Statement regarding: Intent, Implementation and Impact at Willow Nursery School.

**Intent:**

The government provides a curriculum framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which we, at Willow Nursery School use at the core of our practice. Our very experienced team of Early Years specialists work together to plan a curriculum for the forthcoming year that is varied, covers important aspects of individual curriculum subjects, is play based, and provides planned progression based upon children’s past experiences, but acknowledges and celebrates that all individual children have different starting points. We aim to support all children to make Outstanding progress during their time with us, encouraging all children to be the best that they can be. This includes all learners, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities. The committed staff at Willow aim to give our pupils the very best start to their education, enabling them to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they require to be successful in their subsequent stages of education, and ultimately to be successful in adult life.

At Willow we produce a ‘Forward Planning Diary’ which records all our plans for the forthcoming year. Our curriculum has developed over time and is constantly reviewed to ensure it meets the current needs of the children in our care, and to include new innovative curriculum additions. In this way our curriculum is current, taking on board new initiatives that are important in today’s or even tomorrows society.

Each area of the curriculum is championed by a curriculum co-ordinator. We have a curriculum co-ordinator for each curriculum area in both the 2+ and 3+ year groups. These leaders work together to ensure the curriculum on offer is broad and balanced, but also to ensure that they are satisfied that their area of the curriculum is sufficiently covered, to give pupils the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to be successful within a discrete curriculum area.

At Willow we embrace a wide spectrum of ways to facilitate teaching and learning. We have daily, weekly and yearly timetables, to facilitate progression across the year, but we employ a number of teaching and learning strategies to support individual children on their learning journey. We are very committed to a play based curriculum. For the majority of a child’s day with us they will spend their time learning through play. We provide a modern, well equipped Nursery School. Children are free to choose where they would like to work. The classrooms are organised to allow pupils free access to quality early years learning materials. We encourage independent learning through keeping the organisation of play spaces as consistent as possible. We have an open plan approach across classrooms, meaning that spaces are zoned to cover curriculum provision. For example, in the creative space, children will find workspaces to paint, collage, box model and explore malleable materials on a daily basis. Individual staff have planning responsibilities for the play spaces in our school. One staff member plans for each classroom or outside area for two weeks at a time. Staff plan for adult led experiences that children can choose to join during the free flow part of our school day. Staff also plan for activities within the play space, to provide additional resources for a limited time to provide interest for the children. Staff act as facilitators within the classroom. They work alongside individual children or small groups to support their learning, talking with children to scaffold their learning, helping to provide additional resources that children decide they need or the staff realise are necessary to support the next step in a child’s learning. Staff provide a narrative to children’s learning, feeding vocabulary to improve the child’s language skills. Staff use their knowledge of child development to guide their interactions with individual children.

Within their week, staff will plan some adult led tasks where particular children are targeted to be drawn into the activity, within the free flow play environment. Staff plan these tasks based on their knowledge of a child’s current attainment within a particular curriculum area, and draw them in to consolidate, revisit or extend knowledge. Willow staff are interested in the children in their care and strive to know about their interests and personalities. Sometimes children are drawn in to activities because the staff know the individual child will enjoy it and have fun. Staff also draw in children to challenge them, and encourage them to partake in an adult led task or to work alongside others, when the child’s disposition is to routinely say ‘No’ when invited to join a group. At Willow we believe that children engage best when involved with activities that they have chosen for themselves, that are purposeful, and give the child a good sense of wellbeing. Children should only be drawn away from this work if the adult led task is of very good quality, otherwise children should be allowed to explore learning independently. Sometimes an adult will decide that it would be inappropriate to cut across a child having a high level of involvement with a task, and would decide to allow them to continue with the task they were engaged in.

Within our daily routine we have timetabled opportunities to learn as a whole group. On arrival, children make their way to their base room for register time and pastoral time with their Keyworker Groups. Keyworker groups are based upon a child’s age for all funded 3 year olds. Children are grouped into termly cohorts, Autumn Born, Spring Born and Summer Born. In this environment, children learn with ‘Drips’, small pieces of knowledge that the children learn by rote, or are ‘drip fed’. Together staff created a list of Drip themes to be taught, across the year, with progression built in, noted in the Planning Diary. Even the very youngest children in our 2 year old Class use ‘Drips’ as a way of learning useful vocabulary, such as toilet, drink, biscuit etc

Moving through the day, children have a whole class grouptime towards the end of the morning session. Our Grouptimes are something we are very proud of, and have been developed over time. Our grouptimes differ in length depending upon the child’s age. The youngest 2 year olds will have a grouptime of just a couple of minutes, gently extending to 5-10 minutes if appropriate. Two year olds have: singing time, music time with dancing and instruments, Sign language, Lift off to language, story time. Children turning 3 have a 20 minute group: story time, music time, Nursery Rhyme time. The children in their final year at nursery, the 3+children, have a program of groups that changes throughout the year. In the 3+ group all children will experience 5 different planned grouptimes across the week. These grouptimes are developed in blocks of 5, 10, 20 or 40 weeks delivery, all with progression built in, and are 25 minutes in duration. We begin with: BBC Rhymetime, storytelling, Thinking Skills, Theraplay, Big Books, Oxford Reading Tree,then move on to Music, Dance, Number stories, Phonics (twice weekly), BBC Numbertime, finishing with the end of year performance practice. Each session has planned content. Some of these schemes have been developed as part of staff whole school development. For example we had training from the DeCapo organisation, teaching us how to teach music. We planned a series of 10 sessions, teaching a variety of elements around a new short song introduced each week. The entire staff undertook Theraplay training and used this to create a series of progressive sessions that support wellbeing and Social and Emotional Development. The best of our sessions are comparable with ‘Classes’ that parents pay to take children to in the community.

We then layer on activities in our weekly timetable for the 3+ children. These run during choosing time, in a small classroom or outside. On Mondays and Fridays intervention groups are planned for various reasons. We teach Lift off to Language, for those reluctant to use speech or who have English as an Additional Language. We plan small groups based on need if ongoing assessment suggests a need, or if Keyworkers/curriculum identify a need. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we teach the Letters and Sounds program, looking at Phase 1 and Phase 2. We have created resources to teach the objectives set out in the program. On Wednesdays we teach ‘Basic skills’ sessions. Children are involved in Basic skills tuition in the term that they turn 4 years old. The sessions are around 35 minutes long, and they are a formal kind of teaching, as would be seen in reception class. Children work in a small group of 8 children with their Keyworker once a week for 10 weeks. The sessions are 5 English activities and 5 Maths activities, planned and resourced by the teaching staff.

In addition, children entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium are drawn together for a year long program of planned activities for one session per week, varying in length, depending upon the activity. In previous years, children have taken part in 10 weeks of exploring a new toy/ activity pack that they have been provided with to explore at school and then take home. Followed by 10 weeks of cookery, with all ingredients and baking trays etc provided for the child. Then, in the Summer term the children get involved in gardening.

All children take part in a 8 week x 40 minute session of Planned Forest Schools Activities in a small group of 8 children.

We plan a series of themes across the year, with a theme lasting for one or two weeks. These themes were planned to ensure a broad curriculum coverage across the year. We accept that all themes are cross curricular, but some themes such as ‘growing’ have a high science content, whilst learning about ‘The Three Bears’ there is a big opportunity for learning about books and stories. These themes are planned out in the Forward Planning Diary. Staff take direction from the Forward Planning Diary, and the existing assessment information regarding individual children, to plan activities to be provided during free flow time.

We have high academic ambitions for all learners. However the broad curriculum we deliver is not always suitable or indeed practical for some learners with high levels of Special Educational Needs (SEND). In our setting, children with high levels of SEND usually receive additional financial support from the Local Authority. In this situation we are able to provide 1:1 adult support for part of or in some situations for the entire session the child attends. In this situation we take advice from outside specialists to provide a program appropriate to the child’s individual needs, encouraging as much inclusion as possible within the setting.

Our curriculum is well planned and very comprehensive, and is likely to be what makes us different to many other early years’ settings. We aim very high. We always question, what more can we offer? and we carry out an annual review at the end of the academic year to ensure our curriculum is as challenging as possible, but also meeting learners needs.

Our intent is to provide a wide variety of activities, delivered in a variety of young-child friendly ways, by a team of passionate early years specialists, using the best quality resources, to enable all learners to reach their full potential.

**Implementation.**

We carefully recruit staff at Willow Nursery School, because our staff team is our greatest resource in terms of giving our pupils the very best start in life. Staff are offered training to support the new initiatives identified in the School Development Plan. Sometimes we carry out subject audits, and staff are offered training to upskill them in particular areas. Staff become curriculum co-ordinators, and we ensure staff are enabled to access training in their co-ordinator curriculum area. We also try to offer training courses to staff who want to progress in their learning if our training budget allows.

Co-ordinators become specialist in the Curriculum area they lead. Keyworkers are matched to the same age group of children in each cohort, so they become specialist in the needs and abilities of (for example) Summer Born children compared to the rest of the year group. Staff are therefore ‘experts’ and are looked at to advise and support colleagues.

Staff plan the activities they deliver during free flow play. As part of the planning process, staff seek advice from colleagues if required to achieve a clarity over what they are attempting to teach. Qualified teachers are happy to advise Teaching assistants. Staff consider the language they will use to teach particular concepts. Activities are well prepared by the time they are delivered to pupils. Staff use questioning well to ascertain children’s understanding of what they are being taught. We targeted developing staff questioning skills in our School Development Plan in recent years. Staff are able to check children’s misconceptions through targeted questioning and provide direct feedback on the progress children are making. Staff adapt their teaching based upon their individual interactions with their pupils, ensuring their differentiated needs are met.

Teaching is carefully sequenced across the year, helping children to add new concepts and skills to their knowledge base, enabling them to scaffold their learning over time.

Assessment opportunities are used to build up information on what skills and knowledge individual children have, and give staff the opportunity to note what gaps still exist in a child’s knowledge. At Willow we have developed curriculum class lists to help keyworkers and curriculum leaders identify the progress children are making. The information noted is based closely upon the development matters statements within the Early Years Foundation Stage documentation. The information recorded is not a checklist, but is used as an *indicator* of the level a child is working at. It is also used to support planning for groups/ individuals to provide targeted teaching.

The Senior Leadership Team try to ensure the amount of time devoted to assessment is carefully considered by the staff- Promoting a whole staff approach to shared assessment responsibility. Formal record keeping is carried out in a systematic, time restricted way. All classroom staff have directed time of 1 hour together, after school on a Monday evening, to work on all assessment record keeping. This is in addition to directed staff planning time for individual for teachers and teaching assistants. This assessment time is planned at the beginning of the year, to enable all assessment and evaluation tasks to be completed on specific dates.

The resources used to teach the curriculum are also developed over time. Some resources are provided in the classroom for children to access at any time. Other resources, which may need adult support to be used appropriately are stored until needed in our large walk-in classroom resource cupboards. Curriculum co-ordinators are responsible for looking after their curriculum resources and as such are given designated storage spaces in classrooms and storage cupboards to fill with their resources. Curriculum co-ordinators are given a modest annual budget to spend on resources in their curriculum area. Curriculum co-ordinators maintain their resources, ensuring they are returned correctly to their specific storage space. Co-ordinators across the school tidy up and store all resources on a Friday evening. Co-ordinators can advise other staff what appropriate resources the school has to teach particular skills or concepts within their specialist area. We try to create resources that are ‘ready to go’ both for providing experiences during choosing time, and for supporting learning at group time. Resources are gathered on a Friday evening in preparation for all the group times that are to be taught the following week.

Willow Nursery School has developed a rigorous program for developing the teaching of reading. Within this statement I have already mentioned the group time activities that we systematically use to teach reading: Whole class Big Books, phonics sessions (based on Jolly Phonics), Letters and Sounds tuition, Oxford Reading Tree, basic skills sessions that focus on reading. Again we plan to use complimentary teaching to teach reading in a variety of ways using varied resources. We use Oxford reading tree at group time very systematically. We begin by using a series of story cards, where the staff member writes on key names that pupils become familiar with in the first books. We then explore Oxford Reading Tree Biff, Chip and Kipper stories. Starting with the story books with no words (and a teacher guide). We have a good selection of scheme books available to the children in our Library area. Children often choose these books to be read to by adults in the Library because they enjoy being familiar with the characters. These books can be taken home as part of our school lending Library. The Literacy co-ordinator has a full set of Biff, Chip and Kipper books covering a number of the early stages. We use these with the most able children who we deem need to begin structured parent and child reading at home. Alongside this we promote learning to read from real books. We spend a similar amount of time teaching around real books as we do using scheme books. Again, children can choose to look at a book at any time during free flow play. We have a good collection of both fiction and non-fiction books. Many of our other groups have a high literacy element. When formally teaching phonics at grouptime, we planned to read a book that links to the phonic sound being taught. For example when teaching the sound ‘s’ we read the story ‘Suddenly’ to the group.

Free flow activities across the year include looking at words that children see in the environment, such as shop names, product names etc. We regularly read together, using a set of 6 identical books, that children read along with the teacher, handling their own book themselves. We begin with very simple books such as the ‘Maisie Mouse’ or ‘Spot’ books , as they have very simple texts, and children can spot the letters they have begun learning about in phonics sessions. We also use well known classic stories, such as The Hungry Caterpillar, so children can explore the illustrations and see how text appears in different ways in different books. In the Spring term, in the 3+ year, we spend a number of weeks looking at different book titles as the theme for the week. These stories had been selected to promote a balanced curriculum. The Three Bears, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Three Little Pigs, Handa’s Surprise, The Very Hungry Caterpillar. We provide lots of resources during each week which can increase a child’s love of stories. For example: With The Three Bears we provide a child sized ‘house’ with bowls, chairs and beds to role play the story. We provide dressing up outfits for bears and Goldilocks. We provide puppets of the characters to retell the story in a puppet theatre. We display lots of different versions of the storybook, to look at similarities and differences in the text. Pupils get to cook porridge and eat it! Pupils get to design beds for a bear in Design and Technology. Literacy is explored in a playful hands on way. Children cannot fail to learn to retell the story in their own words. They, then look at a Three Bears storybook, and maybe they can retell the story along with the appropriate illustrations. To fully reinforce this learning, I share with parents what the children are learning about this week in the weekly newsletter. Perhaps they can tell Mummy the story of The Three Bears!

**Impact.**

Pupils at Willow Nursery School are immersed in a rich curriculum throughout the time they spend with us. This, combined with the efforts of our team of Early Years Professionals, to encourage children to play with each other and the resources around them, with adult support, guidance and interaction, ensure that children attending our setting make good progress.

Our pupils do have high attainment. We help to create well rounded individuals, who have a wealth of skills and knowledge ready to support their development going into their next stage of education in Primary School. Pupils are ‘School Ready’ and have a love of learning.