



WETHERBY PEMBRIDGE  
MINORS

## EYFS Curriculum Policy

**Policy by** Sam Edwards

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**Next review date:** August 2025

**Reviewer's Signature:** 

**Headteacher's Signature:** 

**Circulation:** This policy has been adopted by the governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, is available to parents on request. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils.

Please note: 'School' refers to Wetherby Pembrige Minors  'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

## Purpose of the Policy

To outline the school's approach to delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The policy is broadly divided into three sections:

- Section 1: Intent - Our aims and aspirations for the children
- Section 2: Implementation - Our established practices and procedures, through which we action our intent
- Section 3: Impact - The evaluation of our practices and procedures, with a view to continually developing and sharpening them.

## Statutory framework and non-statutory guidance

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors we adhere to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and accompanying non-statutory guidance, linked here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

### Non-statutory guidance

In delivering the curriculum, the school's approach will also be significantly informed by the following non-statutory curriculum guidance documents:

- The Wetherby Pembridge Minors 'Progression of Skills' document
- Development Matters. This guidance outlines the seven areas of curriculum covered at Wetherby Pembridge Minors. It forms a framework and provides checkpoints and is by no means an exhaustive curriculum document. Further detail and depth across all areas are planned for by the teaching teams depending on the needs and interests of the children.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE\\_Development\\_Matters\\_Report\\_Sep2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)
- Birth to 5 Matters: <https://www.birhtto5matters.org.uk/>
- The Arc Pathway framework and outcomes  
[Arc Pathway Framework June2023 2.pdf](#)  
[Arc Outcome Tables.pdf](#)

## Section 1: Intent

### School Statement of Intent

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors (WPM) we combine high aspirations with high levels of support in order to secure the best possible progress and development for the children in our care. We aim to foster a love of learning in a happy, caring and secure environment for children, where they learn, develop and become 'school-ready' through a careful balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning. Children's individual interests, needs and dispositions are strongly respected, and the voice of the child is highly valued. The child's educational experience is tailored to them by adults who know them exceptionally well.

## School readiness and the importance of the Prime Areas of Learning

We want children to leave Wetherby Pembridge Minors ready for their next stage schools as confident, autonomous, thoughtful and resilient individuals who are communicative and highly competent learners. To this end, it is our responsibility to ensure that our pedagogy is research-backed and based on child development, allowing robust and genuine foundations to be laid down across the seven areas of learning:

### The Prime Areas of Learning

- Communication and Language (CL)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Physical Development (PD)

### The Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Art and Design
- Understanding the World

One of the most significant indicators of achievement in the later stages of a child's education is how well children are developing in the Prime Areas during the Early Years. Once children have moved on from the Early Years curriculum, there is far less opportunity for schools to explicitly focus on the Prime Areas and it is therefore imperative that the appropriate foundations are laid down in the Prime Areas during the children's time with us.

- **Particular importance is given to the development of communication and language skills, as these underpin all aspects of concurrent and future learning.**
- **Children learn and develop through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things, and our curriculum and pedagogy strongly reflect this.**

The educational programme at Wetherby Pembridge Minors spans two academic years. The focus during children's first year at WPM should lean very heavily towards the Prime Areas of learning, particularly CL and PSED. Staff should not be tempted to move their focus towards the Specific Areas at the expense of securing maximum progress and depth across all three Prime Areas. The Specific Areas should be incorporated into the learning but a strong focus on the Prime Areas should be maintained at the heart of children's experiences so that children gain the solid foundations which will enable them to excel when they enter the broadened and more structured curriculum of the second year, as well as subsequent stages of their education. Synthetic phonics is not taught in the first year, but foundations for phonics are laid using strategies taken from AnimaPhonics and Phase One of the DfE Letters and Sounds document.

In the children's second year, the curriculum focus broadens to encompass a strong focus on all seven areas of learning. Children's interests should drive the subject matter of the learning as much as possible across all seven areas. Robust programmes for phonics and maths are in

place and taught regularly across the week in the children's second year. The school follows the 'AnimaPhonics.' phonics programme.

## **Progression and the Progression of Skills Document**

Our aim is for children to make the best possible progress during their time with us. We have created a 'progression of skills' document which tracks a typical developmental trajectory across children's two years with us. The document is broken down into six terms, each of which has specific outcomes assigned to it. The progression of skills document is to be viewed as a guide only, and staff must be as ambitious as possible about supporting children to progress above and beyond the skills outlined in the document wherever this is possible for the individual. The appropriate support must also be put in place if a child is still working towards the skills outlined in the document. Our SEND Policy covers our approach to children requiring additional support during their time with us.

## **The 'plan, provide, assess' cycle – Intent, implementation & impact**

We recognise that the assessment of children is never an end point, but instead an ongoing process through which staff ascertain which learning experiences a child should be provided with next in order to help them make the best possible progress.

Staff **PLAN** (intent) experiences based upon children's' developmental needs and interests. They then **PROVIDE** (implementation) the appropriate learning experience. Based upon their observations and reflections during and after the learning experience they **ASSESS** (impact) and then the cycle begins again, with new learning experiences being planned based upon the most recent assessments and reflections.

Assessment takes place through observation and interaction with the child. No formalised assessment of children should take place and children should never have any awareness or feeling that they are being 'tested' or assessed.

## **Section 2: Implementation**

### **Staffing structure and the Key Person system**

Our curriculum is structured across two years. In their first year, children attend the 'Little Hearts' class and in their second year they move up into the 'Little Minds' classes. Both classes are assigned a Class Leader who, in addition to their role as a Key Person, is responsible for co-ordinating the class team. The class leaders report to the Deputy Head, who leads on and has oversight of the curriculum.

Every child at Wetherby Pembridge Minors is allocated a Key Person who is responsible for:

- knowing all of the children in their group exceptionally well
- Being aware of the children's individual needs, next steps, interests and dispositions
- Being the first line of contact with parents and communicating with parents about their child's education and wellbeing
- Completing all necessary record-keeping relating to their Key Children

- Informing other staff members of any information pertaining to the child's needs and interests
- Actively contributing to class planning meetings so that the needs of their Key Children are factored into the environment and the activities on offer.
- Planning adult-led Group Time sessions for the Key Group

All of the teachers teach all of the children in the class, not just their Key Children, and must work as a communicative and supportive team.

## **The school day**

Little Hearts class: All children attend five mornings per week. Afternoons are optional.

Big Stars Class: All children attend five full days, unless there is an exception in place, agreed by the governors.

Arrival time for both classes: 8.15am-9am

Departure time:

- 11.45am-12 noon for children attending part-time
- 3.00pm 3.50pm for children attending full time

## **Pedagogy: A blended, balanced, reflective and child-centred approach**

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors we take a blended approach, drawing elements of best practice from a repertoire of different approaches including the Reggio Emilia approach, the Montessori approach, the Te Whariki approach and elements of traditional British nursery school routines. We keep in sight at all times the expectations of the schools that the children move onto after their time at WPM.

Teaching staff should at all times reflect on what is being provided for the children and **WHY** (the 'intent' of the activity or lesson). The appropriate consideration must be given to how the children respond to what is provided and what this means for the child's individual next steps moving forward. Children's interests are paramount, along with providing the right amount of challenge at the right time. Activities should factor in elements which the child is already capable of so that their confidence is bolstered and they develop a growth mindset and 'can do' attitude to learning, but they must also contain elements which provide the correct level of genuine challenge so that the child moves on in their learning and development in a robust way.

## **The balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning**

It is important that the correct balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning is achieved, and as children progress through their early years, more adult-led learning becomes appropriate. We also recognise that there are elements of a child's learning and progression that are unlikely to develop through independent play and exploration, and will require adult input to flourish (for example, phonics and maths).

Across our two-year curriculum, the amount of structure/adult-led learning is built up gradually and imperceptibly to the child, in line with their age and development. However, even in the more structured, final terms, child-initiated learning always remains a significant part of the day. This is important because it develops independence and gives the children the opportunity to develop, review, expand and embed their learning, and to freely interact with their peers and teachers, further strengthening their CL and PSED skills.

## **Positive interactions**

At WPM we recognise that young children learn in a relational way, through reciprocal interaction, which means that the way that staff interact with children is paramount.

- engage in meaningful dialogue with children
- watch, **listen** and respond to children
- allow children the time to respond
- provide excellent models of language
- read aloud and tell stories to children
- encourage children to sing songs, nursery rhymes and musical games
- encourage children to express their thoughts and use new words
- support independence and confidence
- encourage children to speculate and test ideas through trial and error
- enable children to explore and solve problems
- behave as an excellent role model for children
- support children to recognise and respond to their own physical needs
- attend to children's personal needs
- deal with children's care arrangements

## **The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (CoETL)**

[Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters/development-matters)

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (CoETL) are highly important in helping staff to understand **how** a child learns and provide them with learning experiences which will motivate and challenge them.

The CoETL are kept in mind by staff when interacting with children, when planning for their next steps and when assessing their progress.

## **Self-regulation and positive behaviour for learning**

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors, we recognise the crucial role that self-regulation plays in child development and the significant impact that it has on a child's ability to learn and relate positively to others.

Our approach to self-regulation and positive behaviour is outlined in our Positive Behaviour and Self-Regulation Policy.

## **Wellbeing, Equality and Representation**

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors we recognise that in order to learn effectively and progress well, positive levels of wellbeing and involvement must first be in place. This is kept at the forefront of

practitioner's minds at all times, and staff must always respond to children in ways which will best promote the individual child's well-being and involvement.

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors we are committed to making sure that every child is included, involved, valued and seen regardless of their background or personal characteristics. It is imperative that equality of opportunity is reflected throughout all that we do. The nursery school is committed to anti-discriminatory practice, equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in our children, families and staff.

More information can be found in our Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy but, in the context of our Curriculum Policy, it is important to note that all learning resources, books and teaching must reflect, include and involve a diverse range of individuals and families, and every child should be able to feel seen and represented in the resources and books they see around them. Books and learning resources shared with children should represent a wide range of people in a wide range of roles, and all resources must be free from stereotypes. Any stereotyping seen or heard must be challenged by staff.

It is important that all children know that all of the resources in the nursery are for them and that they can engage with any resource that they wish to. Staff should encourage children to follow their own lines of interest, being mindful of unconscious bias.

## **An Enabling Learning Environment**

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors we recognise the crucial role of the classroom environment in promoting children's progress. We are therefore committed to providing:

- A stimulating but calm environment, which is carefully thought out, avoids 'sensory overload' and enables children to make their own independent choices and develop their own lines of enquiry
- Open ended, attractive resources which stimulate children's innate curiosity
- Areas of the classroom which remain consistent so that children have opportunities to revisit and embed their learning, known as areas of 'Continuous Provision'. These are carefully planned to provide challenge for all children and they are supplemented by new and fresh experiences (enhancements and provocations) day to day or week to week, planned according to children's specific interests and needs or according to outside events (seasons, festivals, cultural events etc).
- An environment that is continually reviewed and adapted to children's needs so that it promotes progress as much as it possibly can.
- A highly organised and well-curated environment, which visibly reflects the individual children who learn there

## **Breadth and depth**

Our aim is to achieve a breadth and depth of curriculum which enables the child to truly progress, to develop their cognitive abilities and to consolidate their learning and development.

The curriculum guidance documents (Development Matters, Birth to 5 Matters and our in-school resources) are to be viewed as guidance only. They should be viewed as the 'skeleton' of the curriculum, with the bulk of the learning experiences that children have being planned by staff based upon children's needs and interests over time.

The curriculum statements and checkpoints should not be used as an exhaustive 'tick list' of targets and the curriculum should not be narrowed towards or led by the checkpoints. These are checkpoints only, and staff are empowered to, as a collaborative team, create a curriculum that best suits the needs and interests of the cohort of children in front of them, and helps them to make the most progress over time.

## **The child's voice: listening to the child and the importance of conversations and the importance of feedback**

### **The importance of conversations with children, interactions with children and of listening to children cannot be overstated.**

In listening to children, we gain highly valuable insight into their thinking about their own learning. This insight helps us to know the children increasingly well and provide activities which will enthuse and challenge them. Staff should be attuned to and aware of when and how to interact and when to 'step back' and observe the child. Wherever it is appropriate and beneficial to interact, every possible opportunity should be taken to engage with children in their learning and play and to engage in sustained, shared thinking. Through high-quality interactions we impact significantly on their learning and progress.

## **Feedback**

Research shows that feedback is one of the most effective ways we can help children of all ages to progress in their learning and extend their thinking. Feedback in the context of Early Years is best given in an informal way, through speaking with the child. Feedback could be a simple provocation given during play by, for example, a practitioner saying to a child 'but I wonder what would happen if we used these blocks like this instead?' or 'You just kept trying even though it was difficult. You swapped the containers when you realised you needed a bigger one'.

Feedback can take the form of a provocation to consider a different way of trying something or a comment on what a child did well. Staff should always be specific in their praise (e.g. 'Your tower is so tall, and I can see you kept trying when it fell down!') Rather than 'well done, what a fantastic tower') and encourage a growth mindset by praising effort and the CoEL.

## **Awe and wonder and Cultural Capital**

### **Awe and wonder**

When planning learning experiences for children, consideration should be given to how we prompt 'awe and wonder'. Moments of awe and wonder are those 'magic moments' that



captivate children, provoking excitement and deep concentration and leading to deep engagement. Whilst 'awe and wonder' may result from a carefully considered 'wow' activity set up by an adult, we should also bear in mind that many very everyday things that adults may view as mundane may be the subject of deep fascination to children. As such, we need to respect the child's interests and allow them the time and freedom to explore.

### Cultural capital

When planning for learning experiences, we bear in mind how to increase children's cultural capital. For children in our specific school context, cultural capital is built up through exposure to the wider community that the children do not always have chance to engage with. Trips to the Post Office, local market stalls in Notting Hill or visits from the firefighters, for example, can be of huge benefit in helping children to broaden their view of the culture that is all around them, as can sessions delivered by parents and community members about the rich and diverse range of cultures that form our school community. Children should also be exposed, whilst they are with us, to diverse stories, music and art created by a range of different people. At the heart of our approach to cultural capital is the idea that every child and their context is unique therefore any planning relating to cultural capital should reflect this.

## **Digital Literacy**

ICT resources should be used only when they are of genuine, practical use and help to connect the child with the wider world around them. Examples of this would be the use of stop motion and green screen technology to engage in creative storytelling with others, the use Zoom to connect with others who cannot be physically present in school and the use of USB microscopes so that children can look closely at and explore elements of nature.

The use of apps which do not allow for a practical element to learning and result in children sitting and simply interacting with the screen is not permitted.

## **Parents and carers as partners**

We are committed to supporting parents to help support their child's learning at home and we recognise that a close working relationship between home and school is hugely beneficial to the child. We hold regular parent events and meetings to support parents in understanding how young children learn and alongside these, provide a range of parent materials and information about children's individual next steps.

In order to help parents gain regular insight into their child's learning, we hold weekly 'stay and play sessions' wherein parents can spend time in the classroom reading or playing with their child, and simply experiencing and getting involved in 'classroom life'. Where someone other than the child's named parent (e.g. a nanny, uncle etc) would like to attend a stay and play session, express permission must be given by the parent. Parents are also invited to deliver story sessions or sessions relating to, for example, their culture, home country or occupation and these sessions are very highly valued by all involved.

We have an 'open door' policy when it comes to speaking with parents and they may email or request a conversation with their child's Key Person, the Headteacher or the Deputy Head/SENDCO as and when they wish to.

## **Paperwork and Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time**

Paperwork and record keeping should be limited to that which will provide genuine benefit to the children. Paperwork should not impact unnecessarily on practitioner's contact time with the children.

SLT will determine the appropriate amount of PPA to be allocated to staff and the decision will be a fair one, which takes into account how much time is needed by staff to carry out the necessary tasks to the expected standard. PPA time given will be allocated consistently across staff unless their role dictates otherwise (for example, a part-time practitioner would receive PPA commensurate with the hours they work and the number of Key Children allocated to them).

## **Staff Development (CPD)**

At Wetherby Pembridge Minors, we are highly committed to the ongoing professional development and upskilling of all staff members. Staff CPD is informed by the termly staff performance enhancement cycle of observations, 'book looks', learning walks and supervision meetings. These processes are supportive, and designed to help teachers to reflect and upskill.

Each member of staff has a termly supervision meeting, during which opportunity is given for a discussion of any current training needs and wishes. During these meetings, previously set 'next steps' for development are reviewed and new next steps are mutually decided.

When assigning staff to training, the needs of the school as determined by SLT, are taken into account along with any training needs raised by staff members or, for example, through observation of practice. Training is sourced from a variety of providers, with an emphasis on selecting high-quality CPD for staff.

## **Section 3: Impact**

Practice and the impact of practice must be continually reflected on by staff, to ensure that we continue to provide the very best standard of education and care for the children. All members of the teaching team have a responsibility to continually reflect upon and discuss what is working well for the children and what could be made even better. Where things are working particularly well or could be improved, staff should speak to their Class Leader and Class Leaders should refer to SLT to discuss any and agree any changes to be made. This consultation process also enables SLT to consider whether any changes being made in a class would be of benefit if implemented across the whole school and whether they align well with the school development plan and aims.

## **Assessment & Record Keeping**

### **The Arc Pathway (AP) Tracker**

At WPM we use the Arc Pathway Assessment Tracker to track children's progress over time.

Arc Pathway is a secure online tracking system, which is closely aligned with our curriculum and research-informed, and used by staff and SLT to carefully monitor the progress of individual children over time.

## **Assessment**

Children's progress across all seven areas of learning is regularly monitored and kept track of using the AP tracker. Staff complete the tracker using their practitioner knowledge and any evidence collected in the child's Special Book. Assessment is an ongoing process and allows staff to keep track of where a child is, which learning experiences would benefit them next and in which areas, if any, a child may need either additional support or additional stretch and extension.

Assessments must always be based upon what a child can do **independently and consistently** and, when assessing, staff should bear in mind accuracy above all else and, for example, not be tempted to be 'cautious' or 'generous' where a child is working above or below their current age-related expectation.

## **Pupil Progress Meetings**

Each term, each Key Person will take part in a Pupil Progress Meeting. The meetings centre around a discussion of each individual Key Child's progress, focusing on the child as an individual, their learning and progress and their agreed next steps.

## **Record Keeping**

The physical evidence base for children's assessments is comprised of an Learning Journal on Arc Pathway in which the Key Person and child compile photographs, written observations, the child's voice and photos of work samples which reflect moments of genuine progress for the child. The focus of observations is on quality and genuine progress, rather than quantity, though staff should add to each child's journal on a regular basis.

The intention is that each item placed into the journal captures a moment of real progress for the child, so that the journal comes to reflect the child's own individual learning journey and voice across the time that they spend at WPM. Each child's journal should, therefore, be highly individualised and reflect their own interests and unique learning journey. The expectation is that 80% of what is placed into the journal represents independent, child-initiated learning.

## **Written Reports**

During the Little Hearts year, the Two Year Progress Check is completed for each child in the Autumn Term (later for January starters), highlighting their progress in the Prime Areas. A further progress report is written for every child in the summer term, which details their progress in all seven areas of learning. These reports are sent out to parents and discussed with them, and parents have the opportunity to add their own written comments to their child's report.

During the Little Minds year, parents again receive two written reports, one in the autumn term and one in the summer term, with both of these detailing their child's progress in all seven areas of learning.



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