



## **Oreston Community Academy**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Date Reviewed by the Governing Body: Autumn 2019**

**Next Review date: Autumn 2022**



## **Oreston Community Academy** **Early Years Policy**



### **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from the age of 0 – 5 years. At Oreston Community Academy School, we have a single point entry to the foundation classes which is at the beginning of the school year.

The EYFS is an important stage 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. The EYFS is based largely on the premise of providing an environment that is stimulating and exciting to young minds, in an effort for every child to reach their potential. In line with the Early Years Inspection Handbook (September 2019), Oreston Community Academy ensures that the curriculum we use 'enhances the experiences and opportunities available to children, particularly the most disadvantaged'.

The Early Years curriculum delivered at Oreston is constructed in the knowledge that children arrive with us having a range of different experiences. We strive to ensure that all children who join our school are provided with experiences and opportunities that really enhance their learning journey with us, particularly for the most disadvantaged.

We realise that through an enriching and engaging curriculum plus quality interactions with practitioners, this can make all the difference for children. We ensure that with our varied curriculum we can harness children's interests and develop them further, as well as build on the experiences that our children have already had.

Our curriculum is planned and developed along the way with children's interests at the heart. Our thematic approach means our learning is based on a core theme and is also influenced by the children's interests. The themes that are chosen link to subjects that inspire and motivate children and are also influenced by what we know of the children and where we are located.

The Early Years Inspection Handbook (September 2019) states 'It is the role of the setting to ensure that children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning'. The early years are so important for building strong foundations that will make a real difference to a child's future. Cultural capital in early years is about giving children the best possible start to their early education and future success preparing children with the knowledge and skills for what comes next. We believe that what children learn in the early years of life will stay with them forever.

### **Intent**

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.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the characteristics of learning of being engaged and motivated, and for using creative and critical thinking. We endeavour to embed traditional British values in all our work and in children's moral compass.

These outcomes are achieved by:

- setting the standards for the learning;
- the development and care young children experience;
- providing for equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice;
- creating a strong partnership 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.

The Early Years Team are committed to nurturing and promoting a love of learning in the widest sense. We believe that for our children to feel safe, happy and included and to become confident and effective learners we must:

- provide a safe and secure learning environment in which children are happy and content;
- deliver a vibrant and enriched curriculum which takes full advantage of the abundant opportunities for learning both inside and outside the classroom;
- ensuring that the curriculum delivered builds on children's prior knowledge and skills to formulate progressive next steps and takes account of children's own interests;
- make strong partnerships with parents/carers to ensure that their understanding can help to consolidate learning and share in the children's learning experiences. The closer the partnership, the greater success in ensuring every child reaches their full potential;
- always seek to find innovative and creative ways to deliver the curriculum, constantly reviewing and refreshing our approach;
- provide real learning experiences for the children; developing partnerships with the local community and beyond;
- offer flexible learning strategies seek to personalise learning based on a 'stage not age' principle.
- focus on the whole child and develop key skills for life;
- provide a carefully planned, bright and busy environment in which children can develop a range of skills;
- develop children's confidence to become independent learners;
- provide opportunities for each child to become a valued member of the school community so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted.

### **Effective Practice in the EYFS**

Effective practice is built on the following themes:

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

### **Daily Routines**

In the Nursery and Foundation Stage, we provide a structured timetable which is conducive to effective learning. For part-time Nursery children, we ensure that all children take part in structured adult-led sessions on each day they attend to ensure they receive consistency in the sequence of lessons taught. These child-initiated and adult-led activities are reflected in the teacher's planning.

Children's 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, based on next steps of learning and children's interests.

Children are provided with a balance between structured free play and involvement in formal, teacher led activities. In both the Nursery and the Foundation setting, children are taught key subjects on a daily basis which include: phonics, maths, story/reading/oracy and fine motor skills. Regular times to support Personal, Social, Emotional Development (PSED), language and communication are built in through snack times and circle times. Children are given opportunities to consolidate and build on learning in these sessions through our continuous provision, which is available for sustained periods of time every day. 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.

### **Planning**

In the Nursery and Foundation Stage, a weekly timetable is used each week which is consistent where possible. Group planning is also completed each week that outlines the planning for the adult taught sessions in phonics, maths, physical development/handwriting, oracy and reading and other specific subjects. A weekly continuous provision plan is also completed. The Development Matters statements and Early Learning Goals for the sessions are added to the planning.

Medium Term planning is not completed as all planning is done on a weekly basis to ensure that children's interests can be built in and learning can be taken in the direction that the children take it and based on next steps. The Cornerstones Curriculum is used as a basis for our termly 'theme' but this is not fixed and is broadened based on the interests of the children. Key events in the calendar are also celebrated through the year and opportunities for children to learn about special celebrations are important. The children work towards a 'Learning Challenge' at the end of a term. As part of this, children celebrate their learning and achievements with their families in school.

### **The Environment**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The environment that we provide is a secure and caring educational one. When children feel emotionally safe and secure, they can explore and find out about the place they are in and the things they can see, touch, manoeuvre or manipulate. All children in the setting have equal access to the opportunities provided irrespective of their race, gender, religious or cultural beliefs, family background, home language, learning disabilities or abilities.

The environment enables children to access a range of activities and active exploration and autonomy are encouraged. Opportunities for investigation and discovery in both the indoor and outdoor environment are provided and adults play a key role in enriching and extending learning potential through high quality interactions.

A wide range of resources are provided to stimulate interest and nurture curiosity. We plan a learning environment both indoors and outdoors that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use resources that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to select resources and make choices to develop independent learning.

### **Physical Development**

One of our basic principles is that physical activity stimulates the brain and encourages learning. We therefore encourage physical development through our continuous provision both indoors and outdoors to support fine and gross motor skills, as well as PE sessions supported by our specialised school PE coach. Our finger gym activities and handwriting sessions help children to develop their fine motor skills and the Read, Write, Inc pattern is used to support children to use the correct letter formation.

### **PSED**

We ensure that children in the Early Years at Oreston Community Academy are highly motivated and eager to be involved in teacher and child-initiated activities.

Linked to the Characteristics of Effective Learning, we encourage children to involve themselves with enthusiasm and confidence. Mr Men characters are used to help the children identify with the Characteristics of Effective Learning and recognise their strengths and achievements.

The use of the school's Lighthouse Behaviour Policy is used to instil boundaries, support the modification of behaviour and provide rewards, praise and encouragement.

The children are made aware of how to manage risks and keep themselves safe and this is reinforced through the delivery of quality PSED sessions in response to the children's needs. The children are encouraged to share any concerns or worries with an adult, using resources around the class. Adults will respond to children's concerns and deal with them immediately. Jigsaw lessons are taught weekly in Foundation and Nursery as part of the PSED curriculum to help children to be proud of who they are and know they are special and unique.

### **Communication and Language**

The focus on the development of communication and vocabulary development in the Early Years is so important and is evident as part of the curriculum and planning. At Oreston Community Academy, we recognise that language opens doors. It unlocks the world of reading and the imagination, the excitement of writing, the capacity to explore new subjects and releases our potential to learn and grow as an individual.

We know that language development underpins progress, impacts on attainment and plays a huge role in a child's future life chances. Without enough language – a word gap – a child is seriously limited in their enjoyment of school and success beyond. To ensure we deliver a language rich curriculum our weekly timetable has planned opportunities for talk. Oracy sessions occur daily in which the children learn the meaning of new and ambitious vocabulary which is linked to a weekly key text. Children are given experiences to help them learn and embed new words.

The continuous provision ensure that the activities planned support high quality interactions between children and adults.

## **Reading and Phonics**

At Oreston Community Academy, we value reading as a key life-skill and we are dedicated to enabling our children to become lifelong readers. We believe reading is key for future success.

By the time children reach the end of their year in the Foundation Stage, the aim is for children to be able to read and understand simple sentences independently. They use the phonic knowledge to decode (segment) regular words and read them aloud accurately and also read some common irregular words (tricky words) such as 'I', 'no' and 'to'. They also need to demonstrate understanding about what they have read.

To become proficient readers, children must develop both word recognition and language comprehension. Our systematic, high quality phonics teaching is based on the Letters and Sounds programme which focuses on securing word recognition skills as these are essential for children to decode (read) and to comprehend what they have read. This programme of phonic work aims to secure fluent word recognition skills for reading by the end of Key Stage 1. Children also have lots of opportunities to apply their developing skills in interesting and engaging reading activities.

Phonics is taught every day to all children through the Nursery and Foundation Stage. The Nursery begins teaching all aspects in Phase 1 and then move into teaching Phase 2 for most children in the Spring Term. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught Phase 1 (if there are still gaps in knowledge), Phase 2, 3 and 4. The aim is to ensure that all children in the Foundation Stage reach the end of Phase 4 and some children will move onto Phase 5. Children are grouped in phonics based on their ability to ensure that the phonics taught matches or exceeds the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

Teachers in the Nursery and Foundation Stage have clear understanding of the children's phonics progress term-by term and this is monitored carefully, alongside the Phonics Lead Teacher. This Lead Teacher supports the team to ensure that regular Phonic learning walks are carried out to ensure that the teaching is highly effective and the school's non-negotiables linked to phonics are consistently followed. The phonics groups are carefully planned to ensure that the staff with the most expertise are placed in the most pivotal groups. The planning for phonics is completed by the teachers in the team and sufficient detail is provided to ensure that staff have clear direction when delivering the phonics sessions.

Children who fall behind are supported to catch up quickly. The on-going assessment of pupils' phonics progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace, and targeted support is given immediately. Precision teaching and other interventions are provided to children who need support to 'catch up' quickly.

Reading is valued highly and staff foster a love of reading. Stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction are chosen for reading to develop pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading. Pupils are familiar with and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction. Reading in Nursery and Foundation is also enhanced through links with home and the use of book experiences, reading buddies and school reading and library books in which children can work towards reading rewards including certificates and tea parties in the staff room. We run parental workshops to ensure that all families can feel supported in the reading process.

Staff in the Foundation Stage read with children in school and reading books match the sounds that children know. The sequence of reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge.

## **The Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The focus of the CoEL is on how children learn rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome. Underpinning the CoEL is the understanding that during their earliest years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement during these years will be creative and adventurous learners throughout their lives.

Children who do not receive this sort of support and interaction are likely to have a much different attitude about learning later on in life. Hence, why the supportive practitioner, and the environment they provide, need to nurture these CoELs to occur, but without forgetting that children are individuals who bring their own needs, talents and histories to the learning environment.

The Characteristics of Learning include:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Opportunities for children to develop in these are provided on a regular basis and children are helped to recognise them through the use of Mr Men characters.

## **Principles of Effective Teaching**

Lessons in the Early Years at Oreston Community Academy will always include these key principles:

- Opportunities for children to revisit and recap previous learning.
- Opportunities for children to answer key questions linked to the learning.
- Opportunities for the children to talk with peers (talk partners) and adult the learning.
- To manipulate resources to develop understanding, practise skills and share learning in their own way.
- Experience learning in small, manageable steps.
- Use resources and learning packs to support learning.
- Have opportunities for independent practise.
- Use pictorial images or videos to represent learning.
- Children should feel a sense of achievement and success.
- Offer challenge and support where needed.

## **Assessment**

At Oreston Community Academy, on-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe and interact with pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning in the form of 'next steps'. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Observations are recorded through the use of our online learning journey through our school data tracking system Itrack. Observations from families of children can also be uploaded onto this. Staff who add observations need to ensure that it is linked to the Development Matters Statements, Early Learning Goals and The Characteristics of Effective Learning. A next step is also identified, linking to the observation. The observation should include comments made by the child in their own words and observations of what the child did or resources they accessed. Through the year, observations are monitored to ensure that all children have range of observations in different areas. Children who have fewer observations are then a focus and all staff are aware of these children. Baseline assessments are carried out with all children on entry to ensure that all staff have a firm understanding of children's knowledge and skills and then the curriculum is planned. Steps of progress for all children in the Foundation Stage and Nursery are monitored through the use of our online data system and online learning journey to identify focus children and check progress.

In the Nursery the staff deliver a 'Focus Child' system, whereby 20% of the cohort are identified each week as the focus group. The focus children's next steps are used to inform the continuous provision plan for the week and all practitioners support children's next steps through their interactions. Information about home learning and children's interests is also gathered from parents the week prior to a child being a focus child

and also used to shape provision. Each child would then be the focus of observation, assessment and planning at least once every half term on a rolling programme.

At the end of the Nursery stage, a report is generated which reflects all of the 17 areas of learning. This report shows where each child is placed within the Development Matters statements.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

### **Linking with Parents/Carers**

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through parent consultations, learning challenges, book looks, our online learning journey and our end of year school report.

Each child in the Nursery is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home.

Parents and carers in the Nursery and Foundation are kept up to date with their child's learning at Oreston through a weekly newsletter which informs parents about focus areas and ideas to try at home.

Parents in the Foundation Stage also have a weekly homework task which is a fun activity to share as a family at home.

Parents are invited to come into school on a regular basis to take part in parental workshops and presentations by the staff which support parents in their part in their child's learning journey. Nursery and Foundation staff make themselves available to parents and carers to talk about their child before their child starts in our school and also through the course of the school year.

### **Transition**

By the end of the EYFS, and as part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, the staff in the Early Years ensure that children are well prepared for their new class. We believe that transition should be seen as a gradual process, central to which are similarities between the EYFS and Year 1 classes, good communication and change over a period of time. If transition is too stressful for children, both wellbeing and academic progress can be affected. Children's emotional needs should therefore be at the heart of any decisions made about provision. Children need time to get to know new adults, similarities in approach to teaching and learning, familiar resources and continued opportunities to learn through play.

Teachers from the Foundation Stage and the Year 1 classes meet to discuss children to ensure they have an understanding of their individual needs and interests.

We offer induction sessions for Nursery and Foundation children in the summer term before starting in the September which includes coming in for lunch with their parents/carers. We also offer home visits to parents/carers requesting one for children who are new to the Nursery or Foundation Stage.

The Foundation Stage start their first week in school on a part-time basis (just mornings before lunch) and are able to opt for part-time hours (after lunch) in the next two weeks after this. Children can start in our on-site Nursery in the term after which their third birthday lies, as long as the setting has space. Children in the Nursery opt for block sessions of at least two and half days either at the beginning of the week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday morning) or at the end of the week (Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, Friday) up to full-time hours if there is space. There is always an intake in September and if space allows, further intakes can take place in January or April.

Please see the Nursery Policy for more information.

### **Safeguarding**

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy along with our Intimate Care Policy.

### **The EYFS curriculum**

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.**

Our curriculum for the EYFS reflects the areas of learning identified in the 17 Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

The Early Learning Goals form part of the National Curriculum, and are in line with the objectives stated in the EYFS Guidance.

### **The Early Years Profile**

This summarises and describes children's attainment to the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observations and assessment in the three Prime Areas and four Specific Areas of learning, and the three Learning Characteristics:

#### **The Prime Areas of Learning**

Communication and Language (CL)

Physical Development (PD)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED).

#### **The Specific Areas of Learning**

Literacy (L)

Maths (M)

Understanding the World (UTW)

Expressive Arts and Design (EAD).

### **Monitoring and review**

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