

How we observe and understand children's learning at Weoley Castle Nursery School, Preschool & Early Learning Hub



What do we want for our children at Weoley Castle Nursery School?

We aim for our nursery to be a place of possibilities where children will be nurtured, where their individual interests and talents will be valued and developed.

As a result, we hope that children's well-being will be high. They will have a belief in themselves and their abilities. They will know that they are loved, that they are strong, capable and unique. They will have resilience and the perseverance to keep on trying when things are challenging.

We want children to have the confidence to try new things, to take risks and be physically active. We want children to be able to communicate their ideas, beliefs and feelings, choosing different ways to do this. Some children will choose to dance, others to build or draw or sing. They will have experienced and remembered a wide range of words through stories, rhymes and poems. They will have the skills to make friends and will show kindness to others. They will know how to look after themselves, their friends, their school and the environment.

They will know about important mathematical and scientific concepts. They will have an understanding and respect of the world around them and the world beyond. They will have a desire to learn and be ready for their next stage in education.

How do we observe children and monitor progress?

We are using a model of effective, meaningful and principled assessment of young children's learning developed by BEYA - Barnet Early Years Alliance. It is called OP&L.

By effective, we mean a method of assessment that ensures that all children are supported in reaching significant milestones.

By meaningful, we mean that the observations made inform our everyday practice and curriculum. By gaining an insight into children's thinking, feeling and needs we can plan our environment and actions to provide future possibilities for learning.

By principled, we mean that our focus is on observing to understand children.

Children are recognised as individuals and supported with a range of personalised opportunities and resources to be curious and inquisitive learners and form positive relationships with others.

We will not spend unnecessary amounts of time writing observations or gathering evidence of children's learning. We believe that if we are capturing the moment, we cannot be part of the moment. Instead we have structures in place that enable us to regularly discuss each child as a team and with their family.

Observation of Play and Learning (OP&L)

Your child's learning will be closely monitored in collaboration with you to ensure they are supported to reach significant milestones for their age.

OP&L works on the basis of having very simple, six monthly child developmental milestones, which we use to monitor children's development. These milestones reflect what we believe a 'typical' child, should be able to achieve.

We know that not all children will have 'typical' development. OP&L allows us to tell and celebrate each child's story and focus on the support they need from us.

The observations and assessments that we make are called 'spot lights'. We observe children's innovation, their creativity, their ideas, their intents and feelings. The insight that we gain enables us to discuss, reflect and plan our environment to support and shape future learning.

OP&L follows a simple, three step cycle:

1.OP&L Spotlight: 2. Speak with parents: 3. Review and reflect

What to expect?

There will be many opportunities throughout the year for us to come together to talk about your child and their learning.

Welcome - When your child joins us at nursery, you will be invited to a Welcome meeting, to talk about our ways of observing children, our daily routines and how we support their learning and development. Each day our staff team will greet you as you arrive and be available as you leave at the end of the day. You are able to share a conversation about your child and let us know how we can support you further.

Settling in: Soon after your child has started nursery, we will invite you to share with us about how your child has settled in.

Parent Drop In: We will hold a drop-in celebration session every term, giving you the opportunity to come in, have a look around and chat with your child's key person.

Spotlight: Each child will have their 'spotlight' points in the year, depending on when their birthday falls. We will invite you in to nursery to share spotlights and talk about your child's learning and development. We call these our celebration sessions.

We will give you the email address of your child's key person, for when you have important information to share. We really encourage you to contribute to your child's profile, where you can add photos or descriptions of significant moments in your child's development that you would like to share with us.

We look forward to working with you, providing happy times and a happy childhood. Welcome!

