

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

February 2025

Overdale CP School



Version:

February 2023

Ratified by the Governing Body:

Signed by the Governing Body:

Chair: Mr. Pete Bowdige

To be reviewed (annually):

February 2024

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Early Years Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.” Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2021

Our Intent and Aims

Within Early Years at Overdale CP School we aim to;

- give each child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to their school life within a safe and secure environment
- establish solid foundations and foster a deep love of learning
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in order to thrive in a diverse and ever changing world
- offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development
- offer a broad and rich curriculum
- encourage children to develop independence within a nurturing and supportive atmosphere
- support children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements by experiencing success and developing their confidence to work towards personal goals
- Ultimately prepare children with the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for the next stage of their learning journey in Key Stage 1.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Implementation

The Curriculum

Our Nursery and Reception follow the EYFS curriculum and ensure that the learning opportunities and experiences we provide are clearly linked to the seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three of these areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (Early Years Framework 2021) they support children’s learning in all other areas, they are known as the Prime Areas

The prime areas are;

Communication and language	Listening, Attention and Understanding Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-regulation Managing Self Building Relationships
Physical Development	Fine Motor Gross Motor

The Prime areas are strengthened and applied through the further four areas which are referred to as the Specific areas.

Literacy	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers Numerical patterns
Understanding the World	Past and present People, culture and communities
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with materials Being imaginative and expressive

Our teaching of synthetic phonics is planned using the Little Wandle scheme and our teaching of mathematics is guided by the White Rose Maths Hub planning.

‘It is the role of the setting to help children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.’ Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook, May 2019

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Throughout all areas of learning and at the heart of the EYFS are the “Characteristics of Effective Learning.” We strive to develop these key characteristics as they highlight the importance of a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

- **Playing and Exploring**- children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’
- **Active Learning**- children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

All of the crucial skills, knowledge and vocabulary that we teach are presented to the children progressively throughout the year. These encompass a range of topics, which are designed with the children’s interests in mind and support children to develop their experience and knowledge across a range of themes

Teaching

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks in the continuous provision, the interaction between the adult and the child is essential as the adult’s response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult’s role is to continually model, demonstrate and skilfully question what the child is doing through warm, positive interaction. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child’s game, extending it where possible. We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for the children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and are planned to meet the specific needs of the group. Each day we set aside times when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional senses, gathered together on the carpet as a class. During these sessions we focus on maths, early reading (Little Wandle), story and topic. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning; learning as a group, listening to an adult, sharing ideas, taking turn to answer questions and sitting still.

We want our children to develop of life-long love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We imitate, innovate and invent stories through a Talk for Writing approach as we want our children to leave the EYFS knowing stories, both traditional and modern. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision. In Reception every child is provided with their own book bag and will receive a wordless or phonetically decodable reading book linked to the school's phonic scheme once a week. In school they will share this book 3 times a week with an adult in a guided reading group. These are planned sessions following the structure of Decoding, Prosody and Comprehension. Across our early years we use Word Aware to promote the vocabulary development of all children. We do this by following the STAR approach: Select- curriculum vocabulary is carefully chosen which is reflective of the children's needs. Teach- words are taught in a range of contexts. Activate- opportunities are provided for children to link vocabulary to activity. Review- to help fix words into long term memory.

Planning

Our planning is always relevant to the stage and age of the child. What we plan supports and further develops their learning and development. Planning is informed by the observations we make of the children. Without observation, planning would simply be based on what we felt was important, fun or interesting but it might not necessarily meet the needs of the children. We believe that many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and we find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Our topics are broad to ensure we have progression of knowledge and skills but also to allow us the flexibility to follow children's interests, seasonal/cultural themes, local and national events. Where possible we link to key texts and rhymes to develop communication and language skills and promote a love for reading. Our long term plans map out the knowledge and skills we expect children to gain throughout their time in EYFS to prepare them for learning in Key Stage 1, and build on previously taught concepts, knowledge and skills. Our medium term planning is topic based and maps out the learning journey of specific knowledge and skills. It highlights experiences and activities that are appropriate to develop new learning, including visits and visitors, books, songs and rhymes that will enhance the learning experience.

Classroom Environments

Teaching and play in the Early Years is a balancing act, there is no right or wrong way to do this. However, what we need to consider is how we ensure that the classroom environments support the learning that occurs when children initiate this for themselves. Environments play an important part in the Early Years and are often referred to as the third adult. Our learning environments are carefully planned throughout the year and they adapt and change with the needs of the children. Our provision is planned and designed to help children remember long term what they have been taught and integrate new knowledge and skills into wider concepts, often those children initiate themselves. We ensure that we have high quality and well-resourced and organised continuous provision that will enable children to hone, rehearse and become experts in their interests and fascinations. We recognise the need to introduce progression between nursery and reception. When selecting resources for the areas of provision, the age, maturity and experience of the children are taken into account. For example, limiting the range of resources in an area for younger children helps them focus for longer periods and work in more depth.

A wider range of resources for developing early reading, writing and mathematical skills are introduced across the provision so that older children can apply and consolidate skills learnt during daily Little Wandle and mathematics sessions in a meaningful way.

Assessment

At Overdale CP School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. When children enter our setting they are baselined against the Early years outcomes, this provides staff with a clear starting point. Children in reception are also baselined using the NFER baseline test. Practitioners observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations and assessments are recorded with photographs on children's online learning journeys (Class dojo) and their individual learning journey files within the classroom which parents can access.

At the end of the EYFS (end of Reception), practitioners complete the EYFS profile (Statutory requirement) for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 16 early learning goals, indicating whether they are;

- 'Expected' - meeting expected levels of development
- 'Emerging' - not yet reaching the expected levels of development

Children's development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Parent Partnerships

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home. We therefore work very closely to ensure that parents/carers are involved in their child's education, and provide them with weekly information on Class Dojo detailing what we are learning and how they can support their child at home. We ensure that parents/ carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, through their child's online dojo portfolio and parents evenings. We understand the importance of parents/carers views, so provide opportunities for feedback throughout the school year. We offer workshops to provide parents with an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years Curriculum, detailing ways in which they can support their child's learning at home. These sessions also give parents/carers the opportunity to work with their child in the school environment.

Safeguarding

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We teach the children how to recognise and manage risks in a supervised learning environment. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children.

Please refer to our school's policies for Safeguarding and Wellbeing and Behaviour for further information.

Impact

We envision that by the end of EYFS children have the personal, physical and social skills they need to succeed as they move into year 1. Children will display high levels of engagement through their positive attitudes to learning. They are developing the resilience to set backs and are proud of their achievements. They work collaboratively together because they've developed the early skills in managing their own feelings and behaviour, they are also now aware of how their actions can impact on others. We make every effort to ensure that all our children make good or better progress during their time in EYFS. Aiming for a good level of development (GLD). All children will have made significant personal progress across all areas of learning. All pupils including disadvantaged and SEND have full access to the EYFS curriculum and close the gap between their peers by making good or better progress.

The EYFS leader, alongside other school leaders, will monitor the impact of the EYFS curriculum and provision of learning. This monitoring will include:

- Learning environment walks
- Learning journey scrutinies
- Assessment analysis and next steps
- Moderation with other schools

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Early Years lead teacher every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with Overdale Schools Governing Board.

Created by: Rachel Vasconcelos – EYFS lead teacher

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