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Our philosophy

Everything we do and hope to achieve at the nursery is based on trust and respect for the individual.

This principle dictates how we treat each child, parent, carer and member of staff, regardless of their position, personal background or circumstances. It supports our aim to embrace the diversity that we are blessed with in our wider community.

We will assist anyone who requires additional help, in order that they may scale the same heights as those around them, without being condescended towards. We hold elevated, yet realistic and attainable goals for all the children, helping them achieve using our set curriculum, while letting them develop according to their own personalities and learning styles.

Communication and openness are stressed at all times allowing everybody access to the knowledge they need in order to achieve all they can and best serve the needs of the children and other adults they work with.

Each member of our community has the right to feel secure in their role, understanding what is expected of them in order that they are able to develop to their own best ability, and contribute all they can to the progression of the nursery as a whole.

We will endeavour to listen to all points of view and give a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves through knowledge of the individual and careful observation. These opinions, responded to constructively, are used as the basis for continuing improvement of the care and education we provide.

We recognise that developing close personal relationships with each other helps us all work towards our common goal of helping the children grow into happy, loving and achieving little people.
Welcome to Westfield Nursery

The Nursery was established by Queen Mary in 1991, moving to the current purpose-built building in 2002. It was renamed after the Westfield Trust in 2009. The Nursery can cater for up to 65 children aged from three months to five years in five rooms. We offer full-day care between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm. This includes a core day from 8.30am to 5.30pm, which is covered in the monthly fees, and additionally charged, breakfast and twilight clubs. The Nursery does not offer half days, and the minimum attendance is two days per week.

The Nursery is closed on bank holidays, and for two weeks at Christmas. These dates are published along with two training day closures at the start of each academic year.

CCTV and Queen Mary's Security team protects the Nursery and access is solely by an automated door entry system linked to the internal office.

The Nursery meets and goes beyond Ofsted standards and copies of our most recent inspection can be found on their website under our reference number EY218414.

Admissions

There is generally a long waiting list for places at the Nursery so early application is advised (for which there is no fee), and you can apply as soon as you have a due date for the birth of your child.

Once you have applied you are welcome to contact the deputy manager who can arrange a visit which takes place at 9.30am so you can see the Nursery in action. For more information (including current fees) or to arrange a visit please contact us at nursery@qmul.ac.uk or on 020 7882 2782.

Nursery management

Our Early Years Manager, Max Moorcock has a degree in Child and Family Studies, as well as Early Years Professional Status. He joined the nursery in 2008, having worked in the field since 1991.

The Nursery’s Deputy Early Years Manager, Karen Gravell has a level four qualification as well as a certificate in supervisory management. She joined the nursery in 2002 and has worked with the under fives since 1997.

Each room has a Senior Early Years Practitioner who is responsible for overseeing that standards are maintained.

Staff and the key person system

We believe that having a skilled, experienced and qualified staff team is at the heart of providing high-quality care. We work hard to ensure we provide a happy, motivated and committed group of individuals. All our practitioners already have, or are working towards a childcare qualification and are encouraged to receive training to add to their skills, while receiving regular supervisions to aid their personal and professional development.

The Nursery applies the key person approach which ensures consistent care and emotional support for you and your child by an individual staff member.

The children are cared for by all the members of their room’s team, but will build a special bond with their key person particularly during their settling-in period.

Your key person will invite you to attend quarterly meetings in order that you can discuss your child’s development.

The Nursery also employs “ratio sustainers” who are full-time members of the team who maintain consistent care when others are on leave.

Settling-in

Once you are offered a nursery place you will receive all the paperwork that we require and details about your child’s settling-in process.

The Nursery offers informal home visits or stay and play sessions to children and parents one month before they settle into nursery.

We are aware that starting nursery can be an anxious time for both you and your child, as well as coming into a new environment which you are not used to, which is why we would like to visit you in your home environment where you are both comfortable, happy and secure.

The Nursery gives children a full week to settle in (even if they are part time) before their start date and for this there is no charge. As the week progresses your child will spend longer periods of time in the Nursery without you, which your key person will discuss and agree with you.

Prior to your settling-in week we do ask you to start to prepare your child by leaving them with other familiar people, sleeping with background noise present and in their own bed, and for older children talking about the Nursery and trying foods from the Nursery menu of which you will receive a copy.
Laura, Arthur’s mum

The settling-in week is a nerve-wracking time for parents. You are leaving the most precious thing you have with people you don't know! It doesn't get more stressful than that! However, the staff were very good at allaying our fears and anxieties. They take time to listen and understand your concerns.

I didn't think it was possible for a child to settle within a week but our son did. By the end of the week he had spent nearly a whole day at the nursery on his own! The staff are very good at making the process as flexible as you feel happy with. The key person concentrates her time fully on your child during that week in order to establish familiarity and to get to know your child.

Our son beams now when he sees his key person and it is clear a strong bond has been formed.

We are very happy with how well our child has settled. It is clear that the staff/parent relationship is important to staff and we value highly that the care of your child is viewed as a joint venture between them and you.

Radoslawa, Lea’s mum

I found the first week of nursery very difficult. Our baby was refusing to sleep, eat and was crying a lot. Despite all this and all the emotions I was going through, this week made me realise how much I trust her key person and the team in her room. I never had doubts about them doing the right thing.

The settling-in took more time than planned but at the end it was a big success, she is now enjoying the nursery a lot. She is always all smiles when we arrive in her room at the nursery. So if things are difficult, keep faith in the staff – they definitely know how to handle this. Also keep faith in you and your baby – you can do it!

Amy, Evie’s mum

We were anxious about settling Evie (13 months) into the Explorers’ room but the process was made as easy as possible for us and for Evie by the wonderful staff in Evie’s room and, in particular, Evie’s key person.

For the first week we gradually built up the amount of time we left Evie in the room and by the end of four days she had had a meal and a sleep there without us. As well as allowing Evie time to get to know her new carers, routine and surroundings (and for the staff to get to know her), the settling-in week was also a great opportunity for me to observe the daily routine and the interactions of staff and children in the room, which left me feeling confident that Evie was going to be well looked after while we were at work.

The second week, when I returned to work, was in some ways harder and Evie often cried when I left her. However, that never lasted long beyond me closing the door. We were given ample time, information and reassurance from the staff at every stage and Evie was soon running into her room with a smile on her face every morning. We feel incredibly lucky that Evie was looked after in those first few important months at nursery by such a caring and compassionate group of people. A big thank you to Rachael, Anwara and Mel in particular!
Parents’ experiences

Anna, Bea’s mum

Our daughter initially started at a different nursery and so, having been through two settling-in processes, I feel able to say that I was impressed and pleased with how she settled at Westfield Nursery.

The staff in her room and in the office team made us feel welcome. They took the time to get to know Bea, and listen to what I had to say. The staff in the baby room were compassionate, caring and attentive, and this approach has continued throughout our daughter’s movement through the nursery. The key person system works well, and our daughter has built strong relationships with each of the staff members, and also with other team members. Settling-in was gradual and seemed to take into consideration individual needs.

I feel it is very important that staff at the nursery do not work shifts so the same person looks after your child all day, and you speak to the same person at the beginning and end of each day. Although the hours of the nursery are a little shorter than other nurseries, the major pay-off for us was the continuity of care that results from staff not working shifts. I couldn’t be happier with how the settling-in process went or with the care our daughter receives at Westfield Nursery.

Philippa, Alexander’s mum

Like any new parents we approached the start of nursery with a degree of trepidation and uncertainty about how our son, Alexander, would respond to his new environment, and how as parents we would juggle the return back to full-time work. Faced with a choice of different childcare options Westfield Nursery easily presented itself as the right one for Alexander and for us. Having met Max and Karen on an earlier visit and got a feel for the vibe of the nursery, its nursery staff and the children, Westfield instantly felt like a place where I could imagine Alexander (and us) feeling at home. Those initial feelings have subsequently been realised.

The process of settling Alexander was smooth and stress free. Caroline, Katy and Manju worked as an excellent team in supporting Alexander and us at a general level. And in particular, Xan’s key worker, Caroline has proved to be unrelenting in her energy to get to know Xan, what he likes and doesn’t like, his funny quirks and faces, as well as strategies for helping him get to, and stay, asleep. It’s knowing that all this care and attention, as well as fun, is happening that has taken away any anxieties we may have had. What’s more, it has enabled us to maximise work while we’re at work, meaning that we can enjoy spending time with our son when we’re all at home.

And I guess just to reiterate the fact that we’re both really happy with how the last couple of months have gone. Caroline in particular as Xan’s key person, has been super!

Rahima, Ayaan’s mum

Sending Ayaan to nursery was a big step. Our decision was made easier by many of my close colleagues whose children have been there as young as four months and also the nursery was highly recommended by others. We were welcomed into this bright, spotless, friendly nursery. Ayaan was immediately fascinated by the amount of toys and activities set up when we arrived on the first day of his settling-in period. He was very excited which was a relief and was quick to engage himself with activities.

When the settling-in pack came through the post I was overwhelmed with the amount of information I had to supply before the settling-in period. However, going through it, I felt it was important to complete it with as much information as possible as you want the key person to understand your child’s likes, dislikes, sleeping, eating pattern etc. This made me feel comfortable and at ease knowing that our child would be well cared for.

From the beginning, Ayaan’s key person, Maz worked well to settle him into the room taking all the information supplied into consideration. The week was well structured and time spent each day was increased so Ayaan had a feel of mealtimes and nap time at the nursery. We thought he settled in pretty quick and began to get familiarised with the other children and staff members. As the months went by, we continued to get an overall daily update as well as a progress report. Watching Ayaan interact with the other children was wonderful! When Ayaan took his first steps at nursery at 16 months, the staff were as (if not more) enthusiastic than we were.
Georgiana, Miles’s mum

Both my husband and I were very nervous about the whole process of choosing a nursery for our son, and at the prospect of leaving him, having never left him with anyone, even family, for more than a few hours at a time. The staff at Westfield couldn’t have been more helpful: from setting up the initial meeting, taking as much time as we felt necessary to take us round and explain how things worked, to coming to our house to see how our son was in the comfort of his own surroundings, to see how best to settle him during the first few weeks. We were encouraged to ask as many questions as we liked to ensure that we understood what would happen; for example, settling in with gradually longer periods in the room without a parent, how he would sleep (a major concern for us!), and what would happen if he didn’t settle easily.

The settling-in week went much better than I had expected, and he seemed to enjoy being with the other children and even managed a sleep on the first longer day. Each day was taken as it came, with no pressure to make him settle any more quickly, and the staff seemed very able to take his lead on how he felt. I have no doubt that he felt the same care and attention as we did, and that this in turn made us all feel secure with the new arrangements.

Although he still cried a little even six months down the line, I was constantly reassured that it did not last more than a minute or two, and from seeing how he was when he didn’t know I was watching through the glass, I was happy that we had made the right decision.

Now that he has been at the nursery for nine months, I can honestly say that it has been the making of him: he has come out of his shell, is completely at home there, and is very affectionate with the staff which is a sure sign of how happy he is with them, as are we.

Working in partnership

We are aware that settling into Nursery can be an emotional time for both the parents as well as the child. We work hard to make the transition as smooth as possible and to give honest feedback about your child’s progression. You are welcome to contact your child’s room whenever you like and this continues throughout their time at the Nursery.

We believe very strongly that to achieve the best possible outcomes for your child, it is vital for our practitioners to work closely with you, as although we are specialists in our field, we never forget that parents/main carers are the specialists when it comes to their child.

We value feedback which helps us develop the service we provide. This can be given formally in a number of ways, or by popping in to see us, as our door is always open.

We recognise that you all lead very busy lives but in order to try and develop relationships we hold regular events at the nursery all of which we invite you to join if you can.

We ask in return that Parents and Carers respect the policies and procedures that have been created to maintain standards. A full copy of which, can be found on our website.
General routine of the Nursery day

The Nursery offers a core day from 8.30am to 5.30pm which is covered by fees, optional breakfast and twilight clubs are also available for an additional charge.

We believe that children need to have routines as knowing what comes next helps them feel safe and sets boundaries. Although routines are flexible they help the flow of the day.

Please note that this is a very basic overview of our day and each room will work on a slight variation of this. For more detail please speak to your key person. Nappy changing/toileting happens as children require.

Meals
The Nursery’s full-time chef prepares all meals freshly each day. We provide a diet low in sugar, salt and fat, and avoid processed foods as much as possible.

Lunch is served at 11.30, the children have tea at 3.30, and morning snacks are offered. Water is available all day.

All dietary requirements can be catered for, be they for medical or cultural reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.00 – 8.30am</td>
<td>Optional Breakfast Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.30am</td>
<td>Nursery opens&lt;br&gt;Parents/carers are welcomed into their rooms and information is shared on how their child has been.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30 – 11.30am</td>
<td>Children involved in adult-guided/self-selected activity indoor and in the garden mixing with children from other rooms. Children are offered a light snack during this time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30am – 12.15pm</td>
<td>Children eat lunch in their rooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.15 – 2.00pm</td>
<td>Rest time&lt;br&gt;Younger children are encouraged to sleep; older children can engage in quieter activities of their own choosing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.00 – 3.30pm</td>
<td>Children wake and are helped to dress and enjoy activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.30 – 4.00pm</td>
<td>Tea time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 – 5.30pm</td>
<td>Children involved in adult-guided/self-selected activity indoor and in the garden mixing with children from other rooms. Parents/carers start to arrive and are provided with information on their child’s day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30pm</td>
<td>Nursery closes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30 – 6.00pm</td>
<td>Optional Twilight Club&lt;br&gt;Children are offered a light snack during this time.</td>
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