

WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Aim

At WMS, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to ensure the children at WMS make good progress.

Statutory Framework

We are a Montessori School following the Montessori curriculum and philosophy. As part of the conditions that need to be met to receive the Early Years Funding at ages 2,3 and 4, we also work within the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, 2025) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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,
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

Principles into Practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a Montessori curriculum, which includes learning across the seven areas of the EYFS,
- Promote equality of opportunity and an anti-discriminatory practice; we provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;

- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context, we;
 - plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation, assessment and the child's interests;
 - provide opportunities for the children to engage in a range of activities, some adult-initiated and some child-initiated, supported by an adult.
 - provide a secure and safe learning environment, indoors and out.

Early Years Policy

The Early Years Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging Montessori curriculum which is based on our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The Prime Areas of Learning are the essential foundations for children to work with and master before progressing to the Specific Areas of Learning.

Prime Areas of Learning:

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

Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

At WMS, children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

In the Early Years we write long and medium-term plans, based on a series of class topics, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas, in the learning areas inside and outside.

(Please see our Curriculum Policy for more details. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations.)

Regulatory Requirements

We ensure that we implement the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2025) and meet the associated regulatory Requirements. Early Years Leaders will attend training in the regulatory requirements.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice in a Montessori School, we observe and evaluate children's development and learning to inform their next steps and future plans.

We record our observations in a variety of ways including written observations, photo observations and through the online platform, Tapestry.

All Early Years practitioners are encouraged to contribute, and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which is shared with parents.

The school complies with requirements to complete the Two-Year-Old Progress Check.

When a child is aged between two and three years, an assessment of the Prime areas of learning across the EYFS will be made. This summary of development will then be shared and discussed with parents. The observations may show that the child is progressing faster or slower in a particular area; this will generally be a normal part of your child's unique developmental journey. When there are concerns regarding a child's development, we will carry out further observations and may seek to consult with other professionals if we feel their support would benefit the child.

Within the final term of the year in which a child reaches the age of 5, we provide parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning, including strengths and next steps in learning. All the related information that forms these judgements is gained quite naturally during the course of the child's learning. Parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher in preparation for their next stage of learning. The cohort's results are shared each year with all parents and also on our website.

Occasionally WMS will form part of a moderation group and across that academic year will attend sessions within the borough and will be visited to monitor the work being done. This results in a moderation day with external moderators visiting and looking at all the supporting evidence which is being used to create a judgement on a child.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious snacks and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all of our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual children and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equal Opportunities and SEND.

Partners

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on visits and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given at WMS to ensure a seamless continuity of learning and development. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend settling visits before moving to their next classes which helps to develop familiarity with new teachers and other children.

Within the final term of the year in which the child reaches the age of 5, the teachers who have children reaching this age will meet regularly and will discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals.

These discussions help the teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all the children.

This policy was adopted on 1 October 2018

Date last reviewed: 12th September 2025

Date to be reviewed: 12th September 2026