



ORCHARD HOUSE  
SCHOOL

# EYFS Policy

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## EYFS POLICY

### Introduction

1. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within the school provides for children aged between 3 to 5 years. Children are admitted in the September following their third birthday (Nursery) or their fourth birthday (Reception).
2. The school is a non-registered setting.
3. For all EYFS children aged from three until 31 August following their fifth birthday, both the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2023, effective January 2024) and the Independent School Standards (2019) apply, including the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023).
4. The EYFS curriculum within the school has been designed to incorporate the learning requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage alongside elements of the Montessori philosophy.

### Aims of the EYFS

5. The school seeks to provide:
  - a high standard of teaching and learning
  - quality and consistency of approach
  - a secure foundation
  - partnership working
  - equality of opportunity
6. The overarching principles of the EYFS are that:
  - every child is unique
  - positive relationships are crucial
  - children require enabling environments
  - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates
7. The aim of the Montessori philosophy within the school is to view each child as unique and that within each child lies a hidden potential. For this potential to be unlocked, the school needs:
  - to give children the opportunities to develop trust and autonomy.
  - to nurture confidence, self-esteem and courage, enabling the child to embrace new challenges, take risks and act with initiative.
8. Young children joining the school in the EYFS will have had a wide range of different experiences. As a result, they will have a variety of skills and interests and will need a well-planned and resourced curriculum to make optimum progress.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

9. The curriculum for the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and developing children's individual needs alongside promoting a lifelong love of learning.

10. There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS guidance. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and for forming relationships.

11. The prime areas are:

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

12. The four specific areas of learning which strengthen the prime areas are:

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

13. None of these areas of learning and development can be delivered in isolation. They are equally important and interdependent in the support of a rounded approach to child development. All areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The focus in the EYFS is on a child-centred approach with the understanding that all children progress at different rates. When teaching such young children, it is also crucial to take account of the age of children and, in particular, 'summer born' children.

## **Communication and language**

14. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

## **Physical Development**

15. Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives<sup>7</sup>. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-

ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development;**

16. Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive 9 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

### **Literacy**

17. It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

### **Mathematics**

18. Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

## **Understanding the World**

19. Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

## **Expressive arts and design**

20. The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

## **Planning, Recording and Assessing**

### **Planning (also see Planning Policy)**

21. Thorough planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. It enables staff to build up knowledge about how individual children learn and make progress. It also provides opportunities for us to think and talk about how to sustain a successful learning environment. This process works best when parallel class teachers in the EYFS plan together.

22. Planning includes all children, including those with additional needs. Plans are therefore flexible enough to adapt to children's interests and experiences. Topic planning takes place on a half termly basis and activity planning occurs on a weekly and daily basis. Reference to the Statutory Framework (Effective January 2024) for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Montessori methods of education ensures progress and continuity. These two documents are linked and demonstrate that both approaches achieve the same ends.

23. To enable effective learning and development in the EYFS each child is provided with opportunities to establish positive relationships in enabling environments.

24. EYFS learning and development comprises of: The Development Matters (Non-statutory) and Early Learning Goals - the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five;

25. The three main characteristics of effective teaching and planning are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning

- Creating and thinking critically

26. Organised visits are planned and authorised visitors are invited into the classroom to enrich the curriculum.

### **Recording Information**

27. The children are observed each day. Individual learning journey observations are also carried out so that each child's development can be observed and the EYFS team can plan the next steps to take the individual child's learning forward. Samples of the children's work including photographic evidence is kept in their Early Years Profiles and in workbooks.

28. The EYFS Profile is a way of summing up each child's development and learning achievements. The profile is used in both the nursery and reception classes. It is based on on-going observations and assessments in all seven areas of Learning and Development. Each child's level of development is recorded against the early learning goals.

### **Assessment (also see Assessment Policy)**

29. On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Teachers must ensure that they observe children and respond appropriately to help them make progress. Assessments are therefore based on practitioners' observations of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities. Judgments are made on observational evidence gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts. All adults who interact and actively work with the child make contributions to this assessment and information provided by parents will also form a vital part of this process.

30. The information gathered is used for discussion during regular staff meetings, short reports, parent/teacher meetings and for future planning and target setting. At the end of the EYFS all teachers are invited to take part in the moderation program and must provide information about the assessments carried out to the local authority.

31. The children are assessed on entry into nursery and reception. The aim of this assessment is to monitor the progress of pupils and provide immediate information to the EYFS teachers. Regular formative assessment is completed throughout the academic year. (Also see Assessment Policy)

### **SEN including Able, Gifted & Talented (Also see SEN Policy and Able, Gifted and Talented Policy)**

32. It is recognised that there are children of differing ability in all classes, and so suitable learning opportunities are provided for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. This is achieved through a range of strategies:

- Setting common tasks that are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty where not all children complete all tasks
- Grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each group
- Using mixed ability pairings or groups
- Providing a range of challenges with different resources
- Using additional adults to support the work of individual children or small groups

33.Children with statements of educational need or specific learning difficulties will have their needs assessed and, if appropriate an IEP will be implemented. The school works closely with outside agencies where appropriate, to support children who require speech and language therapy, occupational therapy or intervention from other professionals.

### **EAL (also see EAL Policy)**

34.All EAL children are assessed in English. Various teaching methods are used to ensure that children with English as an additional language are able to access the curriculum. An intervention program may be used if it is appropriate for the individual child.

### **British Values**

35.British values are implicit within the daily routines and in the PSED and Understanding the World planning and activities. These fundamental British values are delivered in an age appropriate manner. These activities link to the school's aims and ethos.

### **Supervision of staff**

36.Early Years staff undertake appropriate training and professional development to ensure they can continually improve the quality learning and development experiences they offer for children. The concept of 'supervision' is a way for staff to discuss issues and identify solutions as well as receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. Supervision meetings happen on a regular basis between the Head of Early Years and each staff member, including teaching assistants and specialist teachers, in order to support their role as key persons working with children and their families. This is in addition to regular staff appraisals and other opportunities for staff training.

### **Staffing Ratios**

37.The staff ratios follow the guidance in the EYFS Statutory Framework as a minimum.

### **Safeguarding (See also Safeguarding Policy)**

38.The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies can be found on posters displayed around the school buildings and in the school's appendix to the Safeguarding Policy.

### **First Aid**

39.All early years staff, other than gap students, complete a Paediatric First Aid certificate on appointment. PFA training must be renewed every three years.

### **Key person**

40.Each child is assigned a Key person (Level 3 or above).

### **Behaviour (see Behaviour Policy)**

### **Risk assessment (see Risk Assessment Policy)**

### **Outings (also see Educational visits, exchanges & trips)**

41. A risk assessment (in writing) must be undertaken for all outings, and must include consideration of adult-to-child ratios and the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage identified risks and hazards.

### **Complaints**

42. There is a formal complaints policy available from the school office for parents and a written record of any complaints, and their outcome is kept. After an inspection by ISI the school provides a copy of the report to parents and/or carers of children.

### **Equal Opportunities (also see Equal Opportunities Policy)**

43. We are committed to an environment that promotes equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their race/colour/gender and religion and any work undertaken reflects this commitment. Children with educational statements or specific learning difficulties will have their needs assessed and, if appropriate, an IEP will be devised (also see the SENDA and Accessibility plan).

### **Resources**

44. The school uses a variety of resources and materials to support and enhance young children's learning, whilst allowing them to explore and develop as individuals. This will take place both inside and outside the classroom, where the children will be exposed to a variety of different resources, thus allowing them to be creative, imaginative and sociable.

45. Resources are regularly reviewed and updated by class teachers and subject coordinators.

### **Communication with parents**

46. Communication with parents is extremely important to each child's development. In order not to disturb the children's work cycle, parents are encouraged to use the message book system for routine correspondence. These are checked and signed each morning by the class teacher. Parents also receive additional information through parental handbooks, the school website, circulars, weekly newsletter, twitter, parents' evenings and open events. Parents may also make an appointment with staff and senior staff at any mutually convenient time. Staff may also request additional meetings with parents if necessary.



## **Appendix (EYFS)**

### **Weekly routines OHS**

#### **Nursery**

- Children stay 5 sessions per week (morning 8.30 – 12.00 or afternoon 12.15 – 3.30)
- Children attend Lower school assembly once every half term.
- As well as being taught by their class teacher, children enjoy a varied curriculum they attend specialist lessons in Computing, Music, Eurhythmics, P.E, French and Spanish.
- Children enjoy daily outdoor activities.
- As and when the individual is ready he/she may take home some reading activities, which will prepare them for their progression to the reception class (Lower I).

#### **Reception (Lower I)**

- Children attend school 5 full days a week (8.30 – 3.30)
- Children attend Lower school assembly once every half term. Lower I children also attend an EYFS assembly on Friday afternoons.
- As well as being taught by their class teacher, they also enjoy a varied curriculum with specialist teachers in Music, Eurhythmics, P.E, French, Spanish and Computing.
- Children enjoy daily outdoor activities.
- Reading activities are sent home daily. A library book of their choice is taken home once a week.