

Oakham Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Approved by Governors on:

16/03/26

Signature of Chair of Governors:

V. Hayes

Lead Personnel:

B Smith

Date to be reviewed:

16/03/28

Curriculum aims and principles

At Oakham Primary School the Early Years Foundation Stage extends from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Entry into our Reception classes for all allocated children is at the beginning of the school year (September) in which the children are five.

A revised Statutory framework, effective from September 2021 (revised 2023), sets out the standards for learning, development and care for all children from birth to five. This together with 'Development Matters' document allows staff to design an effective early years curriculum building on the strengths and meeting the needs of all Foundation Stage children.

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them.

Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance. The revised document - Development Matters - shows how these themes, and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the EYFS.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on seven key features of effective practice, these are:-

- 1) The best for every child
- 2) High quality care
- 3) The curriculum; what we want the children to learn
- 4) Pedagogy; helping children to learn
- 5) Assessment; checking what children have learnt
- 6) Self-regulation and executive function
- 7) Partnership with parents

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning. There are 7 areas of learning including Prime areas, Specific areas and Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the Characteristics of **Effective Learning**, which move through all areas of learning:-

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas:-

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:-

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All of these areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult initiated, adult led and child initiated activities.

How does this policy link with other policies and statements?

The features of effective learning and teaching in our school are defined in our policy on learning and teaching. They apply in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the learning and teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Other policies to reference are:

Behaviour

Equality Statement

Health and Safety

SEND and Disability

Structure of the EYFS

Admission, induction and entry arrangements

Nursery

There are 70 places available in Nursery, 40 a.m. and 30 p.m, including 21 full time places.

Parents requesting a Nursery place should complete relevant forms available from the school office by the end of Spring Term in the academic year before they would be starting Nursery.

The Foundation Stage Assistant Head together with the school admissions staff allocate places using the set LA process. Letters are then sent out to successful applicants and a reply is requested to secure the place.

If necessary, a waiting list is compiled based on LA set criteria.

Prior to the children starting in Nursery an extensive induction programme is undertaken including home visits, stay and play sessions, workshops for parents and a meeting with Parents, Head Teacher, Foundation Stage Assistant Head and Class Teachers where school aims, philosophies and any additional costs are shared.

Reception

There are 60 places available in our two Reception classes.

Children are admitted into one of these in September in the academic year that they are five. The LA coordinates all of these admissions using their induction policies.

During the Summer Term there is an extensive induction programme to which parents and children are invited. This involves stay and play sessions, workshops for parents and a meeting with the Parents, Head Teacher, Foundation Stage Assistant Head and Early Years Team, where information about the learning is shared and the Foundation Stage curriculum discussed.

Starting and finishing times

Nursery – Morning session is 8.40am until 11.40am

Afternoon session is 12.30pm until 3.30pm

Reception – Morning session is 8.40am until 11.50am

Lunchtime 11.50am until 1.10pm

Afternoon session 1.10pm until 3.30pm

Structure of the day

Children in Nursery and Reception have a balance of adult initiated, adult led and child initiated activities during a day, a week and a term. For two sessions a week, Nursery and Reception children come together for child initiated learning using the indoor and outdoor space and children are able to free flow between all these areas.

Indoor/outdoor provision

The two Reception classrooms and the Nursery unit are well organised and resourced allowing children to access equipment independently. Each room has an interactive whiteboard and class computers. Each class has their own entry and exit door through which children are welcomed each morning and children exit at home time, no child is allowed to leave unless a parent or pre designated adult arrives to collect them. (See left child policy for any child not collected at 3.30pm)

There is an extensive outdoor area that Foundation Stage pupils access on a daily basis. This includes a MUGA, a wooded area, a gross motor play area and other covered and open spaces that reflect the seven areas of learning.

Snack and lunchtime arrangements

In Nursery and Reception, a snack bar system operates where children can access their fruit, milk or water at any time during the day. Healthy snacks are also available in Nursery and Reception and children can choose from a range provided.

Elements of the PSED curriculum are covered at this time where children are expected to wash their hands before eating and are encouraged to make healthy choices regarding their food. It is also a time when small groups of children are able to come together at the snack table in a social nurturing environment. On PE and phase days children have snack together on the carpet, which enables the smooth transition between getting changed from PE/outdoor wear to having a snack and into the next activity.

Parents of children in Reception and full time Nursery are able to choose whether they would like their child to stay and have a packed lunch or a hot cooked meal or go home for lunch. Children eat their lunch in the school dining hall with their own designated lunchtime supervisors and then play outside on the MUGA . During the Summer Term Reception children will play on the KS1 playground as part of the transition into Year 1.

Children's groupings

When the list of new Reception children is published the Foundation Stage Assistant Head together with the Nursery teacher allocate places to the children in one of the two Reception classes. The decision is carefully thought through taking into account ability, age, ethnicity, friendships and gender. Children who are new to the setting are invited into school during the Summer term for some stay and play sessions to enable staff to get to know children and their families.

In each Reception and Nursery class there is a class teacher and support staff to meet the appropriate ratios.

Trips and visits

Several visits are organised during the children's time in Foundation Stage. Recent trips have been to Legoland, Ashend Farm and the MAC theatre in Edgbaston.

Outside speakers are invited into school to support the children's learning these have included – police, fire-fighters, paramedics, estate agents, school nurse, dentist, librarians and travel agents. Parents are also invited into school to talk about special events e.g. a Reception parent came in to talk to the children about Diwali and a Grandparent talked to the children about toys and games that they played with when they were young.

Emergency contacts, accidents, allergies and what to do if a child is ill.

All parents are asked to complete an emergency contacts form and an SS12 when their child starts at Oakham Primary School. This provides details of emergency contact numbers and any medical or personal information that needs to be shared.

If there is an accident/illness at school and staff feel that the child needs to go home, then the class teacher checks with the Foundation Stage Assistant Head. A member of staff phones the parents/ other emergency contact numbers to come and collect their child.

If they cannot make contact, then depending on the severity of the injury/illness the child is cared for at school or in an emergency the child would be taken to hospital or an ambulance would be called. A senior member of staff would be consulted immediately.

All accidents are recorded online and a notification is sent to parents via Arbor (our school management information system). Parents are phoned if the child has an injury to their head or face.

Planning and organising the curriculum

What will the children be learning and when?

The long term plan for children in nursery and Reception is taken from the 'Development matters 2021'. Medium term plans are developed from children's interests and starting points. Weekly and daily plans reflect children's recent observations and next steps to ensure that all children achieve their full potential.

How is the curriculum organised?

What is the progression of teaching and learning?

Staff are required to plan activities and experiences that help children to make progress in their development and learning. Our philosophy underpinning the Foundation Stage curriculum is that learning should be carefully planned and structured with an emphasis on activities that are fun, relevant and motivating and meet the needs of all children in the setting. Staff deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum through planned purposeful play and by extending where appropriate children's spontaneous play both indoors and out.

The development matters statements identify the developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children will need to develop and achieve by the end of their Reception year. Staff in class 2 and 3 assess children at the end of Reception using the Early Learning Goals.

There is a continuous assessment and planning cycle which begins with child observation and reflection followed by planned activities, resources and environment to support and extend children's learning and their next steps. All adults involved in a child's learning are encouraged to feed into this cycle including parents and other settings that a child either attends now or has in the past.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult led activities to help children prepare for the more formal learning ready for Year 1.

Assessment and record keeping

How do we know how well the children are doing?

Entry profiles and ongoing assessments

Wherever possible assessments/records from previous settings are obtained and shared with relevant staff. During the first couple of weeks in Nursery and Reception children are observed by staff and a baseline is established covering all seven areas of learning. Since September 2021 staff have been using the statutory RBA (Reception Baseline Assessment)

Observations, portfolios and record keeping

Observations of children's learning are undertaken regularly by all members of staff. These may take the form of planned child observations or post it notes for impromptu moments. Annotated photographs and examples of children's work are also collected and kept in each individual child's portfolio. Phase meeting sessions are used for staff to get together to discuss their key worker children and to have professional dialogue with colleagues as to where the children are using 'observational checkpoints' External moderation takes place annually through Sandwell LA. Children also have maths and writing books.

Self-assessment information from children

Children regularly take part in self-assessment evaluations and staff talk to the children about how they are learning. Next steps are discussed and shared with parents during key worker meetings.

Contributions from parents

Parents are encouraged to share information about their children and we believe that judgements about their child aren't complete unless everybody involved with the child contributes. We have a class email (contactclass2@oakham.sandwell.sch.uk: contactclass3@oakham.sandwell.sch.uk) where this information is shared:

"We really value parental contributions towards your child's progress. Via email we would like you to share with us significant things that your child achieves at home. You could write about what they do, send photographs or it might be some writing that your child has done that you would like to share with us."

Parents are also invited to termly key worker meetings. At these meetings staff and Parents share their child's progress. Parents are also regularly sent information about teaching and learning and how it relates to Foundation Stage children.

Tracking

There are regular pupil tracking meetings between class teachers and the Foundation Stage Assistant Head to discuss children who are 'not on track' and to plan for interventions to close the gap.

Reporting to parents

During the Summer Term Parents of children in Nursery and Reception are given a report about their child. Parents of children in Reception will also be informed whether their child is 'emerging' or making 'expected' progress in the ELG's.

Transfer information

Meetings are organised in the Summer Term for staff to share information with the child's new teacher. Nursery children also spend time in their new Reception class prior to them starting in September. There is also an extensive induction programme for Reception children moving to year 1 (see Whole School Transition policy for more details).

Information if requested is sent to a child's new school if they move in or out of the authority.

Staffing, equipment and resources

Who is involved and what is available for them to work with?

Management and leadership roles

There is a Foundation Stage Assistant Head who manages, leads and coordinates all aspects of the Foundation Stage. She is a member of the SLT and reports to the Head teacher on issues arising in her phase. The Assistant Head produces an annual action plan in which she has analysed data and teaching and learning to look at key strengths and areas of development for the department in order to embed ambition and drive improvement.

Staffing

In each of the class bases there is a class teacher and support staff to meet ratio requirements and to complete interventions. All staff are valued and play a key role in the children's learning and development. Annual 1-1's with staff are conducted with the Assistant Head where staff have the opportunity to share successes and discuss areas that they would like to develop. These are then checked against the SIP and either delivered in school during phase meetings or outside training is arranged.

Resources

Each of the class bases is well resourced and organised so that children can access equipment independently. There is a range of resources which have been purchased to meet the needs of all children.

Budget

There is a set budget for Foundation Stage as well as other curriculum budgets where staff can bid for equipment for Foundation Stage. The Foundation Stage budget is shared between Nursery and Reception on a prioritised need basis.

'Pot' money is collected each week, currently a voluntary contribution of £1. This provides children with healthy snacks each day and also pays for cookery ingredients and food for parties and celebrations.

Safeguarding

This is an extremely important area and the following steps are undertaken to safe guard all children in our care.

- All mobile phones, including staff and visitors are locked away each day during staff – pupil contact time.
- Daily risk assessments are undertaken when gate locking in Nursery.
- Termly risk assessments are undertaken for the whole of the learning environment including the outdoor area.
- Yearly assessments are made of all electrical equipment.
- Staff are expected to inform the Foundation Stage Assistant Head if there is anything that they think could cause injury or harm and they should then inform the site manager via the online portal.
- Staff undertake yearly level 1 child protection training.
- Staff complete risk assessments via Evolve when planning a trip out or a visit in the local community.
- All staff have received appropriate training and are up to date with current DBS checks.
- There is a designated safeguarding lead (Nick Skett – Head Teacher) and deputy safeguarding leads (Sandra Stretton and Zena Francis)
- Staff medication, is kept out of the reach of children at all times.
- Staff in Foundation Stage base hold a relevant and current paediatric first aid certificate.
- Each child in Nursery and Reception has been assigned a key worker and keyworker meetings take place regularly to keep parents informed about their child's progress.

- 'My Concern' for staff to record any disclosures or worries that they may have. These are picked up by the Designated and deputy safe guarding leads and acted on appropriately.

Staff development and support

How do we improve our teaching skills and knowledge of how children learn?

There is continuing in house training during phase meetings.

Staff are also encouraged and targeted for specific training that meets the needs of the school and is outlined in the School Improvement plan and the Foundation Stage action plan.

Partnership with parents and carers

How are parents involved in the Foundation Stage curriculum? How do they have access to the activities and to reports on their child's progress?

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. At Oakham we aim for parents and practitioners to work together, where this happens the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Different ways we encourage this are:

- Staff show respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's learning. Parents are welcomed to the setting each morning together with their children and time is given at the beginning and end of the day to talk and listen with parents about their child's development and any concerns they have.
- Arrangements for settling in are flexible enough to give time for children to become secure and for practitioners and parents to discuss each child's circumstances, interests, skills and needs.
- Regular newsletters, curriculum overviews and information about the Foundation Stage curriculum are uploaded to the school website. If requested, these are made available in the parent's home language.
- Parents are involved in Reception with sounds, words and reading practice.
- There are 3 key worker meetings a year where information on a child's progress is shared between parents and staff and strengths and difficulties discussed.
- Home visits are offered to all new Nursery parents and children new to school in Reception.

- Each year Foundation Stage children take part in a Christmas Nativity. Parents, Carers and families are invited to watch their children perform.
- Children in Nursery and Reception choose a 'reading for pleasure' book to take home and share each week.
- There are open days each year for prospective parents to visit to see child initiated learning in action.
- Parents are invited to workshops throughout the year (phonics, learning through play, maths) to see their own child and other year groups learning.

Links with the community, other agencies and other settings

How do we involve other agencies, support services and the local Community?

There is a programme in place where health services come into school on a regular basis to check weight and height, dental, vision etc

Health professionals are also invited into school to talk to the children about healthy lifestyles choices.

Sandwell LA runs a parent referral system where staff assess children's speech and language development on entry to Nursery and Reception using the Wellcomm toolkit. (See SEND policy).