

Oasis Academy Short Heath Early Years Policy

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Early Years Setting at Oasis Academy Short Heath.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. At Oasis Academy Short Heath we have two Nursery classes and two Reception classes. Nursery children join the school the term after their third birthday and Reception children join the September following their fourth birthday.

Our Early Years Philosophy

At Oasis Academy Short Heath, we endeavor to make sure that staff, children and their carers all work together to create a high quality Early Years environment. A setting that is welcoming, safe, inspiring and, is a place where children can grow in confidence and become life long active learners.

At Oasis Academy Short Heath we aim to:

- Provide a safe, stimulating, and enriching environment so children thrive emotionally, socially and educationally.
- Ensure children enjoy coming to school
- Ensure no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- Enable children to actively contribute towards making the setting buzz with fun and purposeful learning.
- Build on what children already know and can do.
- Offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of the cohort and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- Support children in making an effective transition from home to school.

Principles of early years teaching and learning

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

See Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage- Section 1 (DES 2007)

To ensure effective Early Years practice takes place at Oasis Academy Short Heath, we follow and build upon these principles within our early years teaching and learning.

Learning and Development

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the learning aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Hence, seven areas of learning and development shape our Early Years educational provision. All of these areas of learning and development are important and are inter-connected so none are delivered in isolation from the others.

Three of these areas are called the Prime areas because they are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They also build children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

- * Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- * Communication and Language
- * Physical Development

The four other areas are called specific areas and it through these areas that the prime areas can be strengthened and applied.

The four Specific Areas are:

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

These areas of learning and development require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively. Consequently, we plan to ensure that our children's learning experiences include a balance of adult led and child initiated activities so our pupils develop competency and skill across all seven areas of learning and, they have the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Oasis Academy Short Heath, 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'.
- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- **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.

Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document.

The Planning follows 'Writing for Real' Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes. These Medium Term Plans are used by the Nursery and Reception teachers as a guide for weekly planning. However, the teachers may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This is indicated on weekly planning which provides detailed activities for the week.

Staff make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment

During the first term, the EYFS teaching teams in Nursery and Reception work together to assess the ability of each pupil using observations and activities. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching program for individual and/or groups of children. This first /baseline assessment also takes into account any other records we receive from previous pre-school settings, parents and childminders. Most of our children have attended our setting as Nursery pupils and so that helps to facilitate the first /baseline assessment process in Reception.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the pupils' Foundation Stage, and to summarise their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 areas of learning onto itrack. To do this, we age band the child's level of development across the 17 areas of learning and then we enter whether they have achieved some, most of or all of the criteria. Using this information, we can then analyse which children are on track to be Emerging, Expected or Exceeding the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year.

Observations and assessment of each individual pupil is also on going with the information gained used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The class teachers in Reception and the class teachers in Nursery have weekly planning meetings to discuss each child and ways to adapt the provision to address learning needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations and activity outcomes. It includes teacher and teacher assistant knowledge of the pupils and photographic evidence. Assessment is completed regularly. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

Assessment data is recorded in maths books, writing books or learning logs. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

At the end of the final term of a pupil's Reception Year we send a summary of these assessments to the LA. For Nursery and Reception, we also keep a copy of the individual and cohort assessments for school analysis. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

The end-of-year report therefore offers the outcomes of children's learning as emerging, expected or exceeding the end of year expectations. There is also a space for general comments about the child's character, effort and achievements. These end-of-year reports are completed in the Summer term and are sent to parents before the end of the school year.

Enabling Environments

At Oasis Academy Short Heath we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's learning and development.

Our Reception and Nursery areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The Year groups are set up into learning areas that reflect the 7 areas of learning. Within these areas, children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Children also have access to both the inside and the outside environment at various points in the day.

Both Nursery and Reception have their own enclosed outdoor areas with sand and water facilities, gross motor equipment including climbing frames, bikes, trikes or scooters, creative art and role play equipment, large scale construction toys as well as reading, writing, maths, problem solving, scientific and mud kitchen opportunities and experiences. This has a positive effect on the children's development as spending time outdoors offers opportunities for exploring and learning things differently to when pupils are indoors and gives things a different perspective. Outdoors, the children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources for the children to access outdoors, that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning are planned for on a weekly basis and reflect the book of the week or topic as appropriate. However, planning may be changed on a daily basis if this is needed to facilitate the children's learning and development further or, more appropriately to meet their learning needs.

Transition

Starting school and settling into their new class can be a difficult time for young children. Therefore, we plan carefully and work hard to support children with the transition so it is as smooth as possible for each child.

Parents of all children entering their Nursery or Reception Year in the next Academic Year are invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer Term to meet their child's new teachers. This is an opportunity for staff to go through our school EYFS policy and talk to the parents about the school and Government expectations for the end of the EYFS. It also provides time to explain other matters such as uniform, attendance, family support, Forest schools, food and drink. Additionally, it is an opportunity to answer any questions that parents might have about starting school.

For Nursery children, children are invited to a taster 'Stay and Play' session just before their official start date. During this, staff are on hand to meet and greet the children with their parents and answer any questions they might have. In Nursery, parents are welcome to come in and help settle their children at the beginning of sessions by helping them to self-register and find a morning activity to enjoy. Towards the end of the year, as children are getting ready to join school full time, we encourage more independence of parents leaving as soon as their child is safe inside the nursery.

For Reception children, children are invited to several taster 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Summer Term before their official start date. During this, staff are on hand to meet and greet the children with their parents and answer any questions they might have. Parents are invited to settle their children in the morning for the first day by helping them to find their coat peg but we actively encourage independence and aim for children to be coming into class independently as soon as possible.

When children begin their Nursery or Reception Year in the September, we find that it is best for all children who have attended our academy already to start at the same time. After a couple of days of these children re-settling in, we then welcome all those who are not familiar to our school environment, rules and routines. To help ensure the best possible start for all children who are eligible for 30 hours education in Nursery or Reception, we encourage parents to bring their children for full days from day one. Any decisions to deviate from the normal pattern of entry will need to focus on the interests of the child.

Some children may be starting school on a full-time basis very soon after their third or fourth birthday so we are committed to ensuring that their EYFS provision meets these needs. In all EYFS classes, children continue to access the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum that is on offer in all pre-school provision. This flexible and responsive play based provision ensures that children's individual needs can be met. Children have places to explore and be active as well as places to rest and be quiet.

Throughout the Nursery and Reception Year we aim to build up their involvement in whole school life, helping them to become familiar with many of the teaching and support staff working in other classes. Full time Nursery Children and Reception children will have taken

part in the weekly celebration assembly, song practice as well as shared the lunchtime hall with other pupils.

Safeguarding & Welfare

‘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.’
(Statutory Framework for EYFS, 2017)

At Oasis Academy Short Heath, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- To promote good health;
- To manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs;
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- To ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- To maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and, to meet the needs of the children.

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. (More information can be found in the school’s safeguarding policy)

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.

Healthy Eating

All full day children in Nursery and all Reception children, are provided with a piece of fruit each day as well as being given the choice of a drink - milk or water. Nursery children are offered a sandwich or piece of toast in the morning to meet their growing needs. All children have access to water at all times. School dinners are provided free for all children in Reception and are offered to Nursery children at a subsidised cost of £1. Menus are on the website for parents to view and teachers to share with the children.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves such as dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet or changing their underwear following an accident.

Although we actively encourage parents to start helping their children become independent with these tasks prior to their start in Nursery, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support. Therefore, while upholding the principal that every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs, staff and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child and at times, staff may need to help children with intimate care as required.

Inclusion

At Oasis Academy Short Heath, we value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children or their families for any reason. All children at Oasis Academy Short Heath are treated fairly and are given the opportunity to achieve their best regardless of their religion, race or abilities.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing 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 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.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working with Nursery and Reception pupils to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Principal, her Deputy and EYFS lead will also monitor EYFS provision as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. This policy will be reviewed in July 2021.