

# CASE STUDY

## Focus on Curriculum

Mitch Cole, Nursery Manager at Woodland House Nursery, attended a Study Day at St. Paul's Nursery School, focused on curriculum. Participants had the opportunity to see how the curriculum promotes their values and pedagogy, to understand how it reflects the interests and special characteristics of their children and families, and to reflect on how it is integrated into observation, assessment and planning.

### What were the take aways from this study day?

The day highlighted how every setting is different. It was so beneficial to engage in the training with people from a variety of Early Years settings and to hear about what was working for them and what wasn't. A lot of the barriers we faced were similar but there were some real differences relating to catchment area, cohort of children, staff qualifications, general motivation, and the separation between upper management and practitioners.

I thought a lot about how to keep the children at the heart of our curriculum and how that looks different in each setting.



The learning walk was such an effective way of showing what the curriculum looked like in practice. There was real evidence of what the practitioners were teaching and what the children were learning. It felt completely embedded into practice and really encompassed what St Paul's is about. I learnt that what we are doing at Woodland is already fantastic but, with some tweaks, it could be even better.

A huge take away was that we are all in this together and, whilst Early Years has its own set of challenges, it's filled with so many determined individuals who always want to shine a light on the individual child.

What action are they taking?



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## What action are they taking?

Since the training, I have organised a curriculum day with the Nursery Manager of our sister setting, Archfield House. Whilst our two curriculums are similar, they have to differ slightly due to number of children & staff, current cohort, catchment area etc. and so discussing what I have learnt at St Paul's will help us to select what suits each setting best.

I have also created an action plan for the new year which I will use as a point of reference to see where we are on our curriculum journey and give staff enough time to assess any changes we have put in place. A big part of this plan involves creating a "Curriculum Team" with a member of staff from each base room at nursery: they will be the 'go to' for any upcoming changes, ideas, or feedback. This feels like a great way to ensure we are really listening to the staff's voice and see the immediate impact our teaching is having on the children.



## What difference is it making?

The children are already engaging in new and exciting activities and opportunities. There is a new found desire to really unpick the learning that we offer and staff are reflecting on how they are involving all children and what they could do next time. Families are seeing more evidence of learning on their child's journey and are sharing more observations from home.

With the creation of our curriculum team, even more staff will be involved in the decisions that we make at nursery and will be able to cascade down what is discussed. With a more streamlined curriculum, which is completely child centred, our staff will have a better understanding of the crucial role they play at Woodland.

## What was useful? Where to start?

- The [Bristol Early Years Curriculum Toolkit](#) answered lots of initial questions and set us up with a vision of what we wanted to get from our curriculum.
- The [Eight to Relate document](#) is really helping to pinpoint different times of the nursery day to add learning into.
- The [EEF Evidence Store](#) has further support and a [Blog](#) about what we mean by 'knowledge-rich curriculum'.
- You can read about [Curriculum Planning on Help for Early Years Providers](#).
- [Development Matters](#) is the non-statutory curriculum guidance

