



Woodland Primary Academy

Classroom Environment Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes made:
0.1	17.09.2026	Mr C Howarth	Rewrote the Classroom Environment Policy to reflect most recent research regarding inclusive classrooms. Added sections to support teachers in meeting the varying needs of our SEND and EAL pupils.

1. RATIONALE

At Woodland Primary Academy, we recognise that the quality of the classroom environment has a significant impact on learning, behaviour, wellbeing, communication, engagement and independence.

Our classrooms should be calm, welcoming, inclusive and purposeful spaces where every child feels safe, valued and able to succeed. The environment should support high-quality teaching whilst meeting the needs of all learners, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, physical disabilities and pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). SEND information report 2026-27 identifies communication, adaptive teaching, sensory support, visual support and assistive technology as key elements of provision within school.

This policy draws upon the findings of the University of Salford's HEAD (Holistic Evidence and Design) Project, which identified that classroom design significantly influences pupil progress. The policy also reflects Woodland's commitment to inclusion, belonging, personal development, independence, regulation and reading for pleasure.

The classroom environment should:

- Promote high-quality teaching and learning.
- Support communication and language development.
- Enable all pupils to access the curriculum.
- Foster independence and resilience.
- Promote emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.
- Encourage reading for pleasure.
- Celebrate diversity and inclusion.
- Develop understanding of British Values.
- Create a sense of belonging and pride.

2. PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

Woodland Primary Academy adopts the three key principles from the HEAD Project:

Naturalness

Classrooms should support pupils' physical comfort through effective use of:

- Natural light.
- Ventilation.
- Temperature control.
- Sound management.
- Connection with nature.

Individualisation

Classrooms should enable pupils to feel ownership of their environment through:

- Pupil voice.
- Celebration of achievement.
- Personalisation.
- Flexible learning spaces.
- Representation of pupils' interests and identities.

Stimulation

Classrooms should provide sufficient stimulation without overwhelming learners.

Displays and resources should:

- Support learning.
- Be visually organised.
- Minimise cognitive overload.
- Maintain calm and purposeful spaces.

3. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

3.1 Lighting, Air Quality and Physical Environment

Teachers should:

Expectation	Requirement
Light	Maximise natural light wherever possible
Windows	Keep largely free from displays
Furniture	Avoid blocking windows and access routes
Ventilation	Open windows regularly where safe to do so
Temperature	Maintain a comfortable learning environment
Sound	Reduce unnecessary noise distractions
Nature	Include plants and natural elements where appropriate

3.2 Classroom Layout

Classrooms should be organised to support teaching, learning and independence.

EYFS and Key Stage 1

Classrooms should include:

- Carpet area.
- Reading area.
- Continuous provision areas.
- Small group teaching spaces.
- Practical learning opportunities.
- Calm or regulation area.

Key Stage 2

Classrooms should include:

- Teacher input area.
- Reading area.
- Independent working spaces.

- Group collaboration spaces.
- Access to support resources.
- Regulation provision where required.

4. INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

Woodland's Inclusive Approach

All classrooms must enable pupils to access learning regardless of need.

The environment should support:

- SEND.
- EHCPs.
- SLCN.
- ASD.
- SEMH.
- Physical needs.
- Sensory needs.
- EAL learners.

4.1 Communication-Friendly Classrooms

Every classroom must have:

Expectation	Purpose
Daily timetable displayed clearly on the classroom screen throughout the day.	Supports predictability, transitions and routine.
Individual visual schedules available where identified through SEND Support Plans or EHCPs.	Supports pupils requiring additional structure.
Key vocabulary displayed using dual coding.	Supports vocabulary acquisition and retrieval.
Widgit symbols used where appropriate.	Supports pupils with communication needs.
Learning intentions and success criteria displayed clearly.	Promotes accessibility and independence.
Sentence stems and speaking frames routinely displayed during learning.	Supports communication and oracy.
Classroom displays use concise language and avoid excessive text.	Reduces cognitive load.

Dual Coding Expectations

Dual coding is the deliberate use of words and visuals together to support learning, memory and understanding.

Expectation	Example
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Key learning represented through both words and visuals.	Vocabulary with photographs, symbols or diagrams.
Working walls combine written explanations with visual models.	Worked examples and annotated diagrams.
Vocabulary displays include the word, image and pupil-friendly explanation.	Science, Geography and Tier 2 vocabulary.
Classroom routines supported visually.	Instructions, routines and transitions.
Behaviour expectations use visual prompts.	Ready, Respectful, Safe icons.
Visual prompts support memory retrieval.	Timelines, graphic organisers and knowledge organisers.

4.2 Autism-Friendly Classrooms

To support pupils with ASD and sensory needs:

Expectation	Purpose
Classroom layouts remain predictable and consistent.	Supports emotional security and routine.
Visual clutter is minimised.	Supports concentration and sensory regulation.
Displays are purposeful and linked to current learning.	Improves accessibility.
Quiet or low-distraction workspace available where needed.	Supports attention and sensory needs.
Individual visual supports readily accessible.	Promotes independence.
Resources are clearly labelled and organised.	Supports self-help skills.
Adaptive resources available without adult support.	Reduces learned dependency.
Assistive technology available where appropriate.	Improves access to learning.

4.3 Supporting Speech and Language

Given the prevalence of communication needs across school, classrooms should:

- Display high-quality vocabulary.
- Use visual prompts.
- Include communication-friendly working walls.
- Support structured discussion.
- Use talk partners.
- Promote oracy.
- Allow processing time.
- Use dual coding strategies consistently.

5. SUPPORTING EAL LEARNERS

The environment should reduce language barriers whilst developing English language acquisition.

Visual Support

Every classroom should include:

- Visual timetables.
- Visual instructions.
- Picture-supported vocabulary.
- Modelled examples.
- Dual coding.

Vocabulary-Rich Environments

Classrooms should provide:

- Subject-specific vocabulary.
- Ambitious language displays.
- Speaking frames.
- Sentence stems.
- Reading vocabulary.

Celebrating Diversity

Displays should:

- Reflect the diversity of the school community.
- Celebrate different cultures.
- Promote inclusion.
- Encourage belonging.

Where appropriate classrooms may include:

- Multilingual welcome displays.
- Maps.
- Cultural displays.
- Home language resources.

Oracy-Friendly Classrooms

Teachers should promote talk through:

- Talk partners.
- Discussion prompts.
- Collaborative learning.
- Vocabulary mats.
- Structured speaking opportunities.

6. REGULATION, WELLBEING AND SEND SUPPORT

Woodland Primary Academy adopts a proactive approach to emotional regulation and wellbeing. Regulation tools should be used as learning resources rather than rewards.

Expectation	Provision
Regulation resources available in classrooms.	Wobble cushions, sensory tools, writing slopes and timers.
Resources accessible throughout the day.	Available without requiring adult permission unless individual risk assessments dictate otherwise.
Calm regulation space available where appropriate.	Supports readiness to learn.
Emotional literacy resources displayed.	Zones of Regulation, Colour Monster or equivalent.
Ear defenders available where required.	Supports sensory needs.
Visual countdowns and timers available.	Supports organisation and transitions.
Positive Education Resources	Focusing techniques, Two Wolves, Inner Critic, What makes a good Apology

7. PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE

Pupils should be able to access support without relying on adults wherever possible.

Teachers should ensure:

Feature	Expectation
Resources	Accessible
Labelling	Clear and consistent
Support materials	Easy to locate
Vocabulary resources	Available
Equipment	Organised
Learning aids	Accessible independently
Assistive technology	Available where required

8. DISPLAY EXPECTATIONS

Hessian Backing

To provide a calm and consistent environment:

All classroom display boards will use hessian backing.

To promote consistency and reduce visual distraction, all display boards across school will use hessian backing.

Benefit	Impact
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Reduced visual overload.	Supports pupils with ASD and sensory needs.
Improved readability.	Makes learning more accessible.
Consistency across school.	Creates a calm and purposeful environment.
Enhanced presentation of pupil work.	Promotes ownership and pride.

Working Walls

Every classroom should maintain effective working walls.

Working walls should include:

- ✓ Current learning
- ✓ Worked examples
- ✓ Models
- ✓ Vocabulary
- ✓ Visual representations
- ✓ Pupil contributions
- ✓ Retrieval opportunities
- ✓ Scaffolds

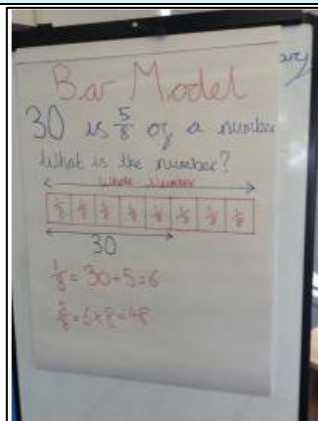
Working walls should be referred to during teaching and updated regularly.

Working Walls: 4 ways to keep it manageable and useful

1. Include models from current learning

Modelled examples from the previous lesson or earlier in the lesson can be used as a point of reference to support children's working memory and reduce cognitive load so that they don't have to hold everything in their heads at once. They are also a helpful tool in daily / weekly / monthly review.

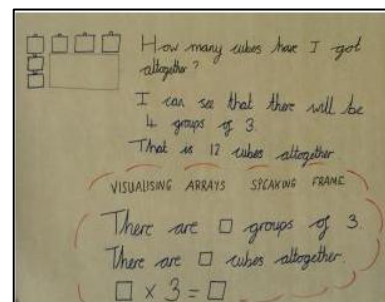
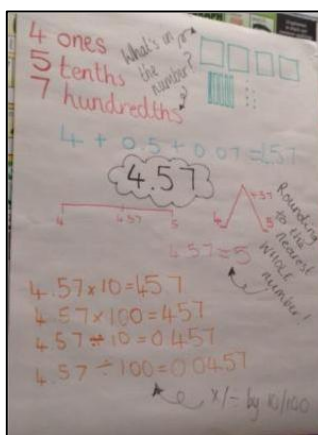
Making sure the wall is easy to navigate and not too cluttered is important – more is not always better. A clear example from recent modelling can be extremely helpful to children.

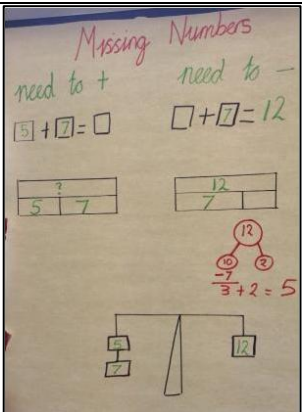
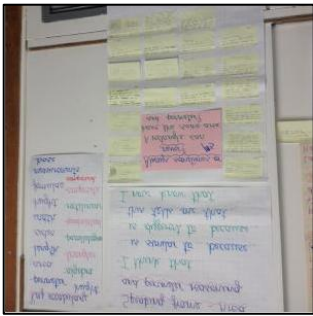


2. Include key vocabulary

In the first picture, this class were beginning to explore how base-10 equipment could be used to support with understanding decimal place value and magnitude. The children were using the physical equipment and the teacher was recording the key language being used alongside a pictorial representation.

In the second picture, with part of the array hidden, the children considered the question. Following a discussion, the teacher recorded their thinking and included language relating to equal parts and the whole. A speaking frame to allow



children to explain their resulting exploration was then left on the working wall for them to use should they wish.		
3. Interact with the wall while teaching We need to teach pupils how to use the contents of our working walls. If we sometimes teach from or at the wall, and point out useful information and prompts, demonstrating how we might use the wall ourselves by reviewing vocabulary and modelled examples, then pupils are more likely to use it as an aid. Focusing children's attention on specific parts of the working wall when relevant, through a 'what's the same and what's different?' discussion, for example, will enable them to make connections and build on previous learning.		
4. Promote deeper thinking During a sequence of learning about the relationships between perimeter and area, this working wall was used as a way for Year 6 children to develop and refine their thinking. Each child responded on a sticky note in their own way: some through written explanation; some through examples; some through diagrams and some through generalisations. The teacher was then able to pull out any misconceptions, e.g. around the relationship between a square and a rectangle, to discuss later as a group or class		

Features of Effective Displays

Principle	Expectation
Viewing Distance	Text visible to learners
Structure	Clear layout
Signals	Key information highlighted
Space	White space used effectively
Dual Coding	Visuals support text
Content	Quality over quantity

9. STATUTORY AND WHOLE SCHOOL DISPLAYS

Every classroom must display:

- ✓ British Values
- ✓ School Values
- ✓ Class Charter or Expectations
- ✓ Maths, English and reading working walls
- ✓ Monster phonics sounds in EYFS and KS1
- ✓ Spelling and Grammasaurus Display
- ✓ Availability of Learning Resources

- ✓ Equality and Inclusion messages
- ✓ Protected Characteristics (age appropriate)
- ✓ Wellbeing information

British Values displays should support understanding of:

Democracy

At Woodland Primary Academy

Democracy means everyone has a say and our opinions matter.

We are Ready Respectful Safe

Your voice makes a difference!

We listen

We listen to other people's ideas and opinions, even if they are different to our own.

We have a say

We have opportunities to share our ideas, for example through school council, pupil voice, class discussions and surveys.

We make choices

We help to make decisions about our school, such as our learning, activities and school improvements.

We take part

We take part in votes, surveys and discussions in school.

We respect the result

We understand that sometimes we might not get our own way, but we respect the decision.

We work together

We listen, share ideas and work together to make our school an even better place.

We see democracy in everyday school life

Choosing activities, Suggesting clubs, Discussing important topics, Helping our school community.

We learn about democracy in Britain and around the world and how it helps to keep people safe and fair.

"Different ideas make a brighter, stronger Woodland."

This links to our Woodland values: Kindness, Curiosity, Responsibility, Respectful, Resilience.

Different Together, Stronger Always

Rule of Law

At Woodland Primary Academy

The rule of law means we all follow the same rules and understand that rules help to keep us safe, fair and happy.

We are Ready Respectful Safe

Rules help us all to learn together!

We follow school rules

Our School Rules
Be Ready
Be Respectful
Be Safe

We all follow the same rules so that everyone can learn, play and feel safe at school.

Rules keep us safe

Rules help to keep us safe in school, at home and in the wider community.

We understand consequences

Action = Consequence

We know that if we make the wrong choice, there may be a consequence. This helps us to make better choices in the future.

Rules are fair

The same rules apply to everyone. This helps to make our school a fair and kind place for all.

We respect the law

We follow the law in our school and in the wider community. Laws help to keep people safe and ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

We make the right choices

Right choice
Wrong choice

We try to make the right choices, even when it's hard. We know that rules and laws are there to help us.

The rule of law in everyday life

Road safety, Local council, Police keep us safe, Laws protect everyone.

We see the rule of law in our local community, in Britain and around the world. It helps to keep people safe, fair and happy.

"Rules help us to live, learn and succeed together."

This links to our Woodland values: Kindness, Curiosity, Responsibility, Respectful, Resilience.

Different Together, Stronger Always

Individual Liberty

At Woodland Primary Academy

Individual liberty means we can be ourselves and make our own choices, while still being kind and respectful to others.

We are Ready Respectful Safe

BE YOURSELF
MAKE CHOICES
FOLLOW YOUR INTERESTS

We are our own unique selves

We are all different and that is what makes our school special. We are proud to be ourselves and celebrate what makes each of us unique.

We can make choices

We can make choices about our learning, the activities we take part in and the things that interest us.

We can follow our interests

We have opportunities to try new things and explore our talents, hobbies and ideas.

We can share our opinions

We can share our ideas and views in class, through school council, pupil voice and discussions. Our opinions matter.

We have the confidence to be ourselves

I CAN DO IT!

We are encouraged to be confident, to have a go and to believe in ourselves. We can make our own choices and learn from our mistakes.

We respect the choices of others

We understand that everyone has the right to make their own choices, and we respect the differences between people.

This links to our Woodland values: Kindness, Curiosity, Responsibility, Respectful, Resilience.

Different Together, Stronger Always

Mutual Respect

At Woodland Primary Academy

Mutual respect means we value and respect everyone in our school and wider community, and we treat each other fairly.

We are Ready Respectful Safe

We are kind and considerate

We think about how our words and actions might make others feel and we choose to be kind.

We listen to and value different ideas

It's good to hear different views!

We listen to others, even when they have different opinions to our own. We recognise that everyone's ideas are important.

We show respect for differences

We respect everyone, no matter their race, religion, culture, background, gender, disability or family. We celebrate what makes each of us unique.

We use polite and positive language

Please, Thank you, Excuse me

We use kind and respectful words and listen when others are speaking.

We look after our school environment

We respect our school, our resources and the places we learn and play so that everyone can enjoy them.

We respect people in our community

We show respect to all adults and children in our school and wider community, including visitors and people who help us.

We treat others how we would like to be treated

We think about how we would feel and try to treat others in the same way.

We work and play together

We include others, support each other and work as a team. We know that we are stronger together.

We celebrate respect

Respect makes our school a happier place!

This links to our Woodland values: Kindness, Curiosity, Responsibility, Respectful, Resilience.

Different Together, Stronger Always

10. READING ENVIRONMENTS

 WASHACRE PRIMARY SCHOOL READING ENVIRONMENT MONITORING CHECKLIST			
CLASS		DEFINITION OF 'A RANGE OF TEXTS'	
READING ENVIRONMENT		A core collection of books that support learning to read and provide a range of genres, degrees of challenge and interest, and books from diverse cultures, including:	
BOOK AREA	✓/✗	KS1	KS2
A carpeted area.		• Picture books • Poetry • Plays • Information books • Traditional tales from a range of cultures • Humorous books and puzzle books • Comics and magazines • Children's own published texts • Dual language texts. • Online audio stories e.g. Get Epic, Tonie Boxes	• Picture books • Novels – different genres and degrees of challenge, books for personal reading, copies of class texts • Poetry – anthologies and single poet collections, humorous and serious, poetry from diverse cultures • Plays • Information books linked to class topics and children's interest • Traditional tales, myths and legends from diverse cultures • Humorous books and puzzle books • Comics, magazines and newspapers • Children's own published texts • Online audio stories e.g. Get Epic
Cushions/plants/drapes used to make area attractive.			
Posters inviting children to read.			
Floor book available of children's responses to texts			
BOOKS			
Accessible, organised and labelled. (With the involvement of children from Y3 upwards.)			
Attractively displayed (Neat and tidy, books on book stands, as many books as possible forward facing, organised by genre, magazines/newspapers in racks etc.)			
DISPLAYS OF BOOKS			
Current class reading book displayed. (See Literature Spine / Books for Topics.)			
Literature Spine books covered evident on display.			
Books related to class topic on display.			
Other displays. (Book recommendations from pupils, authors/genres/themes, current books children are reading, evidence of reading around the curriculum.)			
RANGE OF TEXTS			
A core collection of books that provide a range of genres.			
WORKING WALL (teaching prompts)			
Include the skills of a reader relevant to age group from Gramasaurus			
Include What Makes a Good Reader			

APPENDIX 1

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT MONITORING CHECKLIST

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Area	Yes	No	Comments
Visual timetable displayed	☐	☐	

Area	Yes	No	Comments
Working walls current	☐	☐	
Vocabulary displayed	☐	☐	
Dual coding evident	☐	☐	
Resources labelled	☐	☐	
Reading area present	☐	☐	
Reading area attractive	☐	☐	
British Values displayed	☐	☐	
School Values displayed	☐	☐	
Regulation resources available	☐	☐	
Wobble cushions accessible	☐	☐	
Calm environment maintained	☐	☐	
Hessian backing used	☐	☐	
Pupil work displayed	☐	☐	
EAL support evident	☐	☐	
Communication-friendly supports visible	☐	☐	
Autism-friendly principles evident	☐	☐	
Diversity represented positively	☐	☐	
Independence promoted	☐	☐	
Learning supports accessible	☐	☐	

Strengths

Areas for Development

APPENDIX 2

READING ENVIRONMENT MONITORING CHECKLIST

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

Feature	Yes	No	Comments
Dedicated reading area	☐	☐	
Comfortable seating	☐	☐	
Cushions available	☐	☐	
Books accessible	☐	☐	
Books organised	☐	☐	
Current class text displayed	☐	☐	
Literature Spine represented	☐	☐	
Pupil recommendations displayed	☐	☐	
Reading responses displayed	☐	☐	
Diverse range of texts	☐	☐	
Fiction available	☐	☐	
Non-fiction available	☐	☐	
Poetry available	☐	☐	
Reading for pleasure promoted	☐	☐	
Author focus visible	☐	☐	
Books reflect diversity	☐	☐	

Strengths

Areas for Development

APPENDIX 3

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM AUDIT

Inclusion Feature	RAG Rating	Comments
Visual timetable	Red / Amber / Green	
Communication-friendly environment	Red / Amber / Green	
Vocabulary supports	Red / Amber / Green	
Widgit/visual supports	Red / Amber / Green	
Regulation provision	Red / Amber / Green	
Wobble cushions available	Red / Amber / Green	
Sensory support available	Red / Amber / Green	
Reading area inclusive	Red / Amber / Green	
Diverse representation	Red / Amber / Green	
EAL support evident	Red / Amber / Green	
Autism-friendly practice evident	Red / Amber / Green	
Independence promoted	Red / Amber / Green	
British Values displayed	Red / Amber / Green	
Protective characteristics displayed	Red / Amber / Green	

Priority Actions

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Approved by: Governing Board

Policy Lead: Headteacher

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review: Autumn 2027