

Oakwood School Early Years Curriculum Policy

This policy applies to the Early Years only

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from the age of 0 – 5 years, and children are accepted into our nursery from the age of 2½. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).
- 1.2 The EYFS is important in its own right and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the EYFS.
- 1.1 The EYFS Learning programme at Oakwood is based largely on the premise that children are at their peak learning potential between the ages of 1 and 6 years old. We therefore do everything possible to provide an environment that is stimulating and exciting to young minds, in an effort for every child to reach their potential.
- 1.2 In the Early Years we begin to teach the importance of human virtues as we believe in a balance between academic and personal achievement. That is to say, we encourage children to foster their own personal virtues so that they may grow into young adults who are not only successful and motivated in their workplace but are also of a steadfast character.

2 Purpose and Aims

- 2.1 Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.
- 2.2 The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.
- 2.3 These outcomes are achieved by:
- **setting the standards** for the learning, development and care young children experience;
 - **providing for equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice;
 - **creating the framework for partnership** working between our teachers and parents;
 - **improving quality and consistency** in our Early Years setting;
 - **laying a secure foundation for future learning** that caters for the individual needs and interests of each child.

2.4 Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following guiding themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

3 Key Curriculum principles

3.1 One of our basic principles is that physical activity stimulates the brain and encourages learning. We therefore do PE every day in the Nursery and twice a week in the Reception class.

3.2 We use a great variety of short bursts or sets of activities designed to have the same effect on learning that the physical activity has. These include:

- Spanish words and songs which are learnt through repetition each day;
- Encyclopaedic flashcards;
- Formal music sessions (daily in the nursery and twice a week in the Reception class) which include music appreciation, tempo, pitch, musical instruments (names of those used in an orchestra and simple ones played in the classroom), composers and reading music notes;
- Circle time to discuss personal, social and emotional issues and the virtues.

3.3 Daily routines are adhered to as far as possible. We provide a structured timetable which is conducive to effective learning. The children find security and a sense of order in this practice of routine and we are aiming to lay a solid foundation for a formula that increases their chances of achieving a successful and fulfilled life as an adult. Bearing this in mind, one of the key areas targeted for development is appropriate behaviour in various settings, ie. how to behave at the table, in the oratory or when in the hall.

3.4 In the EYFS, we build on what children have already learned at home and we lay a solid foundation for their future formal education. The environment that we provide is a secure and caring educational one, where they acquire grounding in the fundamentals of learning, and ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged. This is strongly promoted by developing strong ties with parents and encouraging feedback from both parties.

3.5 Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are provided with a balance between structured free play and involvement in formal, teacher led activities. These child-initiated and adult-led activities are reflected in the teacher's planning. Their choices are carefully monitored and, when necessary, they are guided and redirected. This is to ensure that each child is gaining a balance and breadth of learning development. Giving children the opportunities to make choices and organise their play at an early age will prepare them for the time in later years when they have to make important decisions. The choices are made from activities that are well planned, purposeful and progressive; providing an appropriate level of interest for all the children in the Nursery, whatever their needs or abilities.

4 Key Curriculum aims

4.1 We aim to use the child's natural curiosity and knowledge to structure play experiences that will help them develop. During the time spent in the Early

Years, children will develop their ability to make choices, complete tasks, concentrate for longer periods of time, co-operate with their peers, increase their physical skills, begin reading and writing and develop their mathematical skills.

- 4.2** We promote learning and growth in all areas of the children's development – intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual and social. This is done in a learning environment where high expectations will realise the potential in all children. The staff all work together as a team to ensure that all children can achieve the Early Learning Goals. These goals are the basis to the stimulating activities provided as part of the structured programme we offer. This is done to nurture a love of learning and a desire to achieve their personal goals in life.
- 4.3** All children in the Early Years have equal access to the opportunities provided irrespective of their race, gender, religious or cultural beliefs, family background, home language, learning disabilities or abilities.

5 Teaching and learning style

- 5.1** The more noteworthy features of good practice in our school that relate to the EYFS are:
- the partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
 - the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this is reflected in their teaching and planning;
 - the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
 - the carefully planned curriculum that helps many children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS;
 - the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
 - the identification, through observations, of children's progress and next steps in all 6 areas of learning, which are regularly shared with parents;
 - the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
 - the specialist provision in music, Spanish and art;
 - the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work by Heads of Department and the SMT to evaluate and improve it;
 - the high level of communication amongst Early Years staff to ensure continuity of planning and provision from Lower Nursery to Reception;
 - the regular identification of appropriate training needs for all adults working in the EYFS.

6 Inclusion in the Early Years

- 6.1** We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning (see our policy on inclusion).

6.2 In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that many achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of this stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

6.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- assigning a key worker at the beginning of the academic year for all children in the Early Years. Their main aim is to help a child to become familiar with the provision which enables them to feel confident and safe within it;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support as necessary;
- use of Early Year's Action, Early Year's Action Plus & IEPs.

7 The EYFS curriculum

7.1 The Childcare Act 2006 provides for the EYFS learning and development requirements to comprise three elements:

- The Early Learning goals
- The Educational programmes
- The Assessment arrangements

7.2 The Early Years curriculum is formed of six areas:

- Communication, language and literacy
- Numeracy, problem solving and reasoning
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

7.3 Our curriculum for the EYFS reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

7.4 The Early Learning Goals form part of the National Curriculum, and are in line with the objectives stated in the EYFS Guidance. Accordingly, from the beginning of the reception year, our children have daily Spalding (our literacy method) and mathematics lessons. Teachers address these requirements in a

flexible way at first, but by the end of the EYFS, as part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, they put these into regular operation.

- 7.5** The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. Our medium-term planning is completed half-termly, and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

8 Assessment

- 8.1** The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the six areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the EYFS. We make regular assessments of children's learning using the scales as provided in the EYFS framework, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of written observations and photographic evidence, and this involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. Parents have the right to access their child's Foundation Stage Profile upon request, and these also form the basis of discussions at parent/teacher meetings. The collection of assessment data in the EYFS is a statutory requirement.

- 8.2** Each teacher keeps books and work samples, and uses these to record examples of each child's work. These contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

- 8.3** Parents receive reports at various times during the year. These reports offer brief comments on each child's attainment and progress in each area of learning. They highlight the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. Detailed End of Year reports are issued to parents annually in July.

9 The role of parents

- 9.1** We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their class before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to use the home-school diary to inform teachers about any issues that may affect their child's behaviour;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- encouraging parents to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;

- providing various activities that involve parents, i.e. regular communication with home through the child's school diary, and inviting parents to curriculum evenings, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking.
- 9.2** There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the parents discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at various times during the year.

10 Resources

- 10.1** We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. 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 the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** This policy is monitored by the PACT governing body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Signed: C Candia

Date: 12 November 2009