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**The Willows Grow |& Achieve Curriculum**

***~ English ~***

***You plant your tiny precious seeds with us …***

***Together We Nurture, Enrich & help them Grow to be the best they can be!***

At the Willows School & Early Years Centre we believe that a quality **English** curriculum should always start with **developmentally appropriate**, **supportive** and **stimulating** environments in which children enjoy **experimenting** with and **learning language**. We offer a **language rich curriculum** where everyone’s **voice is heard** and **listened too**. We aim for **every child** to become an **effective** and **confident communicator** so that they can express themselves and share their knowledge and their ideas.

We use the power of **stories** and **real-life experiences** to **stimulate, excite** and **deepen language learning** and in turn create **successful, independent readers** and **writers.** We aim to inspire an appreciation of rich and varied texts which fosters a **love of reading** widely and often. By offering quality texts in English alongside opportunities to read and write across all subjects we ensure that every child achieves well. We recognise the importance of children taking pride in their own writing and work hard to provide them with **purposeful** opportunities to develop their writing skills.



Our Willows school community is **diverse** and **inclusive**; we know and understand our children, families and community, we listen to their voices and respond to their thoughts and ideas. Our English teaching has to be **organic** and **evolving** in response to our ever changing **context** and our curriculum must be **broad** and **balanced.** We strive to teach every child the key **knowledge** and **skills** that they need to **communicate**, **read** and **write** so that they can be successful at the Willows, their next school and beyond.

**Teaching and Learning of English at the Willows:**

The aims of both the EYFS and National Curriculum are fully embedded in all aspects of our English and wider Curriculum. The teaching of English covers the following areas:

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| **Early Years***Nursery & Reception*  | **Key Stage One***Year One and Year Two* |
| **Speaking &CLL****Listening , attention and understanding** **Word reading** ~ includes phonics **Writing ~** -includes phonics**Literacy****Comprehension** | **Spoken language** **Reading** ~ word reading, comprehension, applying phonics, reading for pleasure, reading accurately with fluency & understanding**Writing** ~Composition, transcription/spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation & handwriting |

In the Early years; our **high quality play** based curriculum ensures that there are plenty of rich opportunities for children to develop their **language skills** with experienced and skillful adults **modelling** and **scaffolding** new vocabulary. **Songs, rhymes** and **stories** are key to literacy learning, where our children become totally engaged and absorbed in their learning. Both indoor and outdoor environments provide a wide range of early phonic, reading and writing opportunities.

As a whole school we teach **discrete, systematic phonics**. This begins in nursery with phase 1 phonics focusing on general sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration and moving on to voice sounds and oral segmenting and blending. We begin teaching Phase 2 to those nursery children who are ready in summer term. In reception we teach phases 2 and onwards in smaller differentiated groups, this help to support and challenge all children so that they are all able to achieve well and apply their phonics skills in reading and writing. The majority of children are working within or securely at phase 3 by the time they move into year one. Our target for all children is to be working well within phase 5 phonics by the end of summer term in year one; this helps ensure that they are confidently reading at ARE and able to pass the screening checks. In year 2, we are then able to move every child’s English learning forwards by focusing on Phase 6 spelling and grammar.

Reading is taught throughout the school, with a **commitment** that all children will be read to by **enthusiastic** and **passionate** adults who will bring stories alive. 1:1 reading sessions begin when children show readiness in nursery; usually in the summer term and always when they start reception class. Parents are involved in their child’s learning and encouraged to come into school and find out more about how children learn to read so that they are confident to do so at home. All children are given two reading books to take home which have been carefully chosen to reflect their current phonics and reading skills. We use a range of reading schemes at the Willows and all staff are highly skilled in the teaching of reading and are able to take running records to inform their next steps of teaching and book choices.

We do not follow schemes or focus on just one approach to the teaching of writing but do use a range of strategies including **Talk for Writing**. We provide rich models for talk and writing, both through texts and as **language users** and **writers** ourselves. The value of being immersed in quality literature as a young child, alongside rich language and play opportunities ensures that all our pupils are motivated to write. They are inspired by **meaningful** events and experiences such as writing recounts of trips and visits or by writing invitations to their parents to come along to their restaurant opening. They are offered **real purposes** and **audiences** to write for including our newsletters or special displays. Adults in school are encouraged to write alongside the children throughout the school day, linked to all areas of learning. Through **shared writing** we model the processes and strategies children will need to become **successful writers**. We teach phonics, grammar and spelling explicitly as well as ensuring these are embedded in the true context of writing. Our children learn how to **plan, draft and edit** their writing so they become confident in their own ability to strengthen all parts of their writing.

Handwriting is a **developmental process** with **distinctive stages** that children progress though when given frequent, guided practice. Gross and fine motor skills are developed primarily through the wider play based curriculum in the early years. We further develop this by using the **Penpals** handwriting scheme which we introduce in Reception; although visuals and opportunities are available within the nursery environment to practice the **letter formation** of each family. As they progress through the stages in year 1 children will begin to **join** and **secure size** and **spacing** and then move onto **securing** these **joins** whilst practicing **speed** and **fluency** in year 2.