

THE WILLOW ON THE FARM WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICY (INCLUDING ASSESSMENT)

NURSERY TO YEAR 2

Reviewed: 01.01.26

Next Review: 01.01.27

Approved by: Alice Clark.

CURRICULUM INTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

INTENT

At The Willow on the Farm, our Curriculum Intent, known as 'The Willow Way', is to provide a rich, inclusive and ambitious education rooted in Montessori philosophy, outdoor, nature-based learning (using our extensive working farm and surrounding fields) and project-based enquiry. We allow children to develop a sense of curiosity, awe and wonder through creativity and imagination. By embedding our **Six Core Values** (Independence, Confidence, Resilience, a Caring Nature, Grace and Courtesy, and Courage), children become confident and capable learners, with a strong sense of self, community and responsibility for the natural world around them. Our Curriculum builds essential knowledge and skills while fostering independence, creativity and a lifelong love of learning.

We recognise that each child is on their own unique Learning Journey, particularly in Literacy and Mathematics. Our Curriculum is designed to reflect the age, aptitudes, emotional and social and academic needs of the pupils. We have planned a progressive Curriculum from Nursery through Year 2, informed by Montessori teaching principles, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum. This ensures children build learning securely, moving forward at an appropriate pace based on development, strengths and needs. Whilst we are not Montessori accredited, our Curriculum is as robust as the Montessori curriculum and our principles and Core Values are inline with the Montessori ethos. We believe that children learn best through hands-on, experiential activities and we teach using the Montessori materials.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Curriculum is implemented through two carefully planned, interdisciplinary projects - ***On the Farm and Montessori's Five Great Lessons***:

- **Nursery (two years): 'On the Farm'**
Children explore the topic *On the Farm*, using the farm and outdoor environments to spark curiosity, observation, talk, vocabulary growth, storytelling and early concepts across **all** areas of learning.
- **Reception to Year 2: 'The Five Great Lessons'** as a continuous journey
Learning is structured around Montessori's *Five Great Lessons*, spread over three years as a connected **thematic journey** where subjects are not taught separately, but woven into a thematic approach.
 - Reception acts as a transition from On the Farm into the Five Great Lessons, with topics chosen to support early literacy/maths development while ensuring broad curriculum coverage.
 - As children move through **Key Stage 1**, the themes widen to include broader KS1 subject knowledge and skills, while remaining rooted in the Great Lessons framework. Themes are selected to pull concepts together across subjects, so children experience coherence between topic learning and core skill development.

Teachers use adaptive teaching approaches, acting as facilitators who guide enquiry, model skills and respond flexibly to children's interests and needs. Learning takes place both indoors and outdoors, with the farm environment providing meaningful, real-life contexts and hands-on experiential learning.

Literacy and Mathematics: developmental journeys (Nursery to Year 2)

Running alongside this thematic learning is a clear progression in **Communication, Language and Literacy** and **Mathematics**, planned from Nursery through Year 2. This progression is:

- Sequenced from foundational skills to confident application,
- Based on Letters & Sounds phases and Montessori principles for literacy, alongside a developmental sequence for maths,
- Delivered through bespoke teaching moments, guided practice, and independent exploration.

Because children develop at different rates, literacy and maths are taught through one-to-one, paired, or very small group sessions, enabling precise matching of challenge and support to each child's learning stage. Core skills are then applied meaningfully across projects and provision.

Outdoor and Experiential Learning

We believe children benefit profoundly from interaction with the outdoors and the farm environment. Outdoor, hands-on, multisensory experiences support children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and strengthen attention, wellbeing, communication and engagement.

On the farm, learning is naturally active and purposeful. For example, mathematical concepts such as fractions can be taught experientially: children may collect apples from the orchard and physically divide them into halves and quarters before sharing them out—helping children *embody* abstract concepts in concrete ways. Learning outside also encourages curiosity, problem-solving and collaborative language use, which are foundational to both literacy and maths development.

IMPACT

Children leave The Willow on the Farm with strong foundations for future learning. They demonstrate progress across the EYFS areas of learning and the KS1 National Curriculum, showing increasing independence, confidence, and the ability to apply knowledge and skills in purposeful contexts. Children are rooted in our Six Core Values, which they will use to become outstanding global citizens in their future lives and view the world as their oyster.

OUR SIX CORE VALUES AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT:

INTENT:

Our Curriculum is underpinned by our Six Core Values: **Resilience, Confidence, Independence, a Caring Nature, Grace and Courtesy, and Courage**. These values are embedded throughout daily life and learning at The Willow on the Farm and are fundamental in helping children understand their place in the world.

- **Resilience** is developed as children encounter challenge through practical, real-life learning experiences. They are encouraged to persevere, develop grit and determination, and recognise that when learning in the outdoors, failure is a vital part of success. They are taught coping skills when facing the challenges of an ever-changing world.
- **Confidence** grows as children are trusted to explore, make decisions and share their ideas. Feeling valued enables them to approach new experiences positively and believe in their own abilities.
- **Independence** is fostered through choice, responsibility and child-led learning. Children develop the skills needed to think for themselves, solve problems and adapt confidently to a changing world.
- **A Caring Nature** is central to life on the farm. Children learn to care for one another, the environment and the animals, developing empathy, respect and a sense of responsibility for the wider world.
- **Grace and Courtesy** are modelled and practised daily, supporting children to develop kindness, respect and consideration for others, and to build positive relationships within a community.
- **Courage** is encouraged as children are supported to take appropriate risks, try new things and step beyond their comfort zones, empowering them to see the world as full of opportunity.

Together, these values support children to cope with challenge, develop strong moral foundations and grow into resilient, compassionate and confident individuals who are well prepared to become positive, well-rounded citizens grounded in an appreciation and connection to the natural world.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The Six Core Values at The Willow on the Farm are modelled consistently by all staff and reinforced through everyday practice. Adults act as positive role models, demonstrating resilience, kindness, respect and courage in their interactions with children and one another. Values are embedded through routines, shared language, restorative conversations, collaborative tasks and real-life responsibilities such as caring for animals, the environment and learning spaces. Staff intentionally support children to reflect on challenges, celebrate effort and perseverance, and make positive choices, ensuring that values are understood, practised and internalised. Respect for the child is at the heart of ALL that we do.

Alignment with EYFS, British Values and Moral Development

Our Six Core Values are closely aligned with the EYFS Prime Areas of **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**. Through daily routines, collaborative projects and outdoor learning, children develop self-regulation, self-confidence, empathy and positive relationships.

The values also strongly support the promotion of British Values:

- **Democracy** is experienced as children are encouraged to share ideas, make choices and have a voice in their learning.
- **The Rule of Law** is understood through agreed routines, boundaries and respect for others and living things.
- **Individual Liberty** is fostered through independence, confidence and self-directed learning.

- **Mutual Respect and Tolerance** are embedded through caring for one another, the environment and animals, alongside practising grace and courtesy.

Moral development is supported as children learn right from wrong, understand consequences, develop compassion and recognise their responsibilities within a community.

IMPACT:

The impact of our Six Core Values is evident in children who demonstrate resilience when faced with challenge, confidence to express themselves, independence in learning and decision-making, and genuine care for others and the world around them. Children show perseverance, grit and determination, understanding that mistakes are part of learning and that effort leads to growth.

As a result, children leave The Willow on the Farm with strong moral foundations, a clear sense of belonging and the skills needed to adapt to change. They are prepared not only for the next stage of education, but to become thoughtful, responsible and courageous citizens who view the world as full of possibility and with a thirst for knowledge and genuine love for learning.

Examples of Core Values in Action (Cultural Capital)

The following examples illustrate how our Core Values are embedded in daily practice and contribute to children's cultural capital:

- **Resilience and Courage** are developed through caring for animals, outdoor learning in all weathers and sustained project work, where children learn to persist, problem-solve and take appropriate risks.
- **Confidence and Independence** are fostered as children make choices about their learning, lead tasks, manage self-care routines and take responsibility for tools, materials and their environment.
- **A Caring Nature** is reinforced through hands-on responsibility for animals, gardening, conservation and environmental stewardship, helping children understand sustainability, empathy and interdependence. It supports care of a child's classroom, and care of each other, which underpins society by cohesion. Within the Willow Family, there is a sense of belonging.
- **Grace and Courtesy** are practised through mixed-age collaboration, turn-taking, conflict resolution and restorative conversations, supporting children to communicate respectfully and understand differing perspectives. This is modelled by all staff at all times.

These experiences provide children with the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to participate fully in society. By embedding values through meaningful, real-life contexts, we ensure all children, regardless of background, gain the cultural capital required to succeed in education and life.

OUR CURRICULUM'S ALIGNMENT WITH EYFS AND KS1 EXPECTATIONS:

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In the Early Years, our curriculum supports children to make progress across all seven areas of learning. Projects and continuous provision are carefully planned to develop the Prime Areas of **Communication and**

Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development, ensuring children are ready to learn.

The Specific Areas are embedded through purposeful experiences:

- **Literacy** is developed through storytelling, mark making, phonics and Montessori materials, and early writing within meaningful contexts.
- **Mathematics** is taught using concrete Montessori resources, practical problem-solving and real-life applications.
- **Understanding the World** is central to farm-based projects, enabling children to explore people, places, the natural world and change over time. (Children also build readiness for later digital learning through real-world problem-solving and “unplugged” experiences, rather than routine screen use.). There is a dedicated shelf in the prepared environment, and also a Topic Table which supports our current topic.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** are promoted through art, music, movement and imaginative play inspired by nature. There is a Creative Station within the classroom which encourages EAD throughout the day.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

As children transition into KS1, our curriculum builds on EYFS foundations while aligning with National Curriculum expectations. Knowledge and skills in **English and Mathematics** are taught progressively and applied across projects.

Projects ensure coverage of KS1 subjects including **Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology, Music and Physical Education**. Hands-on experiential, practical and enquiry-based learning supports children to develop subject knowledge alongside wider skills such as reasoning, problem-solving, collaboration and communication. (Where elements of computing-related thinking arise, this is approached through practical, unplugged tasks that develop logical reasoning and sequencing in age-appropriate ways.)

COMPUTING AND DIGITAL LITERACY (NURSERY TO YEAR 2):

See also Appendix 1

Why we do not teach Computing as a daily subject in the early curriculum

Our Computing curriculum is ‘**Offline and Outdoors**’ so that children build strong foundations in computational thinking and creativity through real, physical problem-solving: giving precise instructions, testing, debugging, improving and explaining their reasoning. In KS1, this approach directly teaches the statutory Computing outcomes while avoiding routine screen engagement. Where the National Curriculum specifically requires pupils to ‘**use technology purposefully**’ (digital content), we meet this through planned, supervised outdoor digital-content projects (e.g., pupil-captured photos/audio) that are then organised, stored, retrieved and improved within a simple class system. **Online Safety** is taught explicitly and regularly through scenarios and rehearsed reporting routines, recognising pupils’ exposure to technology beyond school, and is supported by appropriate school safeguarding arrangements (including filtering/monitoring and staff procedures).

An Example of KS1 National Curriculum Coverage:

- **Algorithms / precise instructions:** pupils write and follow outdoor “human robot” routes; improve instructions to remove ambiguity.
- **Create and debug simple programs:** pupils create instruction-sequences, test them with peers, identify errors and correct (“debug”) before re-testing.
- **Logical reasoning / predict behaviour:** “predict-before-run” tasks—pupils explain what will happen when an instruction sequence is executed and why.
- **Digital content (create, organise, store, manipulate, retrieve):** pupils use technology in planned outdoor projects to capture photos/audio; content is named/categorised, stored in class folders, retrieved later for learning, and improved (re-take/re-record/select best evidence).
- **Recognise common uses of IT beyond school:** community/grounds “IT spotting” and discussion of everyday systems (e.g., sensors, cameras, traffic systems) using input–process–output language.
- **Online safety** (safe/respectful use, privacy, where to get help): explicit teaching through stories/role-play and a consistent reporting routine (e.g., STOP–TELL–SHOW), with regular revisits across the year.
- **Safeguarding expectations:** online safety is embedded within safeguarding practice, aligned with national safeguarding guidance and appropriate school controls (supervision, procedures, filtering/monitoring).

Benefits for Children:

- At this stage, children benefit more from real-world social interaction, physical exploration and imaginative play than routine screen-based activities.
- Research discussions in early childhood education raise concerns that excessive passive screen time can be associated with reduced language opportunities and early vocabulary development.
- Nature-rich, outdoor learning environments strongly support communication, wellbeing, behaviour and cognitive engagement.
- We prioritise time with children and teachers spent within rich, experiential environments—whether indoors or in a hedgerow, stream, orchard, garden or Forest School—supporting emotional intelligence, language development and social skills.
- We anticipate that in Key Stage 2 and beyond, when cognitive and self-regulation skills are more fully developed, pupils will have ample opportunity to engage with computing and digital skills through structured and meaningful learning experiences.

PSHE / RSHE and Respect for Protected Characteristics

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), including statutory **Relationships Education** and (where applicable) **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE)**, is an essential part of our Curriculum. We meet the statutory requirements for PSHE/RSHE and have regard to the relevant statutory guidance, teaching content in ways that are appropriate to pupils’ age and stage. In line with the National Curriculum and the Independent School Standards, we actively encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

This is delivered explicitly and implicitly through our **Six Core Values**, our **RULER** Emotional Intelligence Programme, daily routines, restorative conversations, carefully chosen stories and texts, and inclusive expectations for how we speak to and treat one another within our school community.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

At The Willow on the Farm, we are committed to providing an inclusive curriculum that enables all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to thrive. This Curriculum Policy should be read alongside the school's SEND Policy.

Our curriculum is ambitious for all learners and is underpinned by adaptive teaching. Montessori principles of individual pacing, independence and hands-on learning support inclusive practice, while project-based learning allows children to engage in ways that reflect their strengths.

Support includes early identification, adapted resources, scaffolding, visual supports, and collaboration with families and professionals. Pupils with SEND are supported to make progress and participate fully in school life.

ASSESSMENT

We assess children's understanding primarily through **ongoing formative assessment** embedded in everyday practice. Staff work closely with children **one-to-one and in small groups**, which means we know each child well and can accurately identify what they understand, what they are ready to learn next, and any areas or gaps where they may need further support or challenge as part of their individual learning journey.

Assessment is **continuous and responsive**. Adults observe children's engagement, language, choices, and independent application of skills, and we use planned interactions and "check-ins" during activities to gauge depth of understanding. We also use **teachable moments** to address misconceptions immediately—rephrasing questions, modelling, demonstrating, and providing additional resources or experiences so children can revisit and secure concepts in the moment.

Our curriculum planning is **adaptive**. While topics provide a clear progression, we routinely adjust activities, resources, and lines of enquiry in response to **children's interests, questions, and emerging needs**, ensuring learning remains relevant and motivating while still meeting intended outcomes.

To support retrieval and sustained understanding, we build in regular recap opportunities. We **review learning weekly (every Friday)**, using age-appropriate discussion prompts and simple **quizzes** to identify what knowledge has been retained and what may need revisiting. At the end of a topic, we strengthen long-term recall by deliberately revisiting key learning from **last week, last month, and earlier points in the topic**, helping children make connections and build secure, cumulative understanding over time.

We also use **My Montessori Child** as our tracking and monitoring tool. This helps us to capture observations and assessment information across all areas of learning, **plan precise next steps**, and **identify any gaps** so that each child's progress is well supported and clearly evidenced. My Montessori Child also supports strong partnership with parents, as it is used to **share updates and keep families informed** about their child's learning and progress.

REVIEW

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with the EYFS statutory framework, KS1 National Curriculum expectations and the ethos of The Willow on the Farm.

Appendix 1:

KS1 Online Safety and Digital Literacy Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how we teach online safety and how we safeguard pupils when technology is used in school, recognising that children may have access to internet-enabled devices outside school.

Online safety is taught as a planned part of the curriculum and is embedded as a running theme within safeguarding, in line with national expectations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all EYFS and KS1 pupils, all staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors when supporting pupils' learning and welfare. The theme is introduced in the Early Years and studied in greater depth in KS1.

3. Aims

We aim to ensure all pupils:

- use technology **safely and respectfully**
- know how to **keep personal information private**
- know **where to go for help and support** if they are worried about online content or contact and that the school:
- has appropriate **supervision, filtering and monitoring** arrangements on school devices and networks
- has clear procedures for **reporting and responding** to concerns

4. Risk Framework (how we describe Online Risk)

We teach and manage online safety using the **4 areas of risk**:

- **Content** (what children might see)
- **Contact** (who might contact them)
- **Conduct** (how people behave online)
- **Commerce** (scams, advertising, in-app purchases)

5. Curriculum Delivery

Online safety is taught through:

- **Computing** and wider curriculum contexts
- **Relationships and Health Education / PSHE** (age-appropriate)
- Regular, short revisits using stories, role-play, picture cards and discussion

KS1 core Knowledge and Behaviours

Pupils are explicitly taught to:

1. **Keep personal information private**
(e.g., surname, address, school, phone number, passwords, photos)
2. **Be kind and respectful online**
(online behaviour follows our school behaviour expectations)
3. **Recognise worrying content**
(scary/upsetting/confusing content; what to do next)
4. **Recognise unsafe contact**
(strangers, “keep it secret”, requests for pictures, links, prizes)
5. **Get help quickly** using a practised routine:
STOP (don’t click / don’t reply) → **TELL** (trusted adult) → **SHOW** (show the device/message to an adult)

This directly supports, especially, the KS1 Computing requirement for pupils to know where to go for help if concerned about online content or contact.

Progression and Planning

We use national guidance to plan age-appropriate progression and ensure coverage across themes such as privacy/security, online relationships and online bullying.

6. Safe use of iPads in School

iPads may be used:

- **teacher-directed** to show carefully selected images/videos to enhance learning (time-limited and discussion-led)
- **pupil use** only when planned, supervised and purposeful

Expectations:

- iPads are used under **direct adult supervision** with clear start/stop points
- staff only use **pre-checked, age-appropriate** content
- pupils are taught not to share personal data and not to bypass school rules
- no passwords/personal data are included in pupil-created filenames/content

7. Filtering, Monitoring and Roles

The school maintains appropriate **filtering and monitoring** on school devices and networks and reviews effectiveness regularly.

- The DSL/lead staff understand filtering and monitoring processes and how concerns are escalated.
- Leadership and relevant staff have awareness of provisions in place and escalation routes.
- Online safety is reflected within safeguarding/child protection arrangements and linked policies (e.g., acceptable use, behaviour, mobile/smart technology).

8. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

Pupils are taught to tell a trusted adult immediately. Staff follow the school safeguarding procedures:

- record the concern

- report to the DSL (same day)
- take action in line with safeguarding procedures and external guidance where needed

9. Staff training and updates

All staff receive safeguarding updates including online safety, and relevant staff receive training appropriate to their responsibilities.

10. Parent/carers partnership

We share the school's key safety messages and reporting language with families and signpost support so that online safety is consistent between home and school.

11. Review

This policy is reviewed at least annually, or sooner in response to changes in technology, safeguarding guidance, or identified need.