



WILLOW TREE Academy



THE LEAF CENTRE



EYFS Policy

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Statement of intent

At Willow Tree Academy, our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is driven by the principles and statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework (2024). We are dedicated to delivering an outstanding early education that nurtures curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. Our provision lays a secure foundation for every child's future success, ensuring that all children thrive, achieve, and feel valued as unique individuals.

In line with the EYFS Framework, we aim to ensure:

- Quality and consistency across all Willow Tree EYFS settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A secure foundation for learning and development, achieved through rich, purposeful, and carefully planned experiences that build upon each child's interests, strengths, and next steps.
- Strong partnerships between practitioners, parents, and carers, recognising that working together leads to the best outcomes for children.
- Equality of opportunity and inclusive practice, ensuring that every child is valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

We uphold the overarching EYFS principles that every child is unique, learns and develops through positive relationships and enabling environments, and progresses in different ways and at different rates.

Our EYFS provision reflects Willow Tree Academy's core values of care, respect, and aspiration, ensuring that every child feels safe, confident, and ready to embrace learning with joy and resilience.

Willow Tree Academy EYFS settings aim to:

- Provide a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment that meets the needs of all children, including those with additional needs.
- Offer a broad, balanced, and creative curriculum that establishes firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Ensure that children learn through purposeful play and exploration, developing independence, curiosity, and critical thinking.
- Recognise and celebrate each child's achievements, using assessment to plan next steps and support continuous progress.
- Foster independence, choice, and decision-making, encouraging children to develop confidence, resilience, and self-belief.
- Work in genuine partnership with parents and carers, valuing their insight and contributions to their child's learning journey.
- Promote inclusivity and equity, ensuring that every child—regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, language, family background, learning difficulty, disability, gender, or ability—has access to the same high-quality experiences and opportunities.
- Provide a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development where all children can flourish together.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#), effective from 1 September 2025.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Early Years Assessment Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Whole-School Food Policy

- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Roles and responsibilities

Greasbrough Primary, Roughwood Primary School and Rockingham Junior and Infant School are members of Willow Tree Academy Trust. All school policies are in line with the Trusts overarching policies and procedures.

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for implementation of the Early Years Policy and for ensuring that the physical Early Years Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Schools complaints policy.

The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Early Years Policy.

The Early Years Leader in each school ensures the running of the EYFS unit is in line with all guidance, policies and procedures. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Early Years Policy.

Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage

A unique child:

- Every child is a unique, resilient, capable, confident and self-assured learner.
- Children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.
- Children's attitudes are fluid and can be influenced by others.

Positive relationships:

- Children learn to be strong, independent individuals by developing secure relationships with teachers and peers alike.
- Relationships with parents and carers are also important and will be nurtured and developed.
- Any relationship will be respectful, caring and professional.

Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults:

- The learning and play environments are vital for supporting and extending a child's development.
- In the classroom and outdoor environment, we observe and assess the children's development and interests.
- Adults respond to children's individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time
- Based on these observations, suitably challenging activities and experiences are planned to extend their learning and achievement.

Learning and development:

- Early Years is organised in a way that encourages children to explore and learn safely.
- There are areas for activities and play, and others for quiet time and rest.
- The setting is designed to enable children to learn and play independently.

Safety and Welfare

Safety and security is a high priority and it is important that all children in our care are safe. We follow all requirements as stated in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage:

- To promote the safety and welfare of the children in our care.

- To promote good general and oral health and prevent the spread of infection by taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- To manage the behaviour of the children in our care in a way that is appropriate for their individual needs and stage of development.
- To ensure that adults who have access to children, or who look after children are suitably vetted and trained.
- To ensure that the setting is fit for purpose and that furniture and equipment is safe.
- To maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting.
- To assign every child a key worker

Relationships

Willow Tree Academy feels it is important for children to learn social etiquette and to develop relationships with peers and adults. This will be achieved as part of Personal, Social and Emotional Development ELG – Building relationships, through playing and interacting with other children and adults. It will be mostly child led.

Safeguarding

Safety is paramount and Willow Tree Academy follows a robust and effective School Safeguarding Policy to ensure the children in our care are protected.

The parent / teacher partnership

The Early Years Foundation Setting cannot function without the enduring support of parents and carers. We recognise that as parent, you are the child's primary educator and we recognise this important role through regular engagement including:

- Information evenings/workshops
- Parent / Teacher Meetings.
- Asking parents to complete admissions forms, a medical form and to write a synopsis ('All About Me') about their child to help us to understand their character and personality.
- Asking parents to sign permission slips for visits out of school, use of photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school.
- Having an open door policy to enable parents to come and speak with teachers, should they have any concerns.
- At least three annual formal parents evening.
- Events and activities throughout the year which bring together children, parents and the school.

Learning and development

Our EYFS curriculum is progressive and details what we want the children to know and be able to do as they go through our Foundation Stage. This ensures that they are 'school ready' and well prepared for Key Stage 1.

The "prime" areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The "specific" areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding of the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

Learning and development is implemented through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity and play and is reactive to the child's lead.

Play is important to learning and development and we therefore do not make a distinction between work and play. Staff expertly interact with the children to scaffold and support their learning.

We plan children's activities to reflect their interests and the synopses written by their parents.

Assessment is conducted through ongoing observation and a range of planned activities. Assessment is used to inform where each child is on their learning journey and plan according to their individual needs. Assessment is based on practitioner judgement and knowledge of the child.

We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning from the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, which are:

- **Playing and exploring** -children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creative and critical thinking** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Early Learning Goals

The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs) as set out below.

- **Communication and Language**
 - ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding
 - ELG: Speaking
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
 - ELG: Self-Regulation
 - ELG: Managing Self
 - ELG: Building Relationships
- **Physical Development**
 - ELG: Gross Motor Skills
 - ELG: Fine Motor Skills
- **Literacy**
 - ELG: Comprehension
 - ELG: Word Reading
 - ELG: Writing
- **Mathematics**
 - ELG: Number
 - ELG: Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World**
 - ELG: Past and Present
 - ELG: People, Culture and Communities
 - ELG: The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
 - ELG: Creating with Materials
 - ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Observation, Assessment and Planning

A well designed curriculum is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this effective process. Observation and assessment is purposeful and based on practitioners' own professional judgement. It does not entail prolonged breaks from working with the children.

The curriculum planning within each class is based around a half termly theme. These plans are used as a guide for weekly planning; however they may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of regular ongoing observations and staff discussion, and this involves the teacher and other adults.

These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFS planning cycle. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents reporting the children's progress. There are opportunities throughout the year for parents to meet their child's class teacher on more formal occasions.

In Foundation Stage Two (Reception), the children are assessed against the EYFS Profile. This summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development in each early learning goal (ELG), or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). It is completed at the end of the Summer Term and provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1.

Teachers participate in regular local authority, in-house and Trust group moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments.

The quality of the taught curriculum is monitored by the Headteachers, EYFS Leader and subject coordinators in school through regular lesson observations/drop-ins, pupil interviews, and planning.

Health and safety

Our full Health and Safety Policy is available on request.

Our full Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy is available on request.

The following general Health and Safety safeguards are in place:

- A supply of fresh drinking water is available on the premises at all times.
- Children's dietary needs are acted upon.
- Healthy snacks are available daily.
- Identified EYFS staff have received Paediatric First Aid training
- Accidents and injuries are recorded in an accident book.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy are in place.
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy is in place which states that cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff member's own personal use.
- Regular EYFS specific risk assessments are undertaken, including outdoor provision. (See Risk Assessments)

The learning environment and outdoor spaces

The classroom is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment.

Equipment and resources are accessible and can be located and used independently by children.

The enclosed outdoor space is secure and offers children the ability to explore a different environment, presenting them with different challenges and experiences.

Activities are planned throughout the learning environment to help the children develop in all areas of learning.

Transition period to Year 1

Class teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible by:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Foundation Two (Reception) plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Foundation Two (Reception) children regularly interact with the year 1 teacher during assemblies and other whole school activities during the reception year.
- EYFS Profiles are passed on and discussed.

- Class teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Children take part in transition days in the summer term.

Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Equal Opportunities Policy: Pupils ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

Mobile phones and devices

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Acceptable Use Policy.

ICT lessons

ICT lessons will be used to give children the opportunity to use technology, equip them for the demands of the developing digital world, and prepare them for the next step in their education. When teaching ICT and utilising technology, e.g. laptops and tablets, the school will have due regard for the 'Education for a Connected World' framework when shaping what children are taught. The school aims to:

- Help children work more independently.
- Enable children to develop and enhance their work.
- Encourage children to collaborate on projects.
- Give children the skills and tools to access a wide range of information, ideas and cultures.
- Help children develop skills that can be used in other areas of the curriculum.
- Help children develop good control and coordination through using ICT equipment.
- Encourage children to represent their ideas, thoughts and feelings through technology.

Teachers will not use formative assessments for ICT, but will use summative assessments to help track children's progress. Resources will be shared fairly between pupils and, where needed, tasks and equipment will be adjusted to suit pupils' needs and abilities.

The EYFS lead will be responsible for ensuring all staff and parents are aware of the setting's policy on using technology and teaching ICT. The EYFS lead will hold the ICT technician, teachers and support staff to account for their delivery and support of the ICT curriculum and offer support where needed.

The ICT technician will be responsible for:

- Staying aware of new ICT developments and communicating these to staff, including through bespoke training where necessary.
- Attending appropriate in-service training, including safeguarding training.
- Maintaining the upkeep and use of ICT resources.
- Working with the EYFS lead to establish an annual budget to secure the procurement of the required ICT software and hardware.
- Keeping appropriate records of ICT expenditure to review costs and make suggestions for the future.
- Securing and maintaining ICT resources.
- Ensuring ICT resources are up-to-date, fit for purpose and safe for pupils to use.
- Advising staff on the correct and safe use of digital technologies.

Staff delivering the ICT curriculum will be responsible for:

- Encouraging pupils to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT in other areas of learning.
- Tailoring lesson delivery according to pupils' age and respective abilities.

- Working with the ICT technician to put reasonable adjustments in place to ensure all pupils can make use of the school's ICT equipment.
- Undertaking summative assessments to ensure the aims set out in this policy are being met.
- Keeping the EYFS lead informed about how the aims of the setting's ICT curriculum are being achieved.
- Supporting children through play and teaching to recognise how technology is used across their lives, such as in their home and school.

The Online Safety Policy will be adhered to at all times. This includes installing internet filters and antivirus software on all devices and ensuring pupils are supervised appropriately when using the internet. In the event of pupils accessing inappropriate content online, safeguarding procedures will be followed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staffing

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

The EYFS lead has qualified Teacher Status and at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. At least half of the other EYFS staff hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

There will be at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate on the school premises at all times, and will accompany children on any school outings.

Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the school office.

The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

The school adopts the following staffing ratios

For children aged two:

- There is one member of staff for every five children.
- At least one staff member holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- At least half of the other staff members hold full and relevant level 2 qualifications.

For children aged three and over:

Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

For children in Reception classes:

Class sizes will be limited to 30 pupils per school teacher.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

Each child is assigned a key person whose role it is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The EYFS lead will inform parents of who their child's key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually.