

## **LOWER SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

### **Preparing to Learn**

Westhaven's Lower School 'Preparing to Learn' curriculum has been designed to inspire and motivate all children to achieve to the best of their abilities. The teachers work hard to plan lessons which will draw on children's talents, encourage child initiated learning, develop creativity as well as nurturing them socially, emotionally and morally throughout their time at Westhaven.

We aim for each child to have exposure to and experience of the world around them. Within the classroom children are encouraged to be successful learners, gaining confidence and independence as they grow.

At Westhaven, we believe it is important to give the children a wide range of opportunities and experiences which will enable them to acquire skills for life and be able to apply them. Children are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and secure environment.

#### The structure of the National Curriculum framework

The National Curriculum 2014 provides the teachers with a framework from which to plan the children's learning – stating key programmes of study in all subject areas.

On entry to the school in the Reception class the children follow the foundation stage framework.

#### The Foundation Stage

Most children in Cambridge and Oxford class follow the Early Years Curriculum. Planning and teaching is based on the DfE's overarching principles for the EYFS.

These are:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership

between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and

- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The

framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities

We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent, giving them a strong foundation for their future learning.

In the Early Years there are 7 Areas of Learning.

The three Prime Areas of Learning are:

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

There are 4 Specific Area of Learning:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding of the World
- and Expressive Arts and Design.

The EYFS also includes 3 Characteristics of Learning which we use to identify children's learning styles, assess the children's strengths and identify next steps.

These are:

- playing and exploring,
- active learning and
- creating and thinking critically.

Long term planning is taken directly from the EYFS to ensure coverage and progress through the age bands towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Year.

Medium term planning is based around a 2 year cycle of topic based learning, ensuring coverage of all Areas of Learning across the Curriculum which informs short term planning.

Short term (weekly) planning also includes opportunities to incorporate the children's own experiences and interests into the learning environment.

We believe that learning should be fun, and plan and deliver a play based curriculum. This includes a combination of adult led activities and child initiated learning, with a balance between whole group, small group and independent learning time. During child initiated learning time the adults observe and support children in their play in order to provide further challenges and scaffold their next steps in learning.

The children have phonics, literacy and numeracy sessions. The children help to contribute to child initiated planning and enjoy seeing the links between their ideas and the challenges and activities in the classroom. The curriculum is delivered to the children both in the classroom and in the outdoor area.

Our everyday practice in our Early Years class(es) includes observations and assessments of the children's development and learning, which we used to inform future planning. We use Tapestry (an online learning journal) to record progress and celebrate learning, with each other and with parents. We value the parent partnership and encourage parents to celebrate their children's achievements with us.

### Key Stage One and Two

At the start of Key Stage One, the staff teams and professionals around the child will determine which pathway they will follow - the 'Ready to Learn' pathway or the 'Preparing to Learn' pathway.

The 'Preparing to Learn' pathway provides an individualised and creative curriculum to inspire children to continue to develop skills to be effective communicators with knowledge of how to self-regulate in order to maintain a calm, alert state where prerequisite skills of EHCP and academic progress can be developed.

The focus of this pathway differs from the 'Ready to Learn' pathways in that its focus is very much more child-led and focuses on a life skills approach.

School visits are encouraged and teachers have worked hard at organising visits in the past that will support their classes learning linked to their themes: a trip to Uphill Beach, Weston Pier, Weston Museum.

Visitors are also welcomed into the school; reinforcing links with the immediate community. (Postman, Vets, Police, Fire brigade, parents/governors with key interests or skills.)

Teachers work hard to use the school environment and locality as a stimulus which will enhance learning across the curriculum. Activities are designed with the school's site in mind: use of the forest school nature area, walking around the local village in order to develop mapping skills, poetry inspired by walks, visiting the church.

In addition, at various points during the year, children have the opportunity to experience visits from theatre, music and dance companies. These are carefully selected in order to have a greater impact on the children and are followed up by the teachers as part of their classroom activities.

Discrete subjects across the school

Currently there are certain subjects which are taught in isolation as it is not always appropriate to link in with the topic and difficult to ensure progression.

Breaking the curriculum down -

**Overview of curriculum offer**

Green = compulsory

	<b>KS1</b>	<b>KS2</b>
Numeracy	5	5
Literacy	5	5
Science	1	1
Computing	*	*
PE	2	2
PSHE, Social Thinking, Citizenship and SRE	2	2
Tech - DT and Food	1	1

Topic - History, Geography and RE	0.5	0.5
Art	1	1
Music	0.5	0.5
MFL	0	*
Life Skills	2	2
Forest School	1	1
Intervention to meet EHCP outcomes	2	2
Land Based Studies	1	1
Golden Time	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>

\* Computing and MFL will be delivered through incorporating it at times into other lessons and times of the day and not as a stand-alone session

### Home learning

Home school links are really important and all staff try hard to keep parents and carers informed as to what will be happening each term in their child's class.

### Celebrate the outcome

The children are encouraged to be proud of their achievements and certificates are presented weekly to children for their efforts and improvements.

### **\*Learning Quest Rationale**

What's it all about?

The main aim of the 'Learning Quest' approach is to inspire our teachers to take risks with their choice of teaching and planning strategies in order to stimulate creative responses from learners.

The challenge for us as teachers is to select interesting themes, topics or contexts for learning through which to develop the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding with their pupils. The 'Learning Quest' approach is intended to support this process.

Creative starting points

We aim to launch our 'Quest' with something that will capture childrens' imagination and engage their interest from the beginning.

These creative starting points might be:

- Oral stories
- Books
- Maps
- Paintings, photographs or a piece of film
- A letter, e mail, text, phone call, ransom/blackmail note, a request for help, message in a bottle
- A cryptic clue
- An experiment
- Footprints
- An artefact (lost or found)
- An unexpected visitor
- A newspaper article or report
- Song lyrics
- A visit
- An unusual classroom installation
- Someone in role
- Objects (suitcases, handbags, clothing, car parts, garden tools)

Outcomes

Evaluation from our past 'quests' show many positive outcomes, including:

- All pupils were fully engaged and enthusiastic.
- Team working and leadership skills were well developed with many pupils taking on unexpected roles.
- Improved emotional well being, independence and peer mentoring.
- Pupils' excitement and enjoyment
- High quality writing.
- Purposeful learning through challenging problem solving activities