



Low Hall Nursery School SEF 2024-25

Our visions and values:

1. Protecting children's right to play, learn and have a voice
2. Keeping parents involved in children's development
3. Governors and staff leading the way on quality
4. Working partnership with health professionals and schools
5. Being ethical, respectful and tolerant

Working together for all our children

Self-Evaluation (SEF) Report Low Hall Nursery School

At Low Hall Nursery School, we have created a simpler version of our SEF for our staff, governors and families to see easily how we accurately assess our strengths and weaknesses. In this document we set out how well we think we are doing, and how we plan to improve to make ourselves even better including actions that relate to our School Development Plan (SDP). In the SEF we use the same criteria and grades to describe our achievements as Ofsted use. * = a heading that Ofsted will award a grade to, and like Ofsted we now no longer give an overall rating, but by section.

Context

Low Hall Nursery School provides an inclusive education for 2-4 year olds. Our 2 year olds receive the FEEE (Free Early Education Entitlement) of 15 hours. Our 3-4 provision is mixed, with some children receiving flexible day care from 8am-6pm for 48 weeks of the year, others receiving 30 hours FEEE term time, and part time children with the universal 15 hours FEEE. We also offer afterschool care for children from ages 3-8 years old and holiday clubs at our Federated Nursery School, Church Hill, for the same age group. We currently have 68 children on roll including; 43 3 and 4 year olds (28 FEEE 15 hours, 15 FEE 30 hour) 25 two year olds (17 FEEE low income, 8 FEEE working one unfunded). After our recent restructure we have the capacity to provide 80 places or 40 full-time-equivalent places, reducing from 60 full time places. We hope that this will support the school's finances. Unfortunately, Waltham Forest maintained nursery schools get the lowest MNS top up in London, so we have received support from Waltham Forest as a School Facing Financial Challenge (SFFC). We have benefitted this financial year from an increase in this top up, and an increase in two year old funding, however staffing costs have also risen substantially. Our intake changes regularly due to the number of families living in temporary accommodation who are moved out of borough with very little notice. Our day care provision has been greatly affected by other local nurseries offering the 30 hour FEEE, many who have reported a drop in the number to three year olds on their waiting lists. To compensate for this we have increased the number of two year olds we have on sit so that we do not need to carry out a restructure.

Low Hall Nursery School sits in highly-populated, highly-deprived wards with high levels of unemployment. The number of households where no one speaks English as their first language is high in comparison to the LBWF and National averages. During the pandemic we regularly delivered food to 17 families through a partnership with a local primary school, using our school voluntary funds to pay for the food. We also regularly refer a number of families to food bank and Early Help to support them when they are experiencing the effects of poverty. Housing is highly priced, resulting in the majority of our families living privately-rented or council-owned accommodation. In our current cohort, most children on roll at the Nursery School live in the St James Street, Markhouse, High Street and Lea Bridge wards of Waltham Forest, which are densely populated with people from diversely-mixed socio-economic backgrounds. Our families come from a diverse mix of backgrounds. We have a number of Asylum Seeking families who live in hotels attending our two nursery schools

Families attending Low Hall Nursery are from one or more of 20 unique ethnicities, speak 1 or more of 27 different languages. The most widely-spoken language in our family's homes is English, followed by Urdu, Arabic and Albanian. **We have 12 of our total cohort (6 two year olds and 6 three year olds) who qualify for EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium) in our 2024-25 cohort,** however we have a high proportion of low-income families who earn less than £16k per household but more than £7.5k that would qualify them for FSM. We also have many of families who are just earning 16k and qualify for the 30 hours who need regular support. We have worked with Early Help to support this group with food referrals and further support where needed. This reflects the impact that the pandemic and cost of living crisis has had on this community, and the number of children living in poverty. In the last year we have had book and toy donations to support our families as they find the cost of living crisis challenging as part of our Give initiative from our 5 Pillars of Wellbeing planning.



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Progress since last Ofsted inspection

During our last short, section 5 inspection we received an 'Outstanding' rating in October 2023.

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/20/103027>

*We have continued to develop our Curricular Goals, publishing a 4th draft with Two Year old Goals. We now report to our families termly using our Curricular Goals reporting system. We are currently working on a 5th draft with Neurodivergent, non-speaking statements running alongside our goals.

*We continue to share our knowledge and experience both in the borough of Waltham Forest and beyond.

*We have high aspirations for all our children and welcoming high numbers of children with SEND supporting them before they start primary school, applying for high numbers of EHC plans.

*We continue to work in partnership with our federated Nursery School, Church Hill.

*We developed play and stay sessions for children on the SACC pathway with Waltham Forest.

*We have developed Forest School.

*We rolled out our We Play initiative (high quality toys and play support for low income families) to many other setting in LBWF

*We continue to develop training for Waltham Forest and The North East London Stronger Practice Hub.

*We work as part of a larger soft federation in the West Walthamstow Partnership to deliver wider training for staff, moderation and strategy development, including providing a curriculum for nursery provisions in Primary Schools.

*We have joined the Haringey Educational Partnership (HEP) for School Improvement Partnership work.

*We have partnered with the William Morris Galley (WMG) to offer a monthly play session to our lowest income families. We have also partnered with the Chicken Shed Theatre Company who have come to both schools to provide theatre sessions for the children.

*We continue to partner with Whale Song who provide music therapy for our children on a weekly basis.

*We have become a Waltham Forest Centre of Excellence with funded provision based places.

*We have become an IQM Centre of Excellence (achieved Gold Mark).

*We have developed our building to be more inclusive and consider younger children, including a sleep space and have new windows and doors throughout the building.

*We have welcomed 2 year olds from working families for 15 hours, developing a sleep space so that they can stay for longer hours.



***Quality of education - We judge this to be outstanding**

In the academic year 21-22 we developed our Curricular Goals in line with the Development Matters 2021 document, <https://www.fans.waltham.sch.uk/pedagogy> this has been developed by the FANS teams across both our schools. We have created a simple assessment system alongside this to reduce staff work load. We are currently writing our 5th draft of this document to include non-speaking children into the heart of this document. We are currently supporting 2 other settings to embed our curricular goals into their primary school nurseries, 1 of these schools has bought a bespoke version of our curriculum which we have co-authored.

We have a very experienced highly reflective staff team who constantly strive to enhance and adapt planning and teaching methods. We champion story and a love for books through a thorough reading curriculum which partners early phonics, shared stories and Tales Toolkit, a TSA storytelling initiative, embedding storytelling into our curriculum. Teaching is highly effective; staff work well as a team, sharing their expertise and reflecting on their own practice. We have developed a clear program for the teaching of reading using Tales Toolkit and name cards. All staff have developed their use of Tales Toolkit over the previous 6 years and it is embedded into practice. Our name systems offer opportunity for children to read their own names and the names of their friends leading to recognition, their name being their first 'high frequency word', and they will also form the basis of our Phase One Phonics teaching during story time sessions. These are defined clearly in our curricular goals. We build very good relationships with parents and carers to ensure all children make progress from their starting points and continue to learn and develop at home. All staff have high expectations of all children in all areas of learning and use every opportunity to encourage learning, for instance snack times where children have the opportunity to build personal and mathematical skills. We provide a rich and varied curriculum in nursery and through experiences beyond our setting to enhance our children's experiences of the world. Our assistant headteacher has developed our Forest School programme on site.

Low Hall Nursery School welcomes all children. As a result of this our provision for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is highly thought of by parents and agencies that work with us in partnership to ensure that children get the very best start in life. Many of our two year old children come with undiagnosed special educational needs and disabilities. We work hard with families and agencies to support these children. ***Our 2023-24 intake 25 children (25%) received SEND support whether it is for complex learning difficulties, social and communication difficulties, complex medical needs or delayed speech. We are currently receiving funding for 9 children through EHC or SENIF funding. This will increase during the academic year as more applications are made, and we expect the number to be similar to last year's cohort with 9* children receiving funding, we currently have 1 child with EHC plan, at a level 5.** Waltham Forest have allocated funding for 8 children though our Centre of Excellence places to ensure that the most complex children have funding from the beginning of the year. We are developing this model with LBWF so that complex children are allocated places in the right nursery for their level of need.

As we have such high numbers, Waltham Forest has recognised that, due to our higher cost being a Maintained Nursery School, that to remain inclusive we must have some financial support to retain our team. We have started to develop Centres of Excellence to work in partnership WF Early Years SEND Pathway and NELFT to ensure children with complex SEND have the best support. We work in partnership with many agencies to support these families including SLT, school nursing team, the Early Help team and Waltham Forest SEND team to support these children as much as we can. Our SENDco is an experienced teacher. Last year she supported her counterpart at Church Hill as they completed the National SENDco Award. Waltham Forest have recognised our SEND practice is very successful and approached us to deliver SEND stay and play sessions and possibly offer Provision places. This year we have had training from the Autism Education Trust to further our use of communication boards for all children as part of our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) and a speech and language therapist to deliver Colourful Semantics.

SDP: 1. Develop idea with WF team to create a cycle of admissions for children who will probably need a Special School provision from Reception onwards who are known to health service

2. To establish what the Centre of Excellence looks like and how it functions for children, families and staff

Learn- Connect families with free learning opportunities in Waltham Forest



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***The behaviour and attitudes: - We judge this to be outstanding**

Our two and three year old groups have opportunities to play together during the school day. Our two year olds settle very quickly with the support of their key person and develop very good dispositions for learning and behaviour through our team of experienced practitioners, and the excellent model that our 3 and 4 year olds provide for them. This intake of children from low income families need support to narrow the gap to ensure they leave at a national average for their age group. The majority of these children make very good progress and do so. With expert support our children become calm, confident, co-operative and very engaged with learning. Our children feel safe, secure and make very good progress in the Prime Areas. Families report to us that a main strength of our practice is their children's wellbeing, emphasised through parents' and carers' exit statements and surveys. They praise our staff for their caring attitude and relationships with children.

The safeguarding of children is our greatest priority and we ensure that our practice is up to date through training. We respond quickly to complaints or issues that arise, learning from them and adapting our practice where necessary. This year our EHT is sitting on the London Safeguarding Children Partnership, to represent Waltham Forest Early Years sector.

We have developed our Curricular Goals to ensure that behaviour, resilience and conflict resolution are a core value in our curriculum intent. We have had a focus over the last three years to develop our staff's creative practice thorough using a wide range of contemporary artists from a range of backgrounds, ensuring that at least 50% are women artists. This year we have invited sculptor Alice Wilson to work with us during our Autumn INSET and in person with the children in the spring term. Our EHT, a practicing artist, has been leading creative training to ensure that we focus on the process rather than the end product. In Spring 25 the team were introduced to the work of Veronica Ryan as a starting point to work with children. We have also developed a calendar with a year of artists, and this template will be the beginning for our FANS training encouraging Early Years settings in Waltham Forest to develop rich experiences for children with a focus on equality and diversity. As part of this project we have taken children to see the work of Rana Begum RA. We have developed wide reaching partnerships with 303 Projects in Suffolk to apply for The Freeland's Foundation Grant to extend this work across boroughs, and although not initially successful hope to develop this concept further over time.

Our EHT has been leading on creativity training with all FANS staff and we are now planning to share this practice by working with Waltham Forest settings by running art workshops with our teacher at Church Hill who has developed a 'Year of Artists' calendar to introduce the work of diverse, well known and contemporary artists to young children. We visited the work of Rana Begum last academic year. This year we will be working with contemporary sculptor Alice Wilson in partnership with 303 Projects, Suffolk; The Chicken Shed Theatre Company to develop school readiness and wellbeing and The William Morris Gallery to ensure that lower income families can access the gallery and their artist in residence. Our AHT will also be visiting the Toy Library Sensory Space of the course of the academic year to get the families to sign up to this local resource.

Our Recovery Curriculum was planned by the team as we returned to school in September 2020, after many children had had a long gap in their early education. We planned this curriculum around the Prime Areas and the gaps that we would expect in children's Communication and Language. This work led to our Curricular Goals which we developed over the academic years of 21-22, 23-23 and 23-24 have a strong focus on resilience and communication to help our children most effected by COVID restrictions to make very good progress in these areas in their time with us. We are developing the representation of our non-speaking children in the heart of our curriculum.

SDP: 3. Alice Wilson INSET with staff and session in each school to develop abstract sculpture (possible visit to Temple Exhibition) Autumn, Spring and summer term 24-25. Veronica Ryan INSET January 2025

4. Ali develop Artist calendar across federation sharing practice through job swaps September 24-July 25

Equality objectives: Take note - Mindfulness sessions for families



Personal development: - We judge this to be outstanding

We create a rich environment which stimulates a sense of wonder. Our learning environment incorporates a variety of multicultural resources, fabrics and objects to help children explore their own culture and that of their peers. We celebrate our identities and cultures during our International Day and with other events throughout the year. Children are proud of their cultural backgrounds and spiritual beliefs, and are accepting of others. This helps to build greater understanding of what we have in common with each other. Children develop the nursery rules where we support children to voice their issues and resolve them, building a sense of justice and democracy. Staff model language to help our youngest children understand that they can say if they don't like something, ensuring that all children are gentle.

Our AHT has worked as a mentor with the North East London Stronger Practice Hub to deliver The Conversation Project. She continues to deliver and support nursery settings on phase two of the conversation project and is also the Evidence Lead in Education for the SPH. She is disseminating FANS visions and value to a greater audience through these projects.

Tales Toolkit has impacted on the children's own conflict resolution: they know that if there is a problem, there can also be a resolution! Children are kind and learn through their time here how to talk to one another respectfully and listen to what the other person is saying. Our Key Person system creates a warm, welcoming start to their time at Low Hall. Parents tell us that the Key Person relationship is vital to their child's emotional development, describing Low Hall as more than a nursery, as a family. We have supported the implementation of Tales Toolkit with our local partners who are using our Curricular Goals. Our EHT is working with Tales Toolkit to support their wider network, through an Education Endowment Foundation, speaking at network sessions.

Our Equality Objectives help us to support all families, based on the 5 Pillars of Wellbeing, a clear focus on children's personal development celebrating the rich diversity of our local community and widening children's experiences beyond their local environment. Our garden and school pets teach children how to be caring on a daily basis and regular bird watching, building a relationship with the natural world every day. We invite artists from a range of genres to work with our children at nursery to ensure all children access the arts. We have championed quality play at home for all families through our We Play project, ensuring that cultural capital begins in the home through equity of toys in the home. We are developing further opportunities for cultural capital for the whole family through our project with The William Morris Gallery commencing in October 2024.

We are currently working with the West Walthamstow Partnership (WWP) of 6 maintained schools on a wellbeing project to ensure that we can share our best practice and practitioners across our schools. The EHT has supported the Early Years in 2 of these primary schools in the form of a review of teaching and learning. During lockdown we developed our use of online communication with families through Class Dojo. The team created videos (singing, phonics, reading stories, and cookery) to inspire home learning and also talked to their key families directly through this platform. We have developed this further since September 2020 using Class Dojo to promote local groups, evidence children's learning and engage with families at home. We also represent early years settings through collaborative partnerships by supporting the work of: The Stronger Practice Hub, The Early Years Task and Finish Group, IQM Network Groups, The London Safeguarding Children Partnership, Tales Toolkit, Haringey MNS, WWP, The Learning Partnership and Schools Forum.

This academic year we are focusing on our staffing structure across the federation to ensure that we are prepared to offer 30 hours to 2 year olds from September 2025. We may need to develop an all year round provision for 2 year olds to meet our community need, but will plan to provide this at Low Hall Nursery School, to avoid making changes to our Church Hill Nursery School Play scheme that serves our community well.

SDP: 5. WF training package over three year Creativity training

6. AHT continue with Stronger Practice Hub mentoring role

7. ECERS for us and for others to develop enabling environments for Continuous provision via WWP support and School Improvement model via HEP (Haringey Education Partnership) and Haringey Early Years training consortium which Waltham Forest are buying into. MNS are to be a part of School Improvement

Equality objective: Be active - Provide information for families on local physical activities



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Leadership and management: - We judge this to be outstanding

A strength of the nursery is the hard federation, The Forest Alliance of Nursery Schools (FANS), with Church Hill Nursery School, another state maintained nursery in Walthamstow. FANS has a single leadership in the form of one governing body, executive head teacher (EHT), an assistant head teacher (AHT) and school business manager (SBM). As we have very high numbers of children who need SEND support at our schools, we have a dedicated SENDco on each site who are key to our strategic vision. Through FANS we have established a shared vision and principled approach to early childhood education. Our governors and school leadership work closely to ensure this approach is evident in policies and practice. Our joint monitoring provides evidence that we offer families expert care across the federation, working together for all our children. FANS has ensured that expertise is shared amongst staff across both sites so that high levels of training provide excellent provision for children.

Our Executive Head Teacher has been in post for six years, and after a restructure in 2020, is supported by an assistant head teacher. We now recruit staff across the federation to strengthen the links and develop working relationships further. The leadership is distributive, with the senior leadership working together to ensure excellent leadership is modelled throughout our structure of staff, ensuring that all staff have opportunities to lead and develop professionally. Across the federation our staff share a clear vision, working together for all our children. We believe that all children can achieve and do well, ensuring they have the very best start in life. Our Governing Body plays a vital part in this leadership structure, challenging us and helping us to develop our practice. This year our governing body leaders will develop our supervision practice through training with a local safeguarding partnership, and support SLT with this vital process. Over the last two years we have responded to staff concerns about work load by creating a simpler form of assessment. Our SENDco work collaboratively, this year developing provision places, commissioned by WF for children with complex needs, SEND visiting days and are applying for the Inclusion Quality Mark across FANS.

Strong practice is disseminated beyond the school through our development of the FANS training package with LBWF, which this year we are running remotely. We are also sitting on LBWF strategic boards including: Schools Forum, SENIF panel, Early Years Task and Finish Group, The Learning Partnership and the SEND funding Task and Finish group. Our AHT is a mentor for the North East London Stronger Practice Hub. We are also part of a local school's soft federation, West Walthamstow Partnership working with two secondary and three primary schools. This year we are supporting one of those schools with their curriculum development.

Our Executive Head has created a partnership between Tales Toolkit, Groundswell Arts and the LBWF training lead to ensure that training offers our partners in other early years settings a wide range of expertise over the last three years. Parents of children with SEND are equal partners in the development of support plans. We have enjoyed working with Waltham forest through an Intergenerational project, called We are Friends, where we have partnered with two local care homes and with WF SEND through the Play Together Learn Together groups run at both schools for children not attending nursery on the SACC clinic pathway for Autism diagnosis'. This academic year we have partnered with The Chicken Shed Theatre company, William Morris Gallery, Haringey Education Partnership (HEP), Walthamstow West Partnership (WWP) and LBWF Early Years Training to ensure that we work collaboratively both in our own borough and beyond.

SDP: 8. Plan extension of two year hours over this academic year including admission changes. 30 hour provision for September 25 with consideration for wrap around care for this group. We are restricted by size. If we were to consider younger children or larger groups of two year old's we will need to extend. We have raised this with Waltham Forest through our governors meetings.

Equality objective: Give - Plan termly charitable giving