

EYFS Policy

Overstone Combined School



Reviewed: Annually

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Introduction

“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. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Overstone Combined School, children are admitted into Nursery after their third birthday and into Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

1. Aims

At Overstone Combined School, we adhere to the statutory guidance stated in **The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021**, and the four guiding principles that shape the practice in Early Years settings.

These include:

- **Unique child** – We recognise that every child is unique and is continually learning, resilient and capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – We recognise that children learn to be strong, secure and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with SEND.

2. Curriculum

According to the ‘Good Practice in Early Education’ Research Report, January 2017, good practice in relation to curriculum planning includes approaches that:

- Are tailored to individual needs
- Capitalise on children’s interests in order to achieve learning outcomes
- Are flexible and responsive so that plans could be changed or adapted to follow the interests of the children and respond to external events
- Are informed by on-going assessment;
- Are grounded in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

The EYFS Curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Our children’s learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

A balance of adult led and child-initiated activities are needed in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three **Prime Areas** are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others.
- **Communication and Language** – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment
- **Physical Development** - children have opportunities to be active and develop coordination (both gross motor and fine motor) and they learn about healthy choices.

Staff will also support children in four **Specific Areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

- **Literacy** – involves children learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write
- **Mathematics** – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculating skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures
- **Understanding of the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people, culture and communities, the natural world and past and present.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- **Active Learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to become an effective and motivated learner.

3. Continuous Provision

At Overstone Combined School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development and deepening their understanding of the EYFS curriculum.

The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment in which:

- Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.
- Children’s interests, passions and abilities are reflected.
- Materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world are used.

4. Welfare and Safeguarding

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 follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the [EYFS Statutory Guidance](#) (2021). Please also see our [Child Protection Policy](#).

5. Transition

We have several transitions throughout the Foundation Stage that we manage with care.

The first transition is into Nursery, which is very often some children’s first experience of any type of setting or school. We offer:

- ‘Stay and Play’ sessions in the Nursery setting are arranged in the term prior to the child commencing. These provide an invaluable opportunity for the children and parents to meet the adults in the setting and become familiar with the environment.
- A meeting is held for new parents in which we talk more in depth about the school and the Nursery session.
- Home Visits, in order to strengthen relationships further.

The second transition that occurs during Early Years is the transition from Nursery to Reception. This jump from part time schooling to full time can be very daunting for both parents and their children and we aim as a school to ensure that any transition is as smooth and comfortable as possible. We offer:

- A meeting for new parents during the Summer Term to provide information about the school, the curriculum and teaching staff. General information regarding school dinners, reading books and an opportunity to meet their child's new class teacher.
- Two transition sessions for children. During the first session, children spend the whole morning in Reception familiarising themselves with the environment and staff. The second session is longer, allowing the children to experience eating their lunch at school.
- A story-time session in which children new to the school come in to enjoy stories with their prospective classmates.
- Parents of children new to the school are offered an appointment with the Reception teacher during which important information, including that from previous settings, can be discussed.

The third and final transition is that between Reception and Year 1. The children are invited to attend two transition days in which the children are hooked into their new project and have an opportunity to spend more time with their new class teacher. We also have an opportunity for Reception teachers and Year 1 teachers to meet to discuss each child's level of development, ELG achievement and any other relevant information (e.g. medical, SEN, EAL, etc.).

6. Assessment

Aims

- To gather information that informs our understanding of a child's development and next steps
- To ensure that our children have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To develop children's awareness of the learning process and to involve them in and be part of their own self-assessment
- To involve all significant people in a child's life
- To monitor the development and progress of every child
- To assist in the monitoring, evaluation and planning of the curriculum
- To share information with staff, parents/carers and other agencies
- To produce written information that will be forwarded to the child's Year 1 teacher.

Baseline Assessment

Teachers complete a baseline assessment for every child starting Nursery and Reception.

In Nursery, an individual Play-Plan will be completed, detailing achievement in the three Prime Areas and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We will also identify ways in which school and home can work together to support the child's development. This will be shared with parents during Parents' Evening.

In Reception, children will complete the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment; a series of maths, phonics and comprehension activities, during the first 6 weeks of the Autumn term. (RBA, May 2021).

Daily Assessment

EYFS staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys, using Target Tracker.

Termly Assessment

- **Target Tracker**- Each term, we assess each child's level of development to be emerging, developing or securely working within the Development Matters age-bands and Early Learning Goals. This is then recorded on our whole school assessment software, Target Tracker. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.
- **The Leuven Scale**- When there are high levels of well-being and involvement, we know that deep level learning is taking place. The Leuven Scale enables us to measure these and ensure that our curriculum and environment encourage optimum wellbeing and involvement for every child.

End of the Academic Year

Parents receive an annual written report that discusses the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning, giving examples when these have been evident.

End of EYFS

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 seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers in children's annual reports. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to:

- Child Protection Policy
- EYFS Intent, Implementation, and Impact Statement
- Communication and Language Strategy
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2021:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf
- Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf