

# Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery



## Early Years Policy

Wallace Fields Infant School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

**Reviewed: Autumn 2025**

**Next Review: Autumn 2026**

Wallace Fields Infant School is proud to be a part of South Farnham Educational Trust.



## Early Years Policy

### Early Years Vision

Playing to learn and light up young minds. Exceptional education with a nurturing atmosphere, establishing a joy of learning and children who are challenged as learners. Giving children the best start to life and strong foundations that children need for their future schooling career, through play, focused teaching and strong interactions.

#### 1. Intent

- To provide a safe, secure and happy environment in which children may begin their experience of education.
- To develop positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning, developing enthusiasm for knowledge, exploration and learning, and a confidence in their ability to be successful lifelong learners
- To develop children's social skills and encourage their co-operation with others.
- To develop children's attention skills and encourage perseverance and persistence.
- To value and develop a partnership with parents to support their child's learning
- To develop language and communication skills in a range of situations and with a range of adults
- To develop foundational knowledge and skills in writing, reading, oracy and number which ensures they have strong foundations needed for the next stage of their school life.
- To develop awareness of the diverse nature of our society
- To provide a rich and balanced early years curriculum that is relevant, differentiated and progressive, taking into account each child's needs.

#### 2. Objectives

##### The children will

- Be supported in their transition to and between settings, so that they feel valued as part of both the group and school community, and so they have a strong and positive self-image.
- Be challenged and stimulated in their learning, with resources that are appropriate to their level of development and achievement and that focus on practical and active learning.
- Work both in groups and individually and be encouraged to co-operate and work harmoniously with others.
- Have challenging opportunities to enhance their learning and develop their ability to concentrate on their own play & group tasks.
- Learn about cultures, other than their own, and celebrate the differences.

- Learn to respond appropriately to adults, and each other, and have opportunities to practise and extend the range of their vocabulary and the communication skills they need to listen carefully.
- Have opportunities in reading, writing and mark marking to explore, enjoy, learn about and use, words and language texts in a broad range of contexts.
- Have opportunities to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts, and to explore and find out about their lives.
- Develop and practise both their fine and gross motor skills and increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.
- Explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music, movement, dance and imaginative and role play activities.

**The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four guiding principles:**

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

## **A Unique Child**

At Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all of our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking into account all of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that all children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging enhancements to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

## **Positive Relationships**

At Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school or nursery environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

- Written contact through the school newsletters.
- Publishing comments on the online observation tool 'Tapestry'.
- Publishing a knowledge organiser detailing the skills being worked on within each term.
- Inviting parents to attend curriculum workshops on areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Giving parents online access to 'Tapestry' to follow the child's learning journey in school.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation meetings during the year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception and Nursery.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers

All staff involved within the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the Reception teachers act as 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the Assistant Teachers. Within the Nursery all members of staff have key children which are displayed in the entrance hall and shared with parents.

### **See also 'Transition'**

### **Enabling Environments**

At Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up with continuous provision equipment available at the point of play.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### **Learning and Developing (see also Appendix A)**

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS framework.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected.

The prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening, Attention and Understanding, Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

- **Literacy** – Comprehension, Writing, Word Reading
- **Mathematics** – Number, Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World** – People, Culture and Communities, Past and Present, The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Planning**

The planning objectives, within the Foundation Stage, are taken from our bespoke curriculum. Our objectives are formed from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document and our whole school progression grids. The planning is based upon termly learning journeys to motivate and engage pupils, with discrete phonics, vocabulary and maths teaching.

### **Observations**

EYFS staff use observations to inform assessments and planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations and evaluations of directed teaching then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded on Tapestry.

### **Assessment**

During the first weeks in Reception and Nursery, the teacher assesses the ability of each child, using observational baseline assessments alongside the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment, against the 17 areas of learning for Reception, and 7 overarching areas for Nursery, and uses this alongside transition information from feeder nurseries to set an entry level for each child. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching and learning for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained

in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as not on track (emerging) or on track (expected). Any children who are identified as not on track are targeted through our Gap Analysis.

For children who start Nursery at the age of 2, and have not received a 2 year old check at a previous setting, this is completed in their first half term and shared with parents at their settling meeting.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the Local Authority for analysis alongside other schools. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents/Carers receive an annual written report that highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress.

## **Transitions**

### **Starting at Nursery (see also our 'Nursery Settling Policy')**

In the term before children start at Nursery, parents are invited to meet with one of the Nursery teachers. At this meeting, general information is given about Early Years and routines and procedures followed in Nursery. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children including their likes and dislikes and family information. Parents are given a welcome pack which further explains practise in Nursery.

We give the opportunity for all children to have 3 settling sessions at the end of the term before they start Nursery. During these sessions parents stay with their children and explore the Nursery setting and meet members of staff including their child's key person.

We offer a flexible induction to Nursery tailored to meet children's needs. Where appropriate parents are welcomed to stay and play with their child at the beginning of sessions to support their child while they are settling. When children need a more gradual beginning to Nursery we encourage starting with short time periods before building up to their full session.

Every parent is offered a 'Settling in parent's meeting' after the first half term to discuss how their child has settled into the Nursery setting.

### **Transition to Reception**

We aim to make the transition into school as easy as possible for both the child and their parents. General information about the Early Years and entry arrangements are explained, followed by opportunities for parents to ask questions. Parents are given a Welcome Pack, which explains all the information needed by the school and gives practical information about ways to help their child into the school routine. Confidential forms should be completed before September so that dietary or medical arrangements can be made before the child begins school. Parents are also given the opportunity to inform the school of any special social needs of their child.

We offer a range of induction opportunities during the Summer Term for children including story time and play opportunities in their new classroom. At the beginning of the Autumn Term, before the children start school, they receive a home visit from their class teacher and assistant teacher to get to know them better in their own environment.

To help the child settle easily into school all children attend half day induction sessions during the first week of the autumn term. This familiarises the children with their new environment and the daily routine and gives the class teacher and assistant teacher the opportunity to meet the children in small groups and build up relationships.

Through termly meetings, nursery and reception parents are given guidelines on ways they can support their children's learning at home with reading and handwriting. We ensure Nursery children receive an effective transition from nursery to their reception class. They are also given more information on the Foundation Stage Profile, which is completed throughout Nursery and the Reception Year, and general information of a "typical" nursery/reception day.

After the induction period, all children attend school daily.

### **Admissions.**

All children are admitted to reception at the beginning of the academic year in which they will be 5.

Those children who are 5 during the autumn term attend school full-time from the beginning of the school year, after the induction period is completed. The remaining children can either attend part-time (mornings only) for the autumn term or start full time in the autumn term. All children are expected to start school full time in the January.

### **Subject Leader's role:**

- To support colleagues in implementing the Foundation Stage.
- To monitor progress in the Foundation Stage
- To ensure continuity and progression from the EYFS to the National Curriculum
- Informing and advising Governors about policy and practice
- The ordering, auditing and organisation of resources
- Auditing staff training needs and arranging INSET and training where necessary
- Liaising with other Early Years Practitioners in other schools
- Keeping abreast of current developments and disseminating information to staff
- Being available for every day advice and support
- Completing yearly action plan for Early Years and end of term action plan checklist for Early years, related to the school improvement plan.

## Appendix A

This document outlines what you might expect to see in our Early Years settings

The majority of children enter our Nursery between the ages of 2 and 3 years old in our Little Stars setting. In Little Stars there is a key focus on the Prime areas of learning and for many children this is their first experience of being away from their main carer and being part of a larger group of children. As children move to Big Stars for their pre-school year of Nursery the curriculum develops to meet the needs of the children including a wider focus on the specific areas of learning. As children's listening and attention skills develop small group learning time is introduced.

The majority of children enter our reception classes having received a secure Nursery education with home experiences that have contributed to the children's development positively. These societal, environmental school community factors have been considered when designing the Reception Curriculum.

Our curriculum is taught through a whole school learning journey which is planned for across each term including books of high interest to the children. A book of the week is chosen to inspire the children's learning journey.

Continuous provision resources which enable opportunities for child initiated learning are carefully planned for against the development matters milestones and to address gaps/ extend children's learning and cater for children's interests and next steps in learning. The classroom is accessible for all children and they are able to lead their own learning by selecting resources independently. Each classroom caters for all of the areas of learning so that children have access to these throughout the school day. The outdoor area also caters for all areas of learning.

The reception teachers tailor planning and it is adapted to meet the needs of individuals. There are 2 learning sessions in a day including daily discrete teaching of phonics and maths. Each session involves a carpet learning session which will be adaptive to meet individual needs. Followed by this, each session includes discovery learning where the AT and teacher are able to engage and interact with the children in order to move their learning on.

We believe strongly that every moment of everyday is an opportunity for a child to learn something new or master a skill. The curriculum is designed to make maximum most of learning time.

What you might see in	Rationale
-----------------------	-----------

a reception class	
Group activities	<p>Children access group and focus activities in writing, maths and reading. Activities are planned to ensure children have access to all areas of the curriculum, to meet children's needs and to move children forward in their learning and to address gaps in children's learning identified through evaluation and data analysis.</p> <p>Group activities are timetabled to ensure staff work with all children and give further opportunity for staff to observe and monitor children's attainment and progress.</p>
Assemblies	<p>We believe that it is important for children to integrate with the rest of the school so that they feel part of the school community and take part in collective worship. The Reception children attend the weekly music and celebration assemblies.</p>
Phonics	<p>Daily teaching of phonics is taught as a whole class following the Little Wandle approach. Children are then grouped by the sounds they know and take part in targeted 3x weekly reading practice groups. Children who are identified as not keeping up with the class are supported through daily keep-up interventions.</p>
Handwriting (from Autumn 2)	<p>Daily explicit handwriting sessions are taught as well as integrated through all areas of learning. Children start with dough disco to ensure fingers are ready for writing. Children are taught to write using patterns at first in Autumn term progressing to print script and take home handwriting sheets for the letters they are taught each week.</p>
Dictation	<p>Dictation sessions support children with their sentence structure and transcription skills. Children take part in whole class dictation sessions three times a week.</p>
Learning patches	<p>Learning patches are used to display the children's achievements. They are also used as a form of an assessment to monitor the areas of learning the children are accessing.</p>
Outdoor area	<p>The outdoor area caters for all areas of learning and continuous provision is available throughout the area at the point of play.</p>
Discovery activities & Continuous provision.	<p>Discovery activities which enable opportunities for child initiated learning are carefully planned for in line with our topics and to address gaps/ extend children's learning and cater for children's next steps in learning.</p> <p>Areas of the EYFS are reflected throughout the indoor and outdoor provision.</p>

What you might see in our Nursery	Rationale
Discovery Activities & Continuous Provision (indoor and outdoor)	<p>Weekly discovery activities and enhancements are carefully planned to: teach knowledge and skills from our medium term planning, meet children's interests, give retrieval practise tasks, support gaps in children's learning, extend children's learning and cater for children's next steps in learning.</p>

	<p>The classroom lay out includes resourced areas which provide learning opportunities to cover the EYFS. At each discovery zone/ table top activity there are opportunities for children to self-select resources to enhance their learning opportunity from our continuous provision.</p>
<p>Adult led group and activities</p>	<p>Children access group and focus activities across Shining Stars. Activities are planned to ensure children have access to all areas of the curriculum to meet children’s needs and to move children forward in their learning and to address gaps in children’s learning identified through evaluation and data analysis.</p> <p>Group activities are timetabled to ensure learning is not left to chance, staff work with all children and give further opportunity for staff to observe and monitor children’s attainment and progress. In Big Stars, group activities also prepare children for their Reception year, promoting the skills they need to engage in group learning including communication and language skills. Group activities also teach children and give them time to practise skills that they can then apply in their child initiated learning.</p>
<p>Phonics</p>	<p>The Little Wandles ‘Foundations for phonics’ are taught in Nursery, teaching children the key skills needed before introducing discrete teaching of letter recognition.</p>
<p>Nature Explorer Days</p>	<p>Nature explorer days are held regularly for Big Stars. On Nature Explorer day part of the Nursery session is held outside in the forest school area. These sessions allow for different learning opportunities, particularly within Characteristics of Effective Learning encouraging children to play and explore and to think creatively and critically. Through holding them fortnightly, children also experience this environment in different weathers and seasons.</p>
<p>Snack Time</p>	<p>Children have daily snack time where children, stop and have a story together led by an adult with; milk, fruit and breadsticks.</p>
<p>Self registration</p>	<p>As children arrive at Nursery they self register with a name card helping children to recognise their name.</p>
<p>Lunchtime</p>	<p>Parents are given the choice to provide a packed lunch or to have a school cooked hot meal. Independence, manners and social skills are promoted through: children’s food is presented on plates and they are encouraged and supported to use cutlery correctly when eating, children all sit around the table together and wait until all have their food before starting, children and staff sit together and social interaction is encouraged.</p>
<p>Key People</p>	<p>All Nursery children have an allocated key person in Shining Stars. Key people meet regularly to share information on their children. Key people build closer relationships with children building trust and ensuring every child has an adult they feel confident around. This adult is primarily responsible for collecting observations and evidence to record children’s attainment and progress. Key people are shared with parents and are point of contact for parents. We are flexible with key children groupings. Where it is recognised that a child is building a closer relationship with a different adult, or it is felt a children’s needs are better met by a different adult, children are moved.</p>

<p>Sleep time</p>	<p>For children accessing Nursery all day a specific time for a nap is offered. This is discussed with parents at the child’s settling meeting. Children are asked to provide their own bedding and any comforters they may need, which is kept on their peg. A named member of staff settles children on sleep mats in a section of the Nursery and records a regular check on children during this time. Staff recognise that children’s needs are different when they wake from their nap, some children being ready to join in the rest of the group activities but others need comfort during this time.</p> <p>In Shining Stars, there are ‘quiet’ zones in the Nursery for children to have quieter times during their session. If a child falls asleep in these areas, staff will assess if it is appropriate to move the child on to a sleep mat or if they are comfortable where they are.</p>
<p>Nappy Changing</p>	<p>See also our nappy changing policy.</p> <p>In Shining Stars, an adult is timetabled for nappy changing to ensure other learning opportunities can be provided but if a child is not happy being changed by a different adult, their key person will change them.</p> <p>Nappy changing is made a pleasant experience for children through adults engaging with children as they change them.</p>
<p>Tapestry</p>	<p>Each child has an online learning journal. Nursery staff make observations throughout the week, on ipads, which are added to the children’s on line profile. These observations are used as part of our assessment and monitoring cycle and are used to capture children’s achievements and progress and to inform planning and assessment.</p> <p>Parents/carers have access to their child’s profile and are therefore able to add their own observations giving staff the opportunity to celebrate outside achievements and for teachers to use these to inform planning and assessment.</p>