Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

For Oakley Reception Classes

Chair of Governors signature

Headteacher's signature

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Person responsible for overseeing the implementation*: Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (responsible for EYFS and KS1)*

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Introduction and Context

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years of age. At Oakley School, our EYFS currently educates children within the Reception year, admitting children from the beginning of the academic year (September) following their fourth birthday. Over the course of the next term, we will be opening our brand-new Nursery on site. This will expand our EYFS offer, meaning children may enter Oakley Nursery from six months of age to four years old.

Nb. Compulsory school age does not begin, however, until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2024 EYFS Statutory Framework and we are fully committed to the purpose and aims that it sets out to achieve. Our EYFS curriculum is carefully structured to meet the requirements of the Statutory Framework and is supplemented by guidance and theories that we believe suit our ethos and the needs of the children we serve, such as the use of 'Development Matters' (2020), Montessori approaches and initiative such as Drawing Club by Greg Bottrill. Our carefully tailored curriculum also ensures we support children to achieve the Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning Goals establish what is expected of most children, by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Vision

'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life'
EYFS Framework, 2024

Our vision for the Early Years at Oakley School is for it to be a place where pupils are happy, safe and love to learn. Through a positive, caring environment, where staff build secure relationships with all children, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential and *be the best they can be*. We live out our school values of kindness, confidence and resilience in all that we do, shaping children into becoming responsible citizens.

We are passionate about a play-based, language-rich early years environment that encourages learners to be inquisitive, to problem-solve, to collaborate and to actively participate in high-quality interactions. We aspire to provide children with the tools to make them lifelong learners and lifelong readers. It is through these environments that children develop the language and literacy skills they need to succeed in all areas of learning.

We believe it is our duty and our vocation to create an Early Years that inspires all. As recent research conducted by the 'Royal Foundation – Centre for Early Childhood' found, high-quality early years' education makes a ***life-long, positive difference to children.***

Safeguarding

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them'
EYFS Framework, January 2024

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We regard safeguarding children as everyone's responsibility and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All our staff are trained accordingly, and we have sound procedures in place to protect all children. The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school is Mrs Cassie Shirley. The Safeguarding Governor is Ms Amanda Bishop (see Oakley School Safeguarding Policy for more information).

Keeping Safe

We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. As part of our PSHE curriculum, we teach children how to keep safe through our Protective Behaviours Programme, 'The Taking Care Project' (See our PSHE and RSHE policy for more information).

Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day, usually a piece of fruit, as well as being given the choice of milk. This is free until the age of 5, and thereafter can still be provided for a small fee via Cool Milk Ltd. They always have access to water and can refill as frequently as required. School Lunches are healthy, balanced and consider all dietary requirements and allergies.

Oral Health

The EYFS framework states that early years' providers must promote good oral health of all children within their setting. We are committed to ensuring all children have a secure understanding of the importance of good oral hygiene and promote this in a number of ways. In the first half term of Reception children learn about people in the community who help us, where a dentist visits the setting to discuss oral health with the children. We develop this partnership by actively promoting families to visit the dentist and ensuring all children have a good understanding of how to brush their teeth effectively. As part of our curriculum, we also ensure children understand how food and drink choices effect oral health and encourage good choices.

Intimate Care

'Intimate' care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on the age and stage of a child's development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom or changing underwear following an accident. In most

cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene, and it is good practice for the school to inform the school nurse of any children who require intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual chid. No intimate care is to be given without the expressed written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins our Reception class. Please see our separate Intimate Care policy for more information.

Our Aims and Principles

The aims for our Early Years provision are encapsulated in the acronym **OAKLEY:**

Our pupils are happy and safe.

All adults take a keen interest in our pupils, know them well and know how to move their learning forward.

Knowledge and skills are carefully planned in the EYFS and built upon each year

Learning environments are inspiring, inclusive and challenging.

Engagement with parents and carers is crucial to support every child to make progress.

You matter – we celebrate the uniqueness of each child and tailor learning experiences to meet individual needs.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles which form our intent for the provision at Oakley School:

- **The Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

The Unique Child

At Oakley School we believe that every individual child can achieve great things with the correct support, relationships and environment. We strive to ensure our learners know how to be resilient, confident and self-assured to enable them to be the best they can be. We believe that high-quality learning and teaching is the entitlement of all children. This must equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices. We acknowledge that children learn at different rates, and each is at an individual stage of development. We believe that children learn best when they

are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning. Identifying what each unique child “knows and can do” is the foundation of inclusive early years practice. We identify children’s baseline and ensure that planning, interactions and carefully planned environments are fostered to move children’s learning and development forward every day. This helps children to learn and develop in all seven areas of learning and development and ensure that they are happy and motivated to do so. We value and celebrate diversity of individuals within the school and every child matters to us. All children and families are treated equally and respectfully, regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities.

Positive Relationships

At Oakley School we believe that for children to be strong and independent they rely on excellent role models to guide and support them from the very beginning of their lives. We recognise that parents and carers are a child’s first and most enduring educators and we aim to work collaboratively to enrich these relationships and support families in nurturing and educating their children. We place huge importance on creating positive relationships with all our pupils, by developing caring, respectful and professional relationships with them and their families. It is through effective engagement and collaboration between the school and the home we can ensure that children have positive examples in which to follow.

We deeply value and encourage our Home-School partnerships and this is exemplified by:

- Engaging in meaningful conversations before children begin school at our summer term Transition Events, Parent Information Meetings and Home Visits. This outlines our school routines, expectations and provides opportunities for parents and carers to ask any questions and alleviate any worries they may have.
- Providing a Parent Guide before children begin school, outlining crucial and supportive information to guide children’s entry into Reception.
- Inviting parents and carers to visit the Reception Classroom for an induction visit before starting school.
- Adopting an ‘open-door policy’ for parents and carers to come into school to share any queries or concerns. School staff will also operate a fluid style of conversation with families to share any concerns about progress or settling in that they may have.
- Sharing ‘wow’ moments, developmental achievements and next steps using the online learning journey ‘Tapestry’. Parents are also encouraged to upload ‘wow’ moments that they see at home to develop a whole picture of the child.
- Frequent communication in the form of app messages, a fortnightly newsletter sharing celebrations and achievements, website updates including sharing Curriculum Learning Theme Maps and Home Learning opportunities.
- Frequent Parent Meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as Early Reading, Phonics and Maths.

- Coffee Mornings
- Come and Play workshops – opportunities for parents and carers to come and spend time with their children in the learning environment to engage in their play and development and gain insight into their next steps.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed and to view their child's written and creative work.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.
- Askin parents to create and/or sign permission slips/ risk assessments where necessary. E.g. visits, food tasting, photographs. Intimate care plan, risk assessments (where necessary).
- Parents invited to a range of activities throughout the school year, such as, assemblies, workshops, Christmas Productions, Come and Play sessions, Sports Day etc.

Role of Staff and Key Workers

In Reception, the Class Teacher is the named Key Worker for each child in the setting. They are instrumental in planning, delivering and monitoring the learning and progress that every child needs to succeed. This will also include the deployment of other key adults within the environment. At Oakley School we take our responsibility as role models seriously. We are driven by creating positive and supportive relationships with all children, getting to know them as individuals, interacting with them in a meaningful and influential way to support their progress and overall development. We are passionate about using positive praise and encouragement as part of our behaviour management techniques, to encourage children to be the best they can be. Staff are trained to engage in restorative conversations to support children to reflect on behaviour that could be improved and encourage children to make positive and safe choices. The formation of healthy, safe relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and for their future success.

In the rare occasions where significant, known adults cannot be in the classroom, we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Enabling Environments

The environment, when designed with purpose and intent, is the third teacher.

This principle is derived from educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy and reflects the idea that the environment acts as a participant in the educational experience. It involves developing the environment in a way that allows children to discover, collaborate, question and become independent in their own learning.

At Oakley School, we take huge pride in creating engaging and challenging learning environments that support and extend children's development. We aim to provide neutral yet welcoming environments, that avoid cognitive overload but that are enriched by children's own work, key vocabulary and declarative statements to support all learners.

The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment where the seven areas of learning are discreetly planned for to ensure coverage and opportunity. Play-based learning is paramount, and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We encourage children to take risks, find solutions to their own problems and be self-sufficient in their tasks. Adults guide, encourage and question children to move learning forward. Children gain exposure to a wide range of tools and resources which enable them to make progress and become confident, lifelong learners. All spaces and resources are regularly checked and audited to ensure they are safe and effective.

Forest School

We believe that pupils benefit enormously from working outdoors. In a natural environment, where children, are given time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships, they develop understanding of the world and the environment through the use of emotions, imagination and senses. Outdoor learning complements the curriculum we provide in school and contributes to the development of confidence, resilience and independence.

We are in the early stages of developing a Forest School Provision within the grounds of our brand-new school. This is something we aim to develop and have up and running within the next academic year.

Learning and Development

We believe that everything we learn, encounter and experience '*floats on a sea of talk'* (Britton, 1970, Pg 164), which is why our carefully planned curriculum is built upon high-quality texts, stories and opportunity to talk. We want our children to be inspired by the awe and wonder a great book can offer and how deep, meaningful conversation enriched with language and vocabulary that we intentionally teach, can pave the way for future success both academically and socially.

The curriculum for the EYFS forms the first stage of our whole school curriculum. At Oakley School, children are engaged in explorative and play based learning for most of their day. This learning does not always have an immediate and fixed outcome but Early Years practitioners at Oakly School are aware of the outcomes we want our children to reach, and we guide children towards them. Children have significant choice and independence as they play, and this supports their confidence, independence, collaboration, motivation and self-regulation. Exploration and play-based learning can be chosen entirely by a child or can be guided by a practitioner who knows that child well. Both options are open to all children. Our curriculum is vital in Early Years, especially in a post-covid world. It encompasses all the things we want children to know and experience and be able to do as a result of their time in Early Years at Oakley School, with Communication and Language being a main priority.

There are **seven areas of learning** and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are interconnected.

Within the seven areas of learning, there are **three prime areas:**

- *Communication and Language* – children will given many opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- *Physical Development* – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will develop both their gross and fine motor skills to enable them to be agile and physical whilst also honing the skills to become proficient writers.
- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development* – children will be supported to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; form positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also **four specific areas,** through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- *Literacy* – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest. Children will have access to mark making and writing materials throughout the day.
- *Mathematics* – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in subitising, counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures
- *Understanding the World* – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and the environment.
- *Expressive Arts and Design* – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The EYFS also includes '*Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'* which helps practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about eh world around them. The three characteristics are;

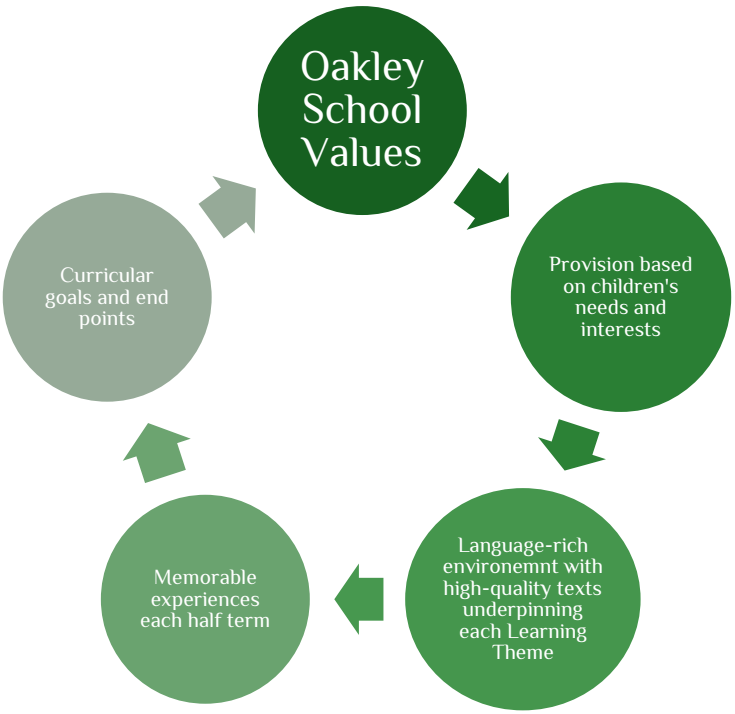
- *Playing and Exploring* – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- *Active Learning* – children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, the enjoy achievements.

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

Our curriculum is planned through a series of Learning Themes, each half term. These inviting themes provide a hook in which we carefully plan the knowledge and skills we want pupils to learn whilst also providing opportunity and flexibility to respond to the children's needs and interests. Weekly plans highlight daily inputs, group and continuous provision activities linked to the learning theme and identification and time to explore children's needs and interests. Adult's observations and interactions with children feed into the activities available, ensuring all children's needs are met. Weekly plans show links to each of the areas of the curriculum. Activities are extended and adapted accordingly through practitioner's knowledge of the children and their learning.

EYFS Curriculum Snapshot

A snapshot of our broad and balanced curriculum at Oakley School



Induction Process

We have close links with local nurseries and communicate, where circumstances allow, throughout the year. This enables the pre-school children and the Reception teacher to become familiar with each other before the transition period begins. The EYFS lead will visit local nurseries to meet the children and play alongside them in the summer term before the start school. Transition forms will be emailed to all nurseries, these will be discussed in person with staff at local nurseries. Phone conversations will be had with other nurseries if necessary. The pre-school children are invited for two visits in the summer term. One of these is with their parents and the other without. The second of these will coincide with Warwickshire's common induction day where all the children move to their new year group. In June, an Introduction Meeting is held by the

Headteacher, EYFS lead and Reception staff to introduce parents/carers to the school, reception procedures and curriculum. Parents/carers are encouraged to read the 'Reception Guide' which outlines the curriculum and school routines. All Reception staff complete home visits in the first week of September. This allows teachers to see the new children in an environment in which they feel safe and secure. During the home visit, teachers talk about routines of school, uniform and answer any questions parents may have. Children then do a staggered intake where they come to school for two shorter sessions: one morning including lunch and one afternoon. This takes place in groups of 15. This enables children to become familiar with their new classroom and all of the adults in Reception. During these sessions we do a tour of the school and grounds, meet members of SLT and talk about the routines of class. Reception children are introduced to the life of the wider school gently as they are ready. Initially, children go for their lunch at 11.45a.m, allowing more time to get used to the hall and routines before older children join them. After they have eaten, children play on the playground in their own section. After a few weeks, they mix with the rest of Key Stage 1. Children attend two assemblies later into the Autumn term, one Phase assembly and one Celebration assembly.

Assessment and Recording

'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.'

EYFS Framework, January 2024

Throughout the EYFS there are many parts of assessment that inform the overall 'whole picture' of the child and the development they have made. These are outlined below:

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) – Statutory Assessment

During the first six weeks of a child's time in Reception, the teacher conducts a statutory baseline assessment (RBA) with all children. They may also carry out their own forms of baseline assessments to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of learners. The RBA can be administered in any term, depending on when the child first started school. Therefore, children entering reception year in the spring and summer terms, will carry out the RBA at these points too.

High quality interactions

High quality interactions with children enable Reception staff to constantly assess children's knowledge, address misconceptions and move their learning forwards. Regular conversations between Reception staff enable children's strengths and areas of need to be discussed and next steps planned and actioned. Tapestry

Tapestry

In Reception we use the online learning journal 'Tapestry'. Parents have access to this and can upload their own observations of things their children do at home. Reception staff use Tapestry to highlight 'Wow' moments in children's learning and track developmental milestones. Tapestry is also used to upload group photos of memorable moments and events throughout the year.

Folders

At Oakley School, we also file selected pieces of paper evidence of children's learning and development through the use of folders. These folders act as a learning journal and are an opportunity to gather evidence of creative work, cutting skills, mark-making, writing, drawing and such like, completed by each child. These pieces are stored chronologically within the file and form a wonderful reflection at the end of the year to demonstrate the journey and progress every child has made. Staff keep three folders each year as part of our moderation process but then files are sent home to be kept by parents and carers.

Summative Termly Assessment Checkpoints

Throughout the year, teachers conduct termly 'checkpoint' assessments. These are completed on entry (Baseline), at the end of the Autumn Term, at the end of the Spring Term, at the end of the Summer Term.

At each checkpoint, teachers will make a judgement against the 7 areas of learning and the Characteristics of Effective Learning, and these are recorded using Tracking Grids. They will make this judgement primarily using their knowledge of the children, supported by any evidence they may have on Tapestry. Conversations with other staff and parents will also help to form these judgements.

For some areas of learning, teachers will complete a 'Checkpoint Activity' to support their judgements. These will be kept in the children's folders to build up a picture of that child's progress over time. The same/similar activity will be completed at each checkpoint.

Phonics assessed every half term

As part of our rigorous approach to teaching Early Reading and Phonics, and to ensure fidelity to our scheme, 'Little Wandle', we asses the teaching and learning of Phonics every half term using an online assessment tracker. This ensures we no children are left behind and that reading progress remains high priority.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) – end of the year

The EYFSP is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception), 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 17 Early Learning Goals as 'Emerging' or 'Expected'. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Final term written report

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. These are sent to parents in early July, allowing time for any discussion thereafter. Year 1 teachers also receive the EYFSP and final report to inform their practice and make appropriate plans to meet the needs of all learners.

SEND and Inclusion

At Oakley School our vision is to create a positive ethos which promotes inclusion of all pupils to achieve their full potential within a supportive, caring atmosphere.
The SEND Code of Practice sets out stages for SEND provision and Oakley School's strategies for meeting SEND are aligned to these stages. Please see our SEND policy and Reception Parent Guide for more information.

In the EYFS our commitment to the 'unique child' and positive relationships means we get to know our children really well. If there appears to be barriers to their learning, we work collaboratively as a team, together with our school SENDCo to identify these barriers, and find ways to support every learner to make progress.

For children with SEND, precise assessment needs to focus on what the child can do, and what the barriers to their learning are. All children are entitled to the whole of the Early Years curriculum. Of course, they won't all manage to do and know everything that's mapped out: but some who appear vulnerable at first may thrive later in the year. Rather than 'differentiating down', we believe that 'scaffolding up' is a more suitable approach in our commitment to inclusion. By 'scaffolding up', children with SEND are exposed to the concepts and skills in our wider curriculum in a suitable breadth and depth. Whereas 'differentiating down' suggests that children with SEND have limited access to the curriculum. Our commitment to 'scaffolding up' means that children are included in the wider curriculum and are not segregated from their peers.

Staffing

All staff members who work in EYFS should have regular supervision with their line manager, at least on a termly basis which should be confidential space for open discussion. This includes:

- Reviewing performance against EYFS standards
- Identifying areas for development and setting goals
- Discussing individual children's needs and how to best support them
- Addressing any concerns or safeguarding issues
- Providing feedback and coaching

Records of supervision sessions will be kept, outlining key discussion points and agreed actions.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS leader will carry out regular monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, EYFS leader and governing body, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.