

WILLOW LANE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT POLICY



Mission Statement

The children are at the heart of everything we do at Willow Lane Community Primary School and they are happy, creative and achieving well academically. They are encouraged to learn to the best of their abilities and we also want them to have fun along the way – to understand nature by growing vegetables and exploring the wildlife area, to develop confidence through drama and singing, to nurture independence through problem-solving and to develop positive human values by caring for each other and making links in the local community which we are proud to serve. We know that children learn – academically, socially and morally – when they are emotionally engaged and that is why we ‘teach to the heart’.

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AIMS and OBJECTIVES:

At Willow Lane School, we are committed to providing a high standard of education for all children. This education provides children with the necessary skills for each subject and engaging and creative experiences to enhance and embed learning. Teaching and Learning are the central activities of the school and our success is judged against the quality of our children's learning, progress and outcomes.

At Willow Lane we have a Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy in order to ensure that:

- There is a high standard of teaching and learning in all classes.
- There is consistency of practice between year groups.
- There is a shared belief in the way teachers teach and children learn.
- Everybody is clear about the roles they fulfil.
- There is equality of access and opportunity for all children.

1. WHAT WE TEACH (The Curriculum):**National Curriculum:**

- In Key Stage 1 and 2 (Years 1 to 6) we teach the National Curriculum in England: (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf)
- In Reception we teach EYFS – the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf)

Reading:

- Emerging Readers are supported through the 'Letters and Sounds' phonics system.
- Reading is developed through the 'Oxford Reading Tree' scheme.

Willow Lane Curriculum:

At Willow Lane we have used the National Curriculum materials as a starting point and from it created our own curriculum. It's a ½ termly topic based approach which gives different subject areas emphasis over the year. It allows teachers to tailor the delivery to the needs of an individual class and it promotes cross curricular teaching – a more effective approach than subject by subject – in particular through the use of effective books and stories. We follow yearly plans (see website) but should other engaging opportunities arise – global events such as the Olympics or local events such as an archaeological dig – then we adapt to teach them.

Linked to the different subjects and skills we have created the 'Willow Lane Passport' which we feel all children should experience in their time with us. These experiences and activities were chosen by the children, parents, staff and governors and as well as being potentially life changing all link to elements of the National Curriculum. During their time with us, children will take part in all the exciting things in the passport. Furthermore, through our

Values Education, children learn about and celebrate twelve key values which provide a bedrock of strong morals no matter where in the world their education takes them.

2. HOW WE TEACH (Pedagogy and Systems):

Aristotle said ‘Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all’ and at Willow Lane we take this idea, build on it and ‘Teach to the Heart’. There are three key elements to this – the physical, moral and creative.

We physically teach to the heart through our extensive sport provision and healthy lifestyle choices linked to gardening and cooking home-grown food. We morally teach to the heart through our values education approach and we creatively teach to the heart through our approach to delivering the curriculum. Key to this approach is putting as much emphasis on how we teach as what we teach.

Our Golden Rule is ‘Love School, Love Learning’ and we know that our children need to not only be provided with knowledge and skills but also positive attitudes and role models who will plant and foster the seeds of ambition. Experiential learning is key to engaging all our children and experiences not only develop interest and enjoyment but provide the context and vocabulary which underpins successful learning.

The following characteristics can be seen in lessons from across the curriculum be it children investigating the amount of iron in a bowl of cornflakes, Forest School sessions in our Wildlife area, handling Saxon weapons with a visiting historian, creating Islamic patterns or orienteering around our grounds. Learning is both fun and purposeful throughout our curriculum.

Children learn best when:

- The teacher demonstrates good teaching skills.
- They are happy, safe and relaxed.
- They are independent.
- They are confident in asking questions.
- They are able to work collaboratively.
- They feel valued.
- Their learning is celebrated – through marking, praise and on the walls.
- They are engaged in learning.
- They know what to do and why.
- High expectations are set with realism.
- Learning is pitched appropriately.
- Learning is well planned and sequential.
- When learning makes links – through cross curricular teaching or with the real world.
- Outcomes and Success Criteria are clearly defined.
- Expectations are made clear.
- They are given quality verbal and written feedback.
- They act on feedback.
- Adults and children are enthusiastic.

- Adults support and extend their learning.
- There are positive working relationships.
- The chosen resources support learning.
- There is consistency between classrooms.

Teachers teach best when:

- They have ambition and belief for all children.
- They recognise everyone – including themselves - as learners.
- Planning is sequential.
- Concepts are clearly explained – through LO and SC.
- They adapt teaching and curriculum for the needs of ‘this class’.
- Tasks are appropriate to the abilities of children.
- Children know what to do and why.
- Teaching is well paced, stimulating and enthusiastic.
- When regular constructive feedback is given – verbal and written.
- Assessment is used to plan next steps.
- There is good teacher/children interaction.
- Children’s contributions are encouraged and valued.
- Children are asked questions which check, develop and extend understanding.
- Praise, of outcomes and effort, is used to motivate children.
- High expectations are set and children want to meet them.
- Support staff are deployed effectively.
- The classroom is well organised and managed.
- Teachers reflect on their practice.

English:

In addition to the above, the teaching of English follows specific sequences to ensure children are exposed to and taught the different elements of the National Curriculum.

Writing:

The foundation of good writing is exposure to quality engaging texts, understanding the sentence and text level expectations and creative ideas of one’s own. For each unit of English, a sequence occurs and involves:

- Hook: This ensures children are engaged and understand the long term aim of the unit. It might include a quality text, creating a piece of art or a real life purpose for the writing.
- Phase 1: Introduction to and immersion within the genre/text types. This involves reading and responding to texts, reading and analyzing different features of the text. Children look at examples of the writing to borrow ideas and themes and get a clear understanding of what the different elements are for e.g. a newspaper. Children will often use drama to help understand different elements, as well as learning part of a text by heart to help embed language which they can use in their independent writing.
- Phase 2: Gathering content. In this phase of a unit, children will gather content for their independent write. As they build up their knowledge and skills in this unit, children will look at the structure/elements of their genre or text to change parts of it with their own ideas.

- Phase 3: Writing. This phase builds on the previous phases where they have understood the features of their genre/text and have built up the relevant content and skills. Children are taught how to plan their own text based on what they have studied and how to include the different elements of that text/genre. The writing will involve scaffolded elements taught by the teacher as well as purely independent writing from the children.
- Publishing: All writing should have an outcome that will engage the children. This could be for a display, to read their work to an audience, to perform and record their work or to publish their work online. The outcome of a unit should be shared at the start so that children are always aware of what they are working towards.

SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar):

Woven in to the teaching of writing is the teaching of Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. Spelling for younger children is linked to Letters and Sounds and for older children based around patterns specified in KLIPS.

The 'I Model' strategy is an effective strategy for teaching different writing techniques. This is effectively used at the start of English lessons but is also helped by being reinforced in other areas across the curriculum.

- Immerse: Children hear the pattern from the teacher.
- Imitate: Children orally use the above pattern with adapted words.
- Innovate: Children use the pattern to write their own adapted versions.
- Invent: Children independently create their own sentences using the pattern.

The use of SPAG.com is used throughout the school to assist in embedding and assessing understanding of age expectations.

In all English books is a copy of a writing checklist (S.P.E.W. Sherriff Pete's Excellent Writing). This has key elements of writing for each year group and is something that the children and adults in the class will refer to in lessons to help ensure that the children know how to write at the expected level. Where children have specific needs these can be adapted.

Reading:

Guided Reading both enhances a love of reading different authors as well as teaches the skills of comprehension. For early readers, daily phonics sessions are key to decoding phonetically. Guided Reading sessions across the week include:

- Reading books with teachers in a small group and answering questions designed to progress their knowledge of the language, structure and how authors create meaning.
- Reading comprehension tasks with Teaching Assistants.
- Independent quiet reading.
- Reading different text types such as newspapers, magazines and blogs.
- One to one reading.

Shared reading of quality texts is also a key part of the Writing process. We feel it is important that children hear a range of genres regularly to help foster a love of reading and provide exposure to language or stories that may be unfamiliar.

Handwriting:

The School follows Nelson Handwriting. Our aim is to provide a careful progression from pre-writing patterns to the development of an individual style, following a clearly structured

programme. Handwriting is taught discreetly - to learn the correct letter formations and joins - following Nelson Handwriting with the supportive use of the IWB. Skills are then rehearsed throughout the week to allow individuals to develop and build upon their own writing style.

- Focus - to engage interest
- Practising Patterns – individual and class
- Letter Formation – rehearsal of letters
- Word Building – to practice and support new learning

Careful and legible handwriting is an expectation across the curriculum and teachers model good practice in daily lessons, including the marking of work and the labeling of displays.

Mathematics:

In addition to the above, the teaching of Mathematics has a high emphasis on 'Maths Mastery'. This has different interpretations across education and at Willow Lane examples of Mastery to look for in the classroom include:

- Correct Mathematical Vocabulary used by adults.
- Correct vocabulary used by children – both for current topic and previous showing learning over time.
- Concepts embedded – Concrete Pictorial Abstract approach.
- Problem Solving and Open Ended tasks within starters.
- Problem Solving within every lesson.
- Multiple step problems including use of Bar Model.
- Children making and explaining links between mathematical areas.
- Children confident at using and manipulating very large and very small numbers.
- Collaborative learning with children explaining mathematics in own language.

Learning Environment:

The essential elements of an effective learning environment are:

- A place where children want to be and where they want to learn.
- Positive leadership by the Headteacher and Senior Management Team.
- A welcoming atmosphere for children and parents that reflects our strong and diverse local community.
- Teaching and learning are the core purpose.
- Children experience a broad curriculum which impacts on aspiration, self-esteem and outcomes.
- Clear and fair rules and discipline which are administered consistently by all adults.
- A tidy and cared for environment that is valued by the school community.
- Displays which celebrate children's learning from across the curriculum.
- Purposeful areas throughout the school which are well used and support learning.
- Extra-curricular activities which broaden interests and experiences.
- Opportunities for staff to support and work alongside each other and continuing professional development for all staff.

Inclusion:

We believe that all children have the right to be included in our curriculum. We achieve inclusion by:

- Working with all stakeholders – children, parents, specialist teachers – where there are barriers to learning.
- Our approach to positive behavior for learning.
- The site’s accessibility including the outside areas.
- Differentiating learning activities.
- Individual and Group action plans.
- Providing for specific needs through additional physical and human resources.
- Ensuring financial circumstances are not a barrier to experiences.
- Providing challenge for all children.

3. HOW WE KNOW IT WORKS (Assessment):

Consistent, accurate and fair assessment is at the heart of teaching and learning. At Willow Lane it is used to see where children are, to identify where they need to go next and to inspire children to greater effort with the belief that more can be achieved with ambitious attitudes to learning.

Day to Day assessment:

AFL (Assessment For Learning) is an integral part of effective teaching and is seen daily throughout the school. Examples in school you might see include:

- Questions to check understanding.
- Scanning classrooms.
- Mini plenaries in lessons.
- Flexible groupings.
- Marking.
- Purple Pen next step comments.
- Discussions with children.
- Children’s self-assessments.
- Interventions to plug gaps.
- Adapted planning for the next lesson.

In school Tracking:

At Willow Lane we use a Lancashire system called KLIPS (Key Learning Indicators of Performance) which allows teachers to attach a best fit descriptor to children’s learning based on a series of statements. The KLIPS assess children against age expectations (eg 4E Emerging 4D Developing 4S Secure) with children expected to achieve ‘S’ by the end of the Summer Term. Furthermore, the system allows the school to track progress – the expectation for all children is 3 KILPS per year in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. All children are assessed ½ termly and the analysis of this data allows teachers to change focus groups, adapt interventions and prioritise areas of the curriculum. Examples of what you might see in school which influence these assessments include:

- Ongoing day to day assessment.
- Marking over a period of time.
- Comprehension tasks.
- Termly Mathematics assessment papers.

- Teachers making reference to DfE and Lancashire exemplars.
- In school moderation among colleagues.
- Moderation between schools (we are part of an effective cluster) to ensure our judgements are accurate and fair.

Combined with the outcomes from National Assessments, these influence our end of year report comments which indicate if children are working below, at or above age expectations in the core subjects.

National Summative Assessment:

EYFS Baseline Assessment:

Children are assessed against the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) 17 areas of learning within the first weeks of joining Willow Lane School. The results influence planning and over the year children's learning is captured in Learning Journeys. The age related expectation at the start of Reception Class is 40-60 months.

Early Learning Goals:

At the end of Reception, children are assessed against the ELG (Early Learning Goals) in the 17 areas.

Phonics Test Year 1:

In Summer ii, children take a phonics test of 40 words (including nonsense words) 1:1 with a teacher. If children do not meet the expected standard they will take the test again at the end of Year 2.

Key Stage 1 Assessments:

In Summer ii, children in Year 2 take SATs tests for Reading and Mathematics. These tests are not timed and are conducted in a sensitive manner. There is an optional GPS (SPAG) test too. These tests are used to influence teacher assessment and the accuracy of these assessments is ensured through both internal and Local Authority support/moderation.

Key Stage 2 Assessments:

In May, children in Year 6 take timed tests according to a timetable released by the DfE. The children take tests for Reading, Mathematics and GPS (Grammar Punctuation Spelling). Writing assessment is through teacher assessment. These assessments identify whether or not the children are working towards, at or above age expectations. Teachers also provide a teacher assessment and the accuracy of these assessments is ensured through both internal and Local Authority support/moderation.

Willow Lane Passport:

Linked to the different subjects and skills we have created the 'Willow Lane Passport' which we feel all children should experience in their time with us. These experiences and activities were chosen by the children, parents, staff and governors and as well as being potentially life changing all link to elements of the National Curriculum. During their time with us, children will take part in all the exciting things in the passport below.

Each experience is linked to a subject and backed with expectations from the National Curriculum. This allows teachers to get an insight in to children's understanding of age

related skills and knowledge which they can use to influence planning and for feeding back to parents for example through reports. These experiences also allow Subject Leaders to gain an insight in to the coverage and outcomes for each subject.

Celebrating Success:

- Reports to Parents – termly Parents’ Evenings allow face to face feedback on children’s progress and a written report is produced for every child in the Summer Term.
- Special Mentions – each week two or more children per class receive a certificate in assembly and a message home in recognition of their effort and outcomes.
- Postcards – each week one or more children per class receive a postcard from the Headteacher celebrating learning or attitudes to learning seen in school.
- Marking – learning is marked daily and children understand the symbols which indicate what they are doing well and what their next step is to improve.
- Displays – children’s learning is celebrated publicly, both in the classroom and communal spaces – through our celebratory displays.
- Praise/Team Points/Stickers/Sharing work with another adult – on a day to day basis, children receive a range of positive feedback which promotes success and gives learning a high status.
- Creative Homework Assembly – at the end of each ½ term topic children bring in their creative homework to share with the class as well as in a whole school assembly.

Monitoring:

Accuracy of assessment against age expectations is monitored through a variety of ways including:

- **Book looks** – termly by members of SMT and one of the criteria looked at is pitch and outcomes against age expectations.
- **Lesson observations** - termly by members of SMT and one of the criteria looked at is pitch and outcomes against age expectations.
- **Discussions with children** – daily by Headteacher including questions about child’s learning and their understanding of it.
- **Learning walks** – regularly by SMT including informal feedback on lessons and celebration displays demonstrating work at age expectation.
- **Data Tracking** – a termly analysis of data by SMT which with cross reference of books provides an insight in to accuracy of assessment. This feeds in to termly Pupil Progress discussions.
- **Moderation** – termly in staff meeting time for RWM to ensure consistency across age groups and to reinforce confidence in accuracy.
- **Inter School Moderation** – annually with local schools to ensure consistency and sharing of good practice.
- **Cluster Moderation** – annually for Year 2 and Year 6 with other schools in the Lancaster and Morecambe Cluster to ensure consistency and sharing of good practice.
- **External Moderation** – Local Authority moderates Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 every 3 to 4 years on a rolling program. This ensures assessment is accurate and consistent across the authority.

4. THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND GOVERNORS:

At Willow Lane we both actively encourage parents to participate in their children's learning and believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school.

We would like parents to:

- Promote a positive, collaborative relationship with school.
- Ensure that their children are in school on time and attend regularly.
- Ensure that their child is ready for school with the correct uniform and PE kit.
- Inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour.
- Support the school to fulfil other obligations such as safety on educational visits by returning consent forms.
- Fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.
- Read regularly with children and update reading records.
- Work with the school to keep children safe both in the real and online worlds.

We will support parents by:

- Informing parents of events through the monthly newsletter, text messages and online calendar.
- Being available for discussions or queries.
- Providing workshop opportunities eg Phonics, Online Safety and curriculum based activities.
- Sending information at the start of each topic ½ term.
- Sending topic based creative homework each ½ term and celebrating children's creations.
- Changing children's books and checking Reading Records so that children progress with their reading.
- Holding termly Parents' Evenings.
- Sending a written report at the end of the year.

At Willow Lane, the Governors support teaching, learning and assessment:

- Support the aims for successful teaching and learning.
- Ensure, through the Resources Committee, the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning.
- Ensure performance management and appraisal policies promote the expected standard of teaching.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning through the Standards and Effectiveness Committee.
- Analyse internal and external data to hold the leadership to account for the outcomes of all children.
- Develop the role of critical friends in their oversight of the school and its activities.