

Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club

Understanding the World Curriculum

Understanding the World

‘Supports children to make sense of their expanding world and their place within itThis development requires regular and direct contact with the natural, built and virtual environments around the child and engaging children in collaborative activities which promote inquiry, problem-solving and shared decision making.’

Birth to 5 Matters, 2020

Children observe their environments from birth and continue to investigate throughout their lives. Understanding the world helps children to identify where they live through investigation and observation skills, using the tools the modern world provides, and encourages them to learn about the people they share their life with.

At WLNSRHC we aim to further support children to develop their skills in Understanding the World which support the development of questioning, exploring and investigating the world around them and the people in their lives, in partnership with families as the children’s first educators.

Aims

At WLNSRHC we aim that

- Children develop their observation skills
- Children develop their exploration skills
- Children develop their curiosity in a safe and secure environment
- Children develop their questioning skills
- Children develop their understanding skills
- Children are curious about themselves and other people around them
- Children enjoy exploring with different materials and media
- Children demonstrate respect for the natural and manmade environment
- Children learn about how things work and why
- Children explore technology safely
- Children become confident and competent investigators

Curriculum Intent, 3-4 year olds

There are 3 strands to our Understanding the World curriculum

- People, communities and identity
- The world
- Technology

These strands are intertwined in the Understanding the World activities and experiences planned for children

People, communities and identity

Early stages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are curious about others around them• Children enjoy stories and pictures that are about themselves and others• Children have a sense of immediate family such as Mummy and Daddy• Children become aware of similarities and differences with themselves and others close to them• Children begin to have some friends• Children start to imitate everyday actions such as role playing experiences
Progression through year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are interested in others• Children begin to learn about similarities and differences with themselves and others close to them• Children remember events and experiences• Children describe special events such as birthdays and Christmas• Children begin to become aware of the different cultures and religions of children in nursery.• Children begin to become aware of special events and celebrations in the different cultures and religions represented in nursery.• Children show interest in ways of life and occupations• Children begin to know about what makes them unique• Children express their experiences through role play
By the end of nursery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children demonstrate a positive attitude towards differences between people and families• Children enjoy family customs and routines• Children discuss in detail their experiences and events• Children may have a range of friendships• Children begin to learn about other family relations• Children observe other people• Children can identify things that make them unique• Children confidently discuss and take on roles in play from their experiences

The world

Early stages

- Children can explore objects through hitting, poking, shaking etc. using all their senses
- Children notice some features of objects in their environment
- Children enjoy small world resources
- Children are able to describe some features of their home/house

Progression through year

- Children explore resources with similar and different properties
- Children will narrate changes that they observe
- Children will respond to 'I wonder' questions based on their experiences and learning
- Children will explore forces e.g. pushing and pulling, magnetism, elasticity
- Children discuss things that they have observed
- Children can identify features of objects in their environment
- Children comment and ask some questions about their environment
- Children show care towards some living things
- Children will experience growing seeds and plants
- Children develop some understanding of growth, decay and change with support, including lifecycles
- Children will begin to develop respect for the natural environment and experience how to care for and protect living things
- Children will begin to become aware of the locality where they live, e.g. Nelson, Colne, and features of the manmade environment

By the end of nursery

- Children explore a wide range of media and materials and discuss their properties with an adult
- Children will suggest reasons for observed changes based on their experiences and learning
- Children will discuss forces they experience and begin to use associated vocabulary
- Children show care and concern towards living things and the environment
- Children will be able to describe some aspects of growth, decay and change
- Children are confident to explore their environment and ask any questions that they need clarification of
- Children will begin to become aware that there are different countries around the world

Technology

Early stages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children anticipate sounds, sights and actions of toys• Children are interested in different mechanisms particularly with books• Children have basic skills in ICT including using tablets• Children can operate mechanical toys with some support
Progression through year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children know how to operate simple equipment• Children explore how things work• Children begin to question why things happen and how things work• Children start to show skill in making toys work by pressing parts etc.• Children show interest in technological toys• Children begin to know that information can be retrieved from computers
By the end of nursery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children can complete a simple programme on a computer• Children use age appropriate software• Children use IT as a source information to further develop their knowledge and understanding• Children understand technology can be used for different purposes• Children enjoy mechanical toys

Curriculum implementation

We teach the children skills and knowledge of Understanding the World through carefully planned activities and environment and effective adult interactions in both that facilitate the children's learning. Planning for activities and the environment is based on assessments of children's levels of development and is differentiated for their more individualised needs.

At WLNSRHC we plan a varied environment which motivates children to engage with Understanding the World provision through

- Accessible resources for all children
- Prompting children's inquisitiveness through a range of resources, both familiar and unusual, that are stimulating and exciting.
- Providing a range of materials
- Use of displays
- A range of books that reflect all aspects of Understanding the World
- Regular access to a well-planned Forest Nursery and Forest School
- A learning environment that reflects children's families, communities, cultures and positive experiences at home

At WLNSRHC we plan activities that motivate, support and challenge children's reading development through

- Support for children to observe, explore and investigate resources
- Adults role model awe and wonder
- Adult interactions, explaining how and why things work and sparking children's curiosity
- Daily group times, where children are supported with the specific areas after the first term of nursery school
- Use of group time to explore technology and mechanical toys
- Adults listening to each child as an individual, following and developing interests
- Adults supporting children's immediate interests and learning by guiding them to appropriate Understanding the World resources and books and sharing it together
- Planning for individual children's learning needs in Understanding the World through the In The Moment Planning process
- Visits and visitors planned to enhance children's cultural capital e.g. visits to library, Marsden Park, areas of local interest; visits from emergency services, dentist, hand hygiene nurse
- Adults support children to consider risks and act on their evaluation of risk
- Forest school practitioners (level 3)

Curriculum impact

The impact of the Understanding the World curriculum is assessed and monitored for individual children, key person groups and nursery cohorts.

- Practitioners assess children's learning dynamically and will respond in that moment to enhance the children's learning
 - They will adapt their interactions to support or challenge children' learning
 - They will add or direct children to resources that will develop or deepen the child's learning
- Practitioners will observe children during child led or adult directed activities and assess their level of development in Understanding the World. Assessments will be used to
 - Plan next steps for individual children
 - Plan activities that will further develop children' learning
 - Plan continuous provision and enhancements to continuous provision that will further develop children's learning
- Key Persons will record children's learning and share it with parents through the In The Moment Planning process, children's records, IConnect and Target Tracker
- Children's Understanding the World assessments will be used

- To identify learning needs of individual children, groups of children and cohorts of children
- To plan learning for individual children and groups of children
- Children’s Understanding the World assessments will be used in conjunction with teaching and learning observations (by peers, team leaders, headteacher or external bodies)
 - To monitor the impact of key person’s teaching of Understanding the World
 - To monitor the impact of specific Understanding the World projects
 - To identify areas of CPD for individuals or groups of staff
 - To moderate Understanding the World assessments across staff
 - To plan future improvements to teaching of Understanding the World

Special Educational Needs and Disability

We aim to cater for the individual learning needs of every child, recognising the need for specialised provision to ensure access to all aspects of the curriculum. Many children with SEND attending WLNSRHC have speech and language difficulties. Activities and the environment for the children are planned using the Lancashire ATTP document; Lancashire SEN progression document and advice from external agencies e.g. SALT, Early Years Specialist Teachers. Specific targets are identified in children’s Targeted Learning Plans to develop their speech, language and communication in preparation for other areas of the curriculum.

Early Years Pupil Premium

Additional support is provided for children who are eligible for early years pupil premium. The support is based on the Education Endowment Fund assessment of the impact of different strategies in the early years. We focus on developing the children’s wellbeing and involvement to build resilience and self-regulation. Next we prioritise developing communication and language skills, once secure we focus on developing children’s literacy. The children will also be involved in experiences to develop their cultural capital e.g. forest school; visits to the library, shops, areas of local interest. The aim is to give the children a broader range of experiences to link to their learning, to talk about, to link to literature and to promote creativity.

Children with English as an Additional Language

For children with EAL, as with all children, developing their speech, language and communication is a priority on which their Understanding the World skills will be built. The children are supported to develop their knowledge and use of English through

sensitive play based activities using visual and physical cues (see CAL policy). The variety of cultures and languages spoken within nursery benefits all children by broadening their experiences and enables them to learn from one another.

To further support children with EAL access all aspects of the Understanding the World curriculum

- Books and literature are carefully selected that represent the different cultures of children in nursery.
- There is a selection of dual-language books
- Books and literature are carefully selected that give visual cues, promote naming and that are rhythmic and repetitive.
- Musical and rhyming activities are valuable for supporting language learning due to the rhythmic chanting and repeated refrains which support the children to articulate in an additional language.
- Makaton is used to promote children's learning as this enables the child to visualise the words used to communicate and supports their progress.
- Translation apps are used to promote communication and demonstrate the link between speech and writing.
- Children's languages and cultures are represented in the environment and resources.
- Staff work closely with parents, using translators or apps to develop an understanding of the children's backgrounds and interests, which is implemented into children's specific targets.