



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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**Date / Term of last review:** Michaelmas Term 2025

This policy applies to the whole school including those in the EYFS.

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## 1. **Aims and objectives**

- 1.1. At Oakwood School, The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) September 2023 applies to children from over the age of 2 to the end of the Reception year. At Oakwood, children are able to join our Nursery and Kindergarten prior to starting Reception in the September of the academic year in which they are five.
- 1.2. This Policy outlines the principles for good practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage. We believe that the Early Years provision plays a vital role in supporting our pupils to reach their full potential. We aim to provide a setting that nurtures, supports and challenges our pupils as a young child's experiences have a significant impact on their future development.
- 1.3. The aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage education we offer our children is based on the following principles:
  - it builds on what our children already know and can do;
  - it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
  - it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
  - It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
  - The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and promoting development through 7 areas of learning.
- 1.4. The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and promoting development through 7 areas of learning.
- 1.5. Prime Areas include:
  - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - Communication and Language
  - Physical Development
- 1.6. Specific Areas include:
  - Literacy
  - Mathematics
  - Understanding the World
  - Expressive Arts and Design
- 1.7. We also follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework Themes and Commitments which are:
  - a unique child – every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
  - positive relationships – children learn to be strong and independent
  - enabling environments with teaching and support from adults – supporting and extending a child's development
  - learning and development – children learn and develop at different rates
- 1.8. The prime and specific areas of learning and development are interconnected with the Characteristics of Effective Learning (COEL):
  - Playing and exploring
  - Active Learning
  - Creating and thinking critically

- 1.9. These areas focus on how children approach their learning, and encourage curiosity, resilience and growth mind-set.

## 2. **Teaching and learning style**

- 2.1. Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages 1 & 2.
- 2.2. The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:
- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
  - the understanding that highly qualified, dedicated, professional teachers and practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
  - the range of approaches used that provide first hand experiences give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
  - the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
  - the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interest and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
  - the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
  - the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
  - the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations and appropriate assessment;
  - Regular communication of progress and next steps through Tapestry journals, regular parent consultations and written reporting;
  - the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
  - the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage;
  - regular learning walks, supervision and performance management for all teachers, teaching assistants and key workers.
- 2.3. There is close liaison between all Early Years Foundation Stage teaching staff as well as with colleagues in Key stages 1 & 2. In the summer term, Reception class teachers liaise closely with both Kindergarten and Year 1 teachers to ensure a smooth transition for children both entering and leaving the final year of the EYFS.
- 2.4. For children who have not attended Kindergarten at Oakwood, Reception teachers will endeavour to visit them at home with their parents/carers, as well as have a telephone conversation with their key worker at their setting. If a further face-to-face meeting or setting visit is required to support their transition, this will also be planned for. As well as this, children new to Oakwood will be invited in to meet the staff with their families and have the opportunity to get to know their new setting at various transition events during the summer term before starting in Reception in September.

### **3. Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 3.1. The EYFS curriculum is delivered through carefully planned play experiences which help children to make sense of the world around them. It is during play that children practise new skills, take risks and solve problems. It is also how they learn to interact with others effectively and appropriately. Early years practitioners play a crucial role in providing scope and resources for this to take place.

### **4. Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 4.1. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give children every opportunity to achieve their potential. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning, as well as by observing their interests.
- 4.2. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that most achieve the significant stages. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more-able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We have a dedicated and trained SENDCO who works across the whole school supporting and monitoring inclusion.
- 4.3. We meet the needs of all our children through:
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
  - using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs, in tandem with our SEND policy and using any appropriate SEND interventions and 'Waves ' of support;
  - providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
  - providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
  - using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
  - planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
  - monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary;
  - following the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework;
  - meeting with parents to discuss children's progress on a regular basis.

### **5. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

- 5.1. The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the EYFS Themes and Commitments and the EYFS curriculum. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.
- 5.2. The EYFS Themes and Commitments are in line with the national objectives. In the Reception Year, in our school, children experience increasingly more structured Mathematics and literacy lessons to ensure a smooth transition into Key Stage 1.
- 5.3. The EYFS Themes and Commitments provide the basis for planning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers use 'Development Matters' as well as other national schemes of work

where appropriate to support the planning for individual children. Medium term and weekly planning identify specific and differentiated learning objectives for all children. Planning is reviewed and amended daily according to the needs, interests and development of the children, allowing for flexibility within the EYFS.

## 6. **Assessment**

- 6.1. Formative assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes place continually through observation, involving the teacher and other appropriate adults/key persons. Summative assessment also takes place regularly in order to identify any concerns for the development of each child.
- 6.2. In Nursery, staff use the Early Years Foundation Stage Checkpoints, following the learning statements in "Development Matters" to check the progress of children, as well as write a 2-Year Check during the first term of Nursery to share with parents. Every term, these checkpoints will be updated and next steps will then be created for each pupil.
- 6.3. In Kindergarten, staff will complete a baseline and an end of term assessment using a continuum of learning in all areas of the curriculum. Progress will be monitored to see if children are "emerging", "expected" or "exceeding" at each level.
- 6.4. A teacher baseline is completed in Maths and Phonics at the start of Reception. This allows practitioners to highlight areas of strength for each pupil as well as focus on any areas of their development that need further support. The same continuum of learning assessment is also completed by teachers as a baseline and at the end of each term to then use to support reporting back to parents. Formal assessments, using PIRA (reading) and PUMA (Mathematics) papers, are also undertaken by Reception pupils at the end of the Summer Term. This, as well as teacher assessment, is used to determine if Reception pupils have met or are working towards the EYFS "Early Learning Goals" in all areas of the curriculum. All this information is then used to then communicate with parents verbally during parents' evenings or other meetings, as well as inform future planning, transition or intervention. This can also be shared with the SENDCO if deemed necessary.
- 6.5. Each teacher or key person keeps an E-Journal using 'Tapestry' for each child. This is used to record achievements and identify next steps within planning. These records contain a wide range of evidence that are shared with parents online. These use 'Development Matters' Flags to identify the area of learning, as well as the chance to highlight the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'.
- 6.6. Parents receive a written report twice per year via Tapestry that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. The report highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of their general progress. We complete these in December and July and are released to parents at the end of the Michaelmas and Summer Terms. In Nursery and Kindergarten, the Michaelmas Term report focuses on a detailed "Initial Review" observation with next steps highlighted. In Nursery, this will also include a two-Year Check. For any Nursery starters who begin their time at Oakwood in the Spring or Summer terms, this initial review and two-year check will be completed at the end of their first term. In Reception, the Michaelmas report focuses on a general comment as well as Literacy and Mathematics. The End of Year report for Nursery and Kindergarten is written in the form of a general comment along with targets for their transition to the next year group. In Reception, this End of Year Report covers all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. as well as detailing if a child is working towards or has met the Early Learning Goals.

- 6.7. 'Tapestry' E-Journals are kept at Oakwood School until the beginning of the Michaelmas Term in Year 1. The e-journal can be accessed by all Oakwood staff to monitor learning and assessment. The Head of EYFS will release these journals, along with reports, to Year 1 parents to download and keep. These journals will then be deleted from Tapestry. The Head of EYFS will save any that are not visibly downloaded by parents and they will be reminded again. The Reception End of Year report will be kept for the School's own records and to support planning in Year 1.
- 6.8. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be completed for each child. This profile looks at if the child has met the Early Learning Goals for each area of the curriculum, or indeed if they are still working towards this. This profile is shared with parents in their end of year Reception report as Early Learning Goal scores, working towards or met. This information is also passed onto Year 1 teachers. If the Local Authority requests this data, the school must report these results. Local authorities are under a duty to return this data to the relevant Government department. At the end of Reception during the summer term, children will also be assessed in their reading and mathematical skills, using PIRA and PUMA testing papers. These are given to pupils in 1:1 formats or in small groups depending on the needs of the pupil. These results are then shared with the Assistant Head of Academics, the Heads of English and Maths, as well as the SENDCO if needed.

## **7. The role of parents**

- 7.1. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:
- providing the children with the opportunity to spend time with their class before starting school;
  - inviting all parents to a welcome meeting at the start of the school year; and
  - encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher informally at any time ("open door" policy) if there are any concerns or to discuss general progress. This is in addition to the more formal Parent's Evening consultations that take place regularly.

## **8. Resources, Outside Visitors and Trips**

- 8.1. We plan a learning environment both indoors and outdoors making use of our glorious surroundings. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from, and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.
- 8.2. An Early Years Foundation Stage bank of resources are available for colleagues to share and staff are encouraged to rotate toys, resources and equipment to maintain stimulating and freshly exciting classrooms.
- 8.3. Trips and outside visitors occur regularly throughout each term. Refer to Educational Visits and Activities Policy.

## **9. Admissions**

- 9.1. Admissions take place from over the age of 2 years and we accept children in the Nursery at any time during the academic year for a minimum of 2 sessions. Children in Nursery who are 2 years old may start within their correct birth cohort at any point during the academic year. If they are turning 2 years

old and are out of that birth cohort, we will make parents aware that they will remain in the Nursery for the following academic year. However, planning and activities are always tailored to the interests and needs of the children so will never be repeated in the same way, in order to avoid repetition. Sessions are increased at the discretion of the Nursery Leader and Kindergarten leader after consultation with parents and when appropriate for each individual child. Please refer to our Admissions Policy for further details.

## **10. Attendance**

- 10.1. Pupils in Nursery and Kindergarten attend according to the sessions they are registered for; these may vary and are agreed in liaison between families, the Admissions Manager and Nursery or Kindergarten Leaders. Registers are completed, and absences followed up, as detailed in line with the processes and procedures outlined in the school's Attendance Policy.
- 10.2. Reception pupils are encouraged and expected to attend full time from the start of the academic year; where appropriate to individual needs, adjustments may be considered or put in place for pupils, at the discretion of the Head of EYFS, SENDCo and in discussion and agreement with parents/carers. Registers are completed, and absences followed up, as detailed in line with the processes and procedures outlined in the school's Attendance Policy.