

**Oak Hill C of E Primary School**

*-Believe Achieve-*

**Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage**

This policy was written in consultation with staff and governors

Discussed by Governors: 12 October 2020

Review Date: October 2022



## **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Oak Hill, all four year old children who wish to start at our school are welcomed into the Reception class in September, at the start of the academic year. They stay for mornings and lunch for the first two weeks and then, with mutual agreement between staff and parents, they may start full time education.

Our policy is based upon the principles of The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, i.e. that:

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”*

## **Aims**

We aim to ensure that all children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We aim to prepare all children for entry to Year 1 and provide them with a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

As a school with a firm Christian foundation, a strong importance is placed on the development of Christian values. Reception children have regular contact with the local vicar, who visits school to lead worship assemblies, and take part in various special services at St Peter’s in Dumbleton and St Margaret’s in Alderton.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare**

We commit to meeting safeguarding and welfare requirements laid out in the EYFS framework to ensure the safety and promote the welfare of all children. Full details can be found in Oak Hill’s Safeguarding Policy.

At Oak Hill, we respect every child as an individual. We value their sense of humour, their warmth, their happiness, their willingness to learn and sometimes not to! In our Reception class, each child is provided with a caring, learning and nurturing environment ensuring that they have the best possible start to their school life. We value the diversity of each child within the school and do not discriminate because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. Each child's individual needs are met by using a variety of realistic and challenging opportunities. Please see Oak Hill's policy for Special Educational Needs for further information about children with SEND.

## Home-School Links

We see education as a partnership. We will be building upon the firm foundations that have already been formed between parents and children at home. It is our aim to provide a friendly, colourful and caring atmosphere, where children feel happy and secure, enabling them to realise their maximum potential.

We value the relationship between school and home and endeavour to promote and maintain the positive interaction between staff, parents and children.

We do this by:

- 😊 welcoming parents in to the school both formally and informally. Those children with older siblings in school frequently visit on an informal basis.
- 😊 providing prospective parents and children with a guided tour of both bases and an opportunity for them to talk to staff
- 😊 inviting all parents to an induction meeting in the Summer term where they meet the Head, teachers, teaching assistants, governors and a representative of the School Association. At this meeting parents are provided with information booklets and an opportunity to talk through any questions they may have.
- 😊 inviting the new Reception children to attend two taster mornings in the second half of the Summer term (with lunch).
- 😊 the class teacher visiting the new Reception children in their own setting during the Summer term.
- 😊 the class teacher offering home visits during the first two weeks, to provide an opportunity for the teacher to get to know more about the child in their own environment and giving parents opportunity to ask questions or discuss matters concerning their child on a 1-1 basis
- 😊 using 'Tapestry' to share learning information between home and school
- 😊 encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- 😊 organising a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. (Parents receive a written report at the end of the school year.)
- 😊 arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Harvest, Nativity and Easter Celebrations, Mothering Sunday assembly, Dancing and Music Festivals, Sports Day, Pancake Race, World Book Day Fancy Dress, Toy and Book sales and an End of Year Celebration assembly.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with the children, their parents and other family members. Great care is taken to ensure that everyone feels welcome in to the Reception class and that parents may take time to settle their child into school in the morning if necessary. We have good links with Alderton Acorns pre-school

playgroup and Toddington Nursery School. They take part in many of the school activities ensuring that the children have the best possible introduction to life at Oak Hill. The Early Years governor supports the Reception staff, attends parent information meetings and open days where possible and makes visits to the classroom to get to know the children.

## Learning and Development

Oak Hill provides a caring environment where each child may learn and develop. The classroom is carefully organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There is an outdoor area that the children can access each day, providing opportunities for imaginative play, textured play and creative play. There is a further outdoor wooded area, Dumblewood, which provides opportunities for supervised learning throughout the seasons.

The following are important in order for meaningful learning and development to take place:

- 😊 a warm and welcoming environment where children feel happy and secure
- 😊 positive relationships between staff and parents
- 😊 the delivery of an exciting and colourful curriculum which encompasses the needs of each child
- 😊 opportunities for the children to develop their personalities, own interests and independence.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The four guiding principles of EYFS shape our practise. 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and 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.

Within the EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development:

Three 'prime' areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. They include:

**Communication and language** development – giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

**Physical development** – providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

**Personal, social and emotional development** – helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied. These include:

**Literacy** development – encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** – providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

**Understanding the world** – guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

**Expressive arts and design** – enabling children to explore and play with a wide 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.

Initially, in the earlier stages of the EYFS, the three prime areas are the main area of focus, but in reception class, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning.

For each area of learning and development there are a number of Early Learning Goals (ELGs) – 17 in all. Each ELG comprises a statement describing the expected attainment of a child at the end of the EYFS for that particular area.

## Planning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. At Oak Hill, the teachers will make ongoing judgement about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults, responding to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Staff will also reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. 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.

## **Religious Education and SMSC**

Alongside this, children are also provided with opportunities in RE, following the themes outlined in the Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus for RE. Religious Education aims to promote the spiritual development of children through an exploration of the world of religion in terms of its special people, stories, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. The themes draw material mainly from Christianity with opportunity to look at material from Judaism as well. Teachers aim to keep a balance between hearing and exploring religious stories and practices and helping children reflect on their own feelings and ideas arising from these. RE can also contribute to all other areas of the EYFS, particularly PSED, C&L and UW.

### **Assessment**

#### Baseline Assessment

To meet current government requirements, baseline assessments take place during the first six weeks.

#### Ongoing Assessment

Children are observed by staff throughout their time in reception and evidence is collected and recorded to show how each child is progressing in relation to the stages of learning and development outlined in 'Development Matters' and the Early Learning Goals. Discussions take place between staff, parents, the children and other adults involved with the children, in order to build up an accurate picture of each child's attainment. This is recorded using the online tool, 'Tapestry'. Regular assessments are also made using the school's tracking system, in line with the school's assessment procedures.

Staff use this information on an ongoing basis to plan provision that will enable each child to continue making progress.

#### Final Assessment

In the final term of reception, the 'EYFS Profile' will be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by Oak Hill; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults able to offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals and an indication of whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging') will be given. This is the EYFS Profile.

The reception teacher will provide the Year 1 teacher with a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These inform a dialogue between teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Parents receive a detailed end of year report outlining their child's progress against The Profile, and the profile itself will be made available for parents to view and discuss with the teacher on request.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Head teacher and EYFS teacher will carry out monitoring as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Assessment and Target Setting Policy.

C Tarling  
January 2020