



Onslow Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

This policy should be read in conjunction with the whole school
Safeguarding Child Protection Policy and Learning & Teaching Policy.

Policy Review

This Policy was adopted Spring 2004
The Policy will be reviewed in Spring 2027
By Children and Learning Committee

“Play is the highest form of research” – Albert Einstein

We were early adopters to the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021 reforms and follow the ‘Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework’, and the ‘EYFS Profile Handbook’. Our school uses ‘Development Matters’ and ‘Birth to 5 Matters’ to help guide our curriculum

Transition to the Early Years

During the summer term, teaching staff visit all main feeder nursery schools to hold discussions with the nursery staff and introduce themselves to the children who will be starting school the following September. We also hold a stay and play session for all children and parents to help us finalise class **allocations**. Parents/carers have the opportunity to tell us who their child’s friends are to help us ensure all pupils are allocated to a class with at least one other pupil they know, where possible. The children are then invited to visit their new class and meet their new class teaching team during a second stay and play session. Each child is given a personalised ‘Welcome to your new class’ leaflet. This contains information about their new class, which the child will be able to look at during the summer holiday, together with their parents or carers. During this second visit, we also invite parents/carers to stay for lunch with their child so children start to become familiar with lunchtime arrangements before they start school officially. This helps to relieve any anxieties around eating lunch in school and encourages more pupils to opt for healthy school dinners.

Parents are invited to a presentation at which they will be given information on how they can best prepare their children for school. They are given the opportunity to ask questions and find out about the EYFS curriculum.

During the first week of the autumn term, home visits are carried out by the class teacher and teaching assistants to gather any final information needed, give parents/carers the opportunity to ask any questions, and to re-familiarise the pupil with their key staff (see appendix 1 for the home visits policy).

Transition Programme

Our successful transition programme enables the children to settle happily into school life and become motivated learners. **All children will attend part time for the first few days and then they will attend school full time alongside their peers.** By the autumn half term, we aim for all children to be well settled and used to the routine of full time schooling. Parents of spring and summer born children may request for their child to continue attending on a part time basis during the Autumn Term, but we strongly suggest that they attend full time in line with their peers to help develop their personal, social and emotional needs. This request would need to be put in writing and agreed with the Head teacher.

If parents/carers decide to delay their summer born child’s school start until the September following their 5th birthday and wish them to start school in reception, they must discuss this with the Head Teacher and make a request (a formal application) to the local authority for them to be admitted out of their normal age group.

Learning & Development

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We have high expectations for all children from the first day they start school, and the Reception year is critical in building the foundations for a successful education. We believe every child should be given the tools to succeed so they enter Year 1 ready for the next stage of their education.

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to a well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with continuous provision at the heart of what we do.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows children's interests. Planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual Tapestry learning journeys and assessment folders. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff enhance play and extend as needed to further extend individual learning.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The **prime areas** are:

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

The **specific areas** are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world

- Expressive arts and design

The **prime** areas develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. 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. If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the **school's SENCo** in order to access Special Educational Needs support.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-led activity. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. This style of learning, continuous provision, continues well into Year One to ensure a positive and effective transition into KS1.

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** also move through all areas of learning. In planning and guiding what children learn, staff must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are

- **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.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests;
- Using a wide range of multi-sensory teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing different opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Establishing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children who need specific support or whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- A mastery curriculum that allows all children to learn key knowledge and skills in depth.

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. Our school has a safeguarding team that oversee the safety and welfare of children in the reception classes and the Head Teacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). All staff working in the EYFS have annual safeguarding training and know how to take action if there are safeguarding concerns about a child.

There is always at least one member of staff with a paediatric first aid certificate on the premises and available at all times. A paediatric first aider accompanies the children on any trips or outings.

More detailed information can be found in our 'Safeguarding Child Protection policy'.

Assessment and Evaluation

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

Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, staff should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and are not required to prove this through excessive collection of physical evidence.

A baseline assessment will be carried out during the first few weeks of the child's first term at school. This provides a benchmark by which the child's progress is monitored. Each term, staff will assess pupils to see if they are on track to meet the Early Learning Goals at the end of the year or working below. Interventions and additional support through quality first teaching and enabling environments will be put into place quickly. Teachers use Tapestry software to create a 'learning journey' for each child. This is further supported by anecdotal stickers, a writing folder and maths folder. Evidence collected will look different for each child based on their age and stage of development.

In the final term of the Reception year, the EYFS Profile will be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents/carers and staff with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect the teacher(s) knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents/carers. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The child's teacher(s) must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

From EYFS to Key Stage 1

In the last few weeks of the summer term, there is a transition meeting between the Reception and Year 1 teachers. The profile report on expected levels of development for all early learning goals, together with a short commentary on each child's progress in the three key characteristics of effective learning is discussed. Year 1 teachers are then able to plan lessons and resource their classroom environment to effectively meet the needs of all pupils in the following academic year.

The first term in Year 1, at a minimum, is developed around a continuous provision approach to learning, similar to what the children would have experienced in Reception. This is to help ensure a smooth transition from one key stage to the next and to continue providing the children with rich learning opportunities. Children are familiar with this style of learning and teaching and it helps to alleviate any anxieties around moving to a new year group. Resources and systems, such as phonics lessons, are kept consistent for the same reason.

Appendix 1: EYFS Home Visits Policy

Reasons for a Home Visit

As part of the process of getting to know the new cohort of Reception pupils, all families are given an informal home visit, which should last no longer than 30 minutes. The home visit is an opportunity for the child to meet the staff in a familiar environment and to allow parents/carers to ask any questions or raise any queries or concerns. This will take place in the first week of term, before the child starts school.

The class teacher and teaching assistant(s) carry out each visit, wherever possible. Parents are notified of the visit in advance, usually at the end of the summer term, and a convenient time is arranged. Early Years staff wear their ID badges and take a mobile phone with key contacts pre-stored. This mobile number as well as a timetable of the visits will be left in the School office (01483 532726). We cannot re-arrange another visit for a missed appointment so it is vital that we are made aware of any issues.

If parents/carers have any questions about home visits or need any special arrangements, they are requested to contact the school office prior to the home visits.