

# FOX WOOD SCHOOL



## EARLY YEARS POLICY

Headteacher: Miss Lucinda Duffy

Fox Wood School  
Woolston Learning Village  
Holes Lane  
Woolston  
Warrington  
WA1 4LS

Tel: 01925 811534

Written: October 2024  
Amended: October 2025  
Review Date: October 2027



## **Satellite Site**

Fox Wood School's Early Years Provision is on a satellite site called Fox Cubs. Fox Cubs is supported and led by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Fox Wood, who spend time at Fox Cubs weekly. There is a lead teacher at Fox Cubs who is responsible for the day to day running of the site including safeguarding. Fox Cubs make use of the facilities at Fox Wood School, such as the swimming pool, sensory kingdom and the Food Technology room when appropriate.

## **Introduction**

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (effective from 3 April 2017 – statutory framework) and The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2024). Birth to 5 Matters and Development Matters have also been referenced. The school's policies and procedures in relation to EYFS are also reflected elsewhere in the school's general policy framework, including, but not limited to the following policies which can be found on the school's website:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Policy for Pupils
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Statement
- Health, Safety & welfare Policy
- Parent Partnership Policy
- SEND Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Total Communication Policy
- Parent Privacy Notice
- Well-being Policy
- Admissions Policy

At Fox Wood School we use the term EYFS to refer to the time from when a pupil enters Reception until they enter Year 1. Early Years education is the foundation upon which pupils build the rest of their lives and one that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the nature, principles and practice of Early Years Education at Fox Wood School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of those staff leading and teaching pupils up to Reception.

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”*

**Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Department for Education, 3 March 2017**

## **Principles and Aims**

At Fox Wood School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our pupils. We aim to give them a strong foundation for their future learning. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that pupils learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding and promoting their welfare.

The EYFS aims to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years' settings
- a secure foundation through learning and development for all children for good progress through school and life
- partnerships between different practitioners and between parents or carers
- equality of opportunity for all children to ensure all children are included and supported.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework and the four guiding principles which shape practice in EYFS settings:

1. Every child is unique – consistently learning, resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learning to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments – experiences respond to individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and partners and/or carers.
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates – the framework covers education and care of children in early years provision including SEND pupils.

At Fox Wood School we aim to put these principles into practice by doing the following:

- The curriculum should be relevant and carefully structured by practitioners.
- Staff should understand pupils' development.
- Pupils should feel included, secure and confident.
- Early Years experience should build upon what pupils already know and can do.
- No pupil should be excluded or disadvantaged.
- Staff and parents should work together.
- Activities should be well planned and purposeful, with appropriate intervention by staff, using varied approaches and teaching methods.
- The learning environment should be well planned and well organised.
- Access to outdoor and indoor play should be available.
- Each pupil will be encouraged to reach their full potential.
- Above all, effective learning and development for young pupils requires high quality care and education by practitioners.

## **The nature of the Early Years Curriculum**

In order to promote the learning and development of pupils in our care and to ensure they are ready for their school career, we plan an exciting and challenging curriculum. This is planned in accordance with the seven areas of learning and development to ensure the pupils in our care

reach the end of their Early Years education ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them.

Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS document. The EYFS is based on seven key features of effective practice as set out in Development Matters 2021.

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

As part of our best practice we provide a balanced curriculum, across the seven areas of learning through,

- Promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Providing early intervention for those who need additional support.
- Working in partnership with parents and where needed outside agencies.
- Planning challenging learning experiences for all our children, based on the individual needs of the child.
- Providing opportunities for our children to engage in adult led learning and self-initiated learning.
- Providing a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

At Fox Wood School we plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning.

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

There are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. At Fox Wood School, children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences, in which children can explore, think creatively and are active. Our curriculum model details how we provide a well-balanced curriculum and our planning ensures that each child can develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area of the EYFS. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful activities and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated learning. Learning is progressive and built on prior knowledge. The curriculum is ambitious and ensures pupils are equipped to continue their education.

At Fox Wood School we develop curriculum plans using the Statutory Framework based on a series of topics, planned on a two-year cycle, which offer experiences in all areas. Progress is also planned through IEPs which are written and evaluated each term and allow each pupil's abilities and difficulties to be considered and ensures that targets are uniquely differentiated. IEPs are taken from the pupils individual targets in the Education, Health and Care Plan.

Many pupils at Fox Wood School, including those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) benefit from a structured environment, such as set areas of the classroom for specific activities, 1:1 teaching and a structured timetable which they are informed about by touch cues, objects of reference, photographs or symbols.

Teaching and Learning at Fox Wood School includes a good balance of adult led and child-initiated learning. Teaching may be whole class, face-to-face with a child or small group of children during the session. Practitioners skilfully plan the learning environment to support children in making progress through child-initiated play. Sometimes, these two approaches overlap, for example when a child or small group initiate play which is then supported and extended by the practitioner. When practitioners teach children:

- They facilitate opportunities for the child to contribute and to make choices in their learning as independently as possible.
- They scaffold the child's development, to support increasing independence and control.
- They ask questions to check or develop children's understanding using methods of communication suited to the child.
- They work collaboratively to solve problems and find answers.
- They provide formative feedback to help children to consolidate their learning and extend their exploration and thinking further.

### Ready to Learn

At Fox Wood we want to ensure that all of our pupils are able to fulfil their potential and that they are given the opportunities and support needed to achieve this. We feel it is vital to ensure that before the learning day starts, individuals are set up with the right tools to focus and learn new skills. For many of our pupils, their ability to process and respond to sensory information can be difficult and therefore a varied selection of activities is provided in different forms, appropriate to the individual child, to assist them to be 'ready to learn.' At Fox Cubs, ready to learn activities can be relaxing in the multi-sensory room, playing in the playground or accessing sensory circuit.

### The Importance of Play

Play is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Playing allows for children to be challenged and behave in different ways. Through play, children are able to develop skills across all of the prime and specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

The curriculum is delivered through structured play as much as possible. It balances experiences in the 7 areas of learning, although this balance may vary due to the number and ability of pupils. The teaching may be individual, small group or whole group depending upon the nature of the activity. Teaching and Learning will take place within the classroom and outside areas. Within these areas pupils will participate in a variety of activities, either with an adult or independently.

We aim to develop a sense of belonging, achievement and worth through a positive learning atmosphere where pupils are rewarded for effort and achievements with verbal praise, stickers and certificates. Pupils at Fox Cubs have links to Fox Wood School and will access resources and school activities, such as the swimming pool, the multi-sensory room, the Food Technology Room, Sensory Kingdom and the sensory circuit when appropriate.

We appreciate and use the opportunities offered in the local community by visiting local parks, shops and other amenities including the library.

*“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activities”.*

**Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, 3 March 2017**

### **Reading and Phonics**

The use of phonics is one of the many skills needed to be able to be a reader and writer. We aim to teach high quality phonics to ensure the children have the best start possible in reading and writing. The learning of phonics is the beginning of children's body of knowledge, skills and understanding that are an essential part of learning to read. To read and understand texts children must learn to recognise/decode the words on the page. Good quality phonics teaching allows the child to be secure in the skills of word recognition and decoding which allows children to read fluently. This will result in children being able to read for pleasure and will allow them to move onto developing higher order reading for meaning skills. The teaching of phonics at Fox Wood School is progressive from Pre-Phonics, Early Phonics and then following the Read Write Inc programme for pupils who are ready for this. Phonics teaching flows throughout the curriculum and is mapped to the pupils' ability and stage of development.

In Reception, there is a key focus on daily taught Early Phonics and Pre-Phonics skills. Examples of early phonics skills are stilling to sound or echoing sounds, pre-phonics skills could be alliteration, rhyme and environmental sounds. These will be a focus until the pupil is ready for the formal SSP phonics programme. Our EYFS unit provides a strong continuous provision to enable children to repeat, practise and master. Resources enable children to engage in exploratory play with sounds, investigating variations, pattern, rhyme, voice as well as a range of real sounds through active phonics. Practitioner's awareness of the opportunities for phonics within the environment will support children's learning, questioning, and sharing experiences are essential for the development of key skills. Children always have access to a range of reading and writing materials, vocabulary rich classrooms are the basis of continuous provision. Love of Reading Green Lane Academy promotes a love of reading; this starts from the very start of a child's journey with us. Books are the key driver throughout our reading enhanced curriculum in EYFS and high-quality texts are carefully planned to support learning in line with the seven areas of learning.

These texts are used to influence enhancement ideas to add into provision for children to reconsolidate their learning and understanding of the book during continuous provision time.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting/Monitoring and Evaluation**

Assessment plays an important part in helping those involved in EYFS to recognise pupil's progress, understand their needs and plan appropriate activities and support. Here at Fox Wood as part of our ongoing practice we observe and assess pupil's development and learning. This helps us understand levels of achievement, interests and identify learning styles. We encourage all parties to contribute and take part in discussions about progress.

In order to celebrate all of the small steps that pupils at Fox Wood make, Early Years staff have devised a Developmental Framework based upon the Development Matters document that breaks statements down into achievable progress steps.

We use Evidence for Learning to record the children's progress over the academic year in all areas of learning and development in the EYFS Statutory Framework and the schools own Developmental Framework. Parent's and carers are kept up to date about their child's progress and development and can access their child's online learning journey to see pictures, videos and comments demonstrating progress made in school. Parents are also able to share learning opportunities from home with staff using the portal. Learning is also shared at Parent's Evenings, Annual Reviews and Stay & Play sessions.

When pupils start at Fox Wood, staff refer to the assessment scores from the previous setting as well as observing and interacting with the pupil in order to enter their starting assessment onto Evidence for Learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work together throughout the baseline assessment process to determine starting levels and to devise each pupil's IEP. Individual reports are written and sent home on an annual basis and parents are informed of their child's assessment levels in line with the school's progression framework. Pupil's achievements are recorded on a regular basis and are celebrated throughout the week – at Shine Time with the Head Teacher or within assembly time in class.

### **EYFS Profile**

At the end of the EYFS, the EYFS profile must be completed for each pupil. This provides a well-rounded picture of each's child's readiness for entering Key Stage 1. This reflects the ongoing observation we carry out, the records we hold and the discussions we have had over the course of the EYFS. Pupil's development is assessed only against the Early Learning Goals (ELG), with each level being assessed as either: emerging, meeting or exceeding. Due to the nature of our pupils at Fox Wood we do not believe that the profile is appropriate for the majority of our pupils and as such they would be assessed as 'emerging' against the ELG.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities/Equality**



We firmly believe that every child is unique and that we plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child. We want every pupil to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that this setting provides. No pupil is excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, religion, culture, family background, disability, gender, home language, special educational needs or ability. More information can be found in our Equality Statement.

### **Parents as partners**

At Fox Wood we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents and carers, as highlighted in the Statutory Framework. We understand and celebrate that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we value your contribution to their education. A positive partnership between school and home can have an equally positive impact on a child's learning and development.

We encourage parents and carers to take an active role in their child's learning and development and ask that participate with us in as many ways as you can. We encourage regular information sharing to make sure we have the best knowledge available to help support and develop your child. Your invaluable insight into the individuality of your child helps us to ensure that our learning experiences are not only engaging but appropriately challenging as well.

Fox Wood School and Fox Cubs have an open-door policy and maintain close links with parents after pupils start school, through home-school diaries, Individual Education Programme review meetings, celebration assemblies, parents' evenings, annual reviews and reports. (See Home School Links policy for further information). As Fox Cubs is a satellite site, we would ask that parents make appointments to come and speak to staff rather than just 'drop in' so we can ensure that there is someone available to chat with you. Appointments can be made via the home link book or the school office.

### **Safeguarding and Welfare**

As a provider of the EYFS our duties in relation to the safeguarding and welfare of our pupils is of paramount importance. We have created a welcoming environment that is both safe and stimulating allowing our pupils to learn and grown in confidence.

We have a safeguarding policy framework here at Fox Wood that is referenced at the beginning of this document and these contain stringent policies, procedures and documents that ensure children's safety, including but not limited to safeguarding children, suitability of adults who have contact with children, promoting good health, managing behaviour and maintaining records. Our staff are trained on our policies and procedures and have up-to-date training on matters relating to safeguarding and child protection. There is always a Designated Safeguarding Lead on site at Fox Cubs whilst the pupils are in school.

## **Induction and Transition**

This is an important time for our staff to get to know you and your child, their interests and experiences and any individual requirements they may have. Due to the high staffing ratio and small class sizes, the class teacher will be the key worker for each pupil and alongside class staff will ensure that your child's care is tailored to their needs.

Here at Fox Wood, we know how difficult it can be to change settings and we ensure that transitions are carefully planned to ensure continuity of learning by working closely with other settings as well as parents and carers.

Prospective pupils usually visit Fox Wood and other schools with their parents during the year before they are due to start Reception. When parents have decided on Fox Wood School, the school receives a copy of the pupil's EHC Plan from Warrington Local Authority (LA). The Foundation Stage staff liaise with the staff at the current placement regarding the new pupil through a series of meetings and attend nursery sessions to observe and interact with him or her. The pupil is then offered transition visits to Fox Wood School/ Fox Cubs in the summer term. These usually include two half day visits and one full day visit but can differ according to the needs of the individual. Parents and carers are asked to come into school with their child for the half day sessions and to gradually withdraw so that pupils attend the full day sessions unaccompanied. Parents are asked to fill out a "pre school record" (see attached) about their child and have opportunities to discuss practicalities and any concerns with the school Health Adviser, Physiotherapists and Speech and Language Therapists during visits to school.

The previous setting passes on new pupils' information to Fox Wood including likes and dislikes as well as medical notes, IEPs, assessment information etc. We continuously update the information we provide to new parents to ensure that it is as up to date as possible.

## **Stay and Play**

Throughout the year parents will be invited to join their children during some sessions where staff will set up 'enhanced provision'.

## **Behaviour Management**

At Fox Wood we manage behaviour in an appropriate way and in accordance with Fox Wood's behaviour policy.

## **Record Keeping**

We maintain records and obtain and share information with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure the safety of the children in our care and the efficient management of the setting and to help ensure the needs of all pupils in our care are met.

We comply with Data Protection legislation and GDPR requirements in relation to the retention and sharing of data that we hold. Please see our 'Parent Privacy Notice' for more information.

### **Staff training**

Foundation Stage practitioners are encouraged to attend courses and training on relevant aspects of the Foundation Stage. When staff attend training, they share relevant information with EYFS staff and the wider school community where appropriate.

Information gathered at courses is shared with all practitioners and used to inform planning.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of EYFS staff, and all relevant staff involved with EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy and any linked policy. The senior leadership team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring process. We will evaluate its effectiveness by taking in to account all relevant parties involved within the EYFS setting and anything which has come to light during observations in the setting. We also carry out curriculum reviews and take account of any national reviews and reports in this area.

## **Addendum: EYFS Framework 2025 – UPDATES**

The revised EYFS Framework (September 2025) introduces eight key updates aimed at strengthening safeguarding, health, and operational practices. These include the formal inclusion of whistleblowing procedures, clearer expectations for monitoring child absence, and mandatory references for all staff prior to recruitment.

Safeguarding training remains a priority, with new criteria outlined in Annex C. Paediatric First Aid (PFA) requirements now extend to students and volunteers counted in ratios, and a PFA-trained staff member must be present during meal times. Safer eating practices are emphasised, including supervision, allergy management, and choking prevention. Guidance on toileting and intimate care now formally supports privacy standards.

Lastly, the framework's restructured format improves clarity across areas such as staff supervision, medication, SEND, and disqualification. Fox Wood already meets many of these requirements through existing policies and practices, including safeguarding, absence monitoring, intimate care, and safer recruitment.

FOX WOOD SCHOOL  
Welcome to Fox Cubs 😊  
Please fill this in with as much detail as possible



## A RECORD ABOUT ME

Pupil's Name:

.....

First Day at Fox Wood School: .....

## INTRODUCTION

### Partnership with Parents/Carers

Fox Wood School recognises the need to establish and maintain a positive partnership with parents. This document aims to begin to establish that important link.

Transition to a new school is an important landmark both for the pupil and family. However, settling into a new environment and meeting new people may be difficult as well as exciting, and we acknowledge the value of parents as the child's first educator. The staff therefore would welcome, on an on-going basis, information that parents are able to share. This information will assist us to fully support your child's learning throughout their time at school.

A successful partnership results in a supportive learning environment, both at home and school, and provides maximum benefits for the child, parents and staff.

We would ask you to fill in as much as you can of this document and send it to us with your child on his/her first day at Fox Wood, along with the 'Personal Information' form.

1. **AT HOME**

What name do you call your child at home? e.g. is his/her name shortened?

h

What are the names and ages of any brothers or sisters?

o

Who else lives in your house?

n

Who else is important people in your child's life? E.g. nana, neighbour, friend?

Do you have any pets at home?

What is your child's favourite toy/game/video/TV programme?

2. **LIKES/DISLIKES**

What does your child particularly enjoy doing? eg. watching videos, looking at books, listening to music?

How do they show they likes an activity?

How do they show they dislikes an activity?

Might your child be particularly upset by a certain event? How will they show this?

How does your child respond to an activity they has never tried before and is this a usual reaction to all new experiences?



What makes your child laugh/smile?

### **3. COMMUNICATION**

How does your child usually gain your attention? E.g. will they ask for something, make a certain sound?

What sounds/words/sentences can your child make or say?

If they are upset, how do they let you know? E.g. go quiet, cry, throw something, tell you

What are his/her favourite songs? eg. nursery rhymes, pop songs

When communicating, do they use (please tick all that apply) :

Makaton symbols

☐

Objects of reference

☐

Makaton sign language

☐

Facial expression

☐

Body movements

☐

PECS

☐

Gestures

☐

Verbal

☐

Is his/her hearing good?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Further info

If you say 'no', how does your child respond? E.g. become upset, does not seem to understand, etc.

Which hand does your child prefer to use when engaging in activities eg mark making, using switches

Right ☐

Left ☐

No preference ☐

#### 4. SELF-HELP

How does your child have their fluids? E.g beaker, beaker with lid, mic-key button

a

Can they chew?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Does food need to be cut up for your child?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Can they finger feed?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Does they use a specific sort of plate? E.g rimmed, plate guard

Can they hold and use cutlery?

Yes ☐

No ☐

With support ☐

Which cutlery?

Do you normally eat together as a family?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Does your child wear nappies/ pads?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Will they sit on a toilet?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Will they use the toilet?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Do they request the toilet?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, how do they request the toilet?

Describe how your child dresses themselves or helps with dressing and undressing. (This could include tolerating you dressing them)

y

5. **SHARED ACTIVITIES**

What activity really holds your child's attention?

W

hat activities do you and your child do together?

D

o they like looking at a book with an adult?

Will they talk about the book i.e. using words/signs/symbols/ reactions?

How is your child's vision? Do they wear glasses?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Further info if required.

.....

Do they enjoy physical activities e.g. climbing, walking swimming?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Have they ever been swimming?

Yes ☐

No ☐

What was their reaction?

Do they like to play with other children or alongside them? Or on his/her own?

## 6. OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Could you please tick and name other professionals who are 'involved' with your child?

Name:

Name:

GP

☐

Speech therapist

☐

Physio

☐

Health visitor

☐

Special Needs Nurse

☐

Hospital paediatrician

☐

Opthalmist

☐

Social Worker

☐

Other consultant

☐

Advisory teacher:

☐

hearing

☐

vision

☐

Are any other professionals involved with your child?

D

Do you receive respite care?

Yes ☐

No ☐

## **7. Further information**

What do you think they will particularly enjoy in school?

What are your main concerns for your child at the moment?

Have you carried out any specialised programmes at home to aid your child's development?

Does your child have any allergies?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Does your child have specific dietary requirements? Eg pureed foods, vegetarian, only likes dry foods



Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Thank you

Lyndsey Phillips and Gemma Capper 😊

