

Oakwood School Early Years Curriculum Policy

This policy applies to the Early Years only

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Definitions:

“DfE”	Department for Education
“EYFS”	Early Years Foundation Stage
“SPEN”	Specific and Extended Learning Needs

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The EYFS extends from the age of 0 – 5 years, which includes our Nursery and Reception classes. Children normally enter our Nursery in September during the academic year when they turn 4. Entry into Reception is at the beginning of the school year in which 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.
- 1.3** 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.
- 1.4** In the Early Years we begin to teach the importance of human virtues as we believe in a balance between academic and personal development. 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.

1.5 This policy has been written in accordance with the DfE 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' April 2017.

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 Oakwood is committed to the EYFS themes and principles which set out the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5. The EYFS sets the standards for early years providers so that children can learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

2.3 The overarching principles are:

- **A Unique Child.** Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships.** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments.** Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences reflect their individual needs. There is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development.** Children learn and develop in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in the Early Years including children with special needs and/or learning difficulties.

3 Key Curriculum principles

3.1 One of our basic principles is that physical activity stimulates the brain and encourages learning. We do PE twice a week in both the Nursery and Reception classes, either in the hall or playground. The lessons take place in formal timetabled PE slots. All Early Years children have daily use of the 'Active Area' in the Outdoor Learning Area and make use of the Trim Trail, bikes, scooters and other resources which develop Gross Motor Skills.

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;
- Formal music sessions are timetabled in both classes. Jolly Music, based on the Kodaly system, is introduced in Reception;
- 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 and take place both inside and outside in the Outdoor Learning Area, where carefully planned resources are set out daily to support the children's learning and development. 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 children in the Early Years, 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 help to realise the potential in all children. The staff work together as a team to help all children 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 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, Art and PE;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work by Subject Co-ordinators and the SMT to evaluate and improve it;
- the high level of communication amongst Early Years staff to ensure continuity of planning and provision between Nursery and Reception and for transition from the EYFS curriculum to Key Stage 1;
- 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 Equal Opportunities).

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 or learning difficulties, 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 resources and 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 (also see our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy);

- 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 the Watch List, Action Plans and IEPs as outlined in our SPEN Policy.

7 The EYFS curriculum

7.1 The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development (outlined below)
- The Early Learning goals which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year
- The assessment requirements

7.2 The curriculum is formed of three prime areas of development:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

and four specific areas of development:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

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 skills 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 Framework. From the Nursery, literacy and mathematics is taught daily. 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 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** All Early Years children have an online Learning Journal which highlights their individual progress and achievement. Teacher observations, children's work and photographic evidence are included as well as Next Steps in their learning. Assessment is an ongoing process which involves all staff who work with the children. Parents can access and contribute to this journal. Next Steps are also recorded in a book and sent home at regular intervals.
- 8.2** As well as the digital journal, both Nursery and Reception children have a physical journal into which work is filed. Ongoing assessments are included and parents can access these at any time.
- 8.3** Parents receive reports at various times during the year according to our Assessment & Reporting Cycle. 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 give details of the child's general progress and how parents can support their child's learning. 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 indispensable 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;
 - offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
 - providing various activities that involve parents, ie. regular communication with home through the child's school diary and email communication, 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 twice a year where parents discuss their child's progress and Next Steps in private with the teacher. A separate Celebration of Work Evening once a year aims to provide parents with an opportunity to look at work across the curriculum with their child and to celebrate their progress and achievements since September.

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 on a day-to-day basis by the Head and EYFS co-ordinator. Our Early Years Governor, Louise Newman-Sanders, ensures its effective implementation via regular school visits and in discussions with teachers.
- 11.2 This policy is reviewed every three years, however it may be amended earlier if legislation or our school procedures change.

Signed: C Candia

This policy is reviewed every 3 years	
Title	Early Years Curriculum
Version	3
Date Created	25 September 2017
Authors	Ciro Candia, Head and Jacqueline Parker, EYFS co-ordinator
Approved by SMT	Yes
Approval/Review required by PACT or sub-committee	Yes (reviewed by LN-S, Early Years governor Autumn 2017)
Latest Review (state whether changes were made)	Yes
Next Review Date	Autumn 2020

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies:

Child Protection & Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities, SPEN