

Curriculum Intent: Understanding the World (KS2–KS4)

At Woodlands the Understanding the World curriculum is designed to ignite curiosity, foster a sense of belonging, and empower learners to make sense of their environment, community, and the wider world. Through a carefully structured and nurturing approach, we aim to build learners' knowledge, skills, and confidence across geography, history, science, and cultural understanding, while embedding social and emotional development at the heart of learning.

Our Intent is to:

- Develop Curiosity and Engagement

Inspire learners to ask questions, explore their surroundings, and engage with real-world issues through hands-on, experiential learning that is meaningful and accessible.

- Build Knowledge and Understanding

Provide a progressive and coherent curriculum that builds foundational knowledge in science, history, geography, and cultural awareness, adapted to individual learning needs and emotional readiness.

- Promote Personal and Social Growth

Use the world around us as a context for developing empathy, resilience, and a sense of responsibility, helping learners understand their place in society and the impact they can have.

- Support Communication and Thinking Skills

Encourage learners to express their ideas, reflect on their experiences, and develop critical thinking through discussion, storytelling, investigation, and creative expression.

- Foster Independence and Life Skills

Equip learners with practical knowledge and skills that prepare them for adulthood, including environmental awareness, digital literacy, and understanding of current events and global citizenship.

- Celebrate Diversity and Inclusion

Promote respect for different cultures, beliefs, and ways of life, helping learners appreciate diversity and develop a strong sense of identity and community.

Specific Learning Outcomes

Key Stage 2 (Ages 9–11)

Science

- Identify and describe basic life processes in animals and plants.
- Explore materials and their properties through hands-on experiments.
- Observe seasonal changes and weather patterns.
- Ask simple scientific questions and use observations to suggest answers.

Geography

- Name and locate the continents, oceans, and countries of the UK.
- Use simple maps, globes, and digital tools to explore places.
- Understand basic human and physical features (e.g., rivers, cities).
- Begin to explore environmental issues like recycling and pollution.

History

- Develop a sense of chronology using timelines and stories.
- Learn about significant historical figures and events (e.g., Florence Nightingale, World War II).
- Compare aspects of life in different historical periods.
- Begin to understand cause and effect in historical contexts.

Cultural Understanding

- Recognise similarities and differences between cultures and traditions.
- Explore key festivals and celebrations from different religions.
- Begin to understand the concept of fairness and respect for others.

Key Stage 3 (Ages 11–14)

Science

- Investigate forces, energy, and simple chemical reactions.
- Explore ecosystems, food chains, and the impact of humans on nature.
- Develop skills in planning and conducting fair tests.
- Use scientific vocabulary to describe findings and draw conclusions.

Geography

- Understand how landscapes are formed (e.g., rivers, mountains, coasts).
- Explore global issues such as climate change, deforestation, and water scarcity.
- Use maps, atlases, and digital tools to compare regions and countries.
- Study local geography and how it affects daily life.

History

- Explore key periods such as the Romans, Tudors, and Industrial Revolution.
- Understand the impact of historical events on modern society.
- Develop empathy through exploring personal stories from the past.
- Use sources to ask and answer historical questions.

Cultural Understanding

- Explore identity, belonging, and community.
- Learn about human rights and responsibilities.
- Understand the importance of tolerance and inclusion.
- Discuss current events in a safe and supportive environment.

Key Stage 4 (Ages 14–16)

Science

- Apply scientific knowledge to real-life contexts (e.g., health, energy use).
- Explore genetics, evolution, and environmental sustainability.
- Develop skills in data collection, analysis, and presentation.
- Prepare for Entry Level or Functional Skills Science qualifications where appropriate.

Geography

- Investigate global interdependence (e.g., trade, migration, tourism).
- Study urbanisation, population growth, and resource management.
- Evaluate human impact on the environment and explore solutions.
- Use fieldwork and digital mapping to explore local and global issues.

History

- Analyse key historical themes such as conflict, power, and social change.

- Explore 20th-century history including civil rights, world wars, and social reform.
- Develop critical thinking through evaluating sources and perspectives.
- Prepare for Entry Level or Functional Skills History qualifications where appropriate.

Cultural Understanding

- Reflect on personal values and beliefs in relation to others.
- Explore global citizenship and ethical issues (e.g., poverty, justice).
- Engage in community projects or social action initiatives.
- Develop confidence in expressing opinions and respecting others' views.

Intended Impact

Our Understanding the World curriculum is designed to have a transformative impact on learners' lives by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to thrive both within and beyond the classroom. Through a nurturing, inclusive, and experiential approach, we aim to ensure that all learners—regardless of their starting points—develop a deeper awareness of themselves, their communities, and the wider world.

The intended impact of our curriculum is that learners will:

- Develop a secure sense of identity and belonging, understanding their place in the world and how they can contribute positively to society.
- Gain essential knowledge and skills in science, geography, history, and cultural understanding, enabling them to access further learning, qualifications, and future opportunities.
- Demonstrate curiosity, confidence, and independence in exploring the world around them, asking questions, and making informed decisions.
- Show increased emotional literacy and empathy, using their understanding of people, places, and events to build respectful relationships and navigate social situations.
- Apply practical life skills such as environmental awareness, digital literacy, and critical thinking in real-world contexts, preparing them for adulthood and independent living.
- Engage meaningfully with current events and global issues, developing a sense of responsibility and active citizenship.
- Achieve personal progress and success, measured not only through academic outcomes but also through improved self-esteem, resilience, and readiness for life beyond school.