

Oldbury Park Primary School

Early Years Policy

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Statement of intent

At Oldbury Park Primary School, we provide an ambitious, language-rich curriculum that enables every child to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for future success.

Through high-quality interactions, carefully planned learning opportunities and meaningful play, we support children to become confident, independent, resilient learners who are well prepared for Key Stage 1.

We seek to provide:

- **Consistently high quality learning opportunities**, so that every child makes good progress.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

1. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we will aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Develop children's speaking, listening and vocabulary through high-quality adult-child interactions, stories, conversations, songs and sustained shared thinking.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four overarching principles will shape our practice:

- 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 the school and parents.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school will:

- Provide a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

2. Learning and development

The EYFS provision and practice will be based on observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development will be delivered through an ambitious and carefully sequenced curriculum. Staff use knowledge of children's needs, interests and prior learning to adapt provision and teaching so that all children make strong progress from their starting points.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language:
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development:
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development:
 - Self-regulation:
 - Staff explicitly teach and model routines, expectations and strategies which support children's self-regulation, attention, emotional development and independence
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading

Early reading is prioritised throughout Reception from day one. Children are taught through a systematic synthetic phonics programme (Read Write Inc) which is delivered with fidelity and consistency. Opportunities to develop language, comprehension, reading and writing are embedded across the curriculum.

- Writing
- Mathematics:
 - Number
 - Numerical pattern
- Understanding the world:
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design:
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play and are willing to try new things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for doing things.

Throughout Reception, children are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics needed for a successful transition to Year 1. This includes developing independence, resilience, communication skills, self-regulation, early reading, writing and mathematical understanding. Transition arrangements ensure continuity of learning and support children's emotional well-being.

3. Assessment

Each child is known well by adults within the setting. Practitioners build secure and nurturing relationships with children and families to support children's well-being, learning and development. Therefore assessment is primarily based on practitioners' professional knowledge of children gained through daily interactions, observations and discussions. It plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan provision, and assess the need for support. Data collection will be proportionate and will never detract from meaningful interaction with children. Staff interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

At Oldbury Park we undertake summative assessments of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year.
- Termly assessment of expected level of development using CRST EYFS Assessment Support Materials.

The school will ensure that teachers actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with specific children in their assessment processes to provide a well-rounded picture of their development and attainment.

To ensure assessment processes do not impact staff's ability to spend as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development, staff are not required to record or document evidence of development.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND/EAL, as appropriate.

At the end of Reception, each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals as part of the statutory EYFS Profile. Practitioners judge whether a child is "meeting expected levels

of development" or is "emerging," based on ongoing observations throughout the year. Results are shared with parents/carers and passed to the Year 1 teacher to support a smooth transition, and data is submitted to the Local Authority as required.

4. Inclusion

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

All children will be valued as individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability, gender, or any other protected characteristic.

We recognise that vulnerability can take many forms and is often contextual and fluid rather than fixed. Staff are trained to identify and respond to the needs of children who may be vulnerable for a wide range of reasons, extending beyond SEND and protected characteristics alone.

Our Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy ensures the needs of every child are considered holistically. Staff are expected to consider the whole child and their family context when planning provision, support, and communication with families, and to raise concerns promptly in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Children with SEND will be identified as early as possible, with support implemented in partnership with parents, external agencies, and the SENCO, who monitors and manages SEND provision within the EYFS setting. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure full access to the curriculum and wider school life, in line with our SEND Policy.

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The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The EYFS curriculum will be planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

5. The learning environment and outdoor spaces

Outdoor learning is considered an integral part of the curriculum. It is planned to promote learning across all areas of the curriculum and reflects the same ambition as the indoor environment.

Children have daily opportunities to develop physical skills, communication, problem solving, creativity, resilience and independence through planned and child-initiated experiences outdoors.

The learning environment will be organised in such a way that children can explore and learn independently in a safe and interactive environment both indoors and outdoors. The environment changes to match the needs and interests of our cohorts. This will happen in response to information gathered from observing and interacting with the children.

6. Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps will be taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. 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. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The school will follow all safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined within the most recent EYFS Statutory Framework, including safer recruitment procedures, staff suitability checks, safeguarding training requirements, safer eating practices, attendance monitoring and children's health, safety and well-being.

The school ensures that children are adequately supervised at all times and that staffing arrangements meet the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework. Staff are deployed effectively to support children's learning, development and safety across indoor and outdoor environments.

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The DSL is Sarah Davies. The deputy DSL is Tim Williams.

Further information can be found within the school's Safeguarding Children & Child Protection Policy.

7. Safer Sleep

The school recognises its responsibility to promote the health, safety and welfare of all children and will have regard to current safer sleep guidance as outlined within the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Although children in Reception do not routinely sleep as part of the school day, provision will be made for children who require rest due to individual needs, medical circumstances or exceptional situations. Any child requiring sleep or rest during the school day will be appropriately supervised and cared for in a safe and suitable environment.

Staff will be aware of current safer sleep guidance and will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents are informed of any concerns relating to a child's health, well-being or sleep needs. Where relevant, staff will work in partnership with parents, carers and health professionals to support individual children's welfare requirements.

The school will ensure that all safeguarding and welfare procedures relating to children's health, supervision and well-being are implemented consistently and reviewed regularly in line with statutory guidance and school policy.

The EYFS Leader will ensure that staff remain up to date with statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements, including any guidance relating to safer sleep, health and well-being.

8. Safer eating

The school recognises the importance of promoting safe eating practices to protect children from choking and to support their health and well-being.

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework, staff will be vigilant when children are eating and drinking, ensuring that they are appropriately supervised and seated safely. There will always be adequately trained staff to support First Aid when required. Staff will be aware of individual dietary, allergy and medical needs and will work closely with parents and relevant professionals to ensure these needs are met.

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework, staff will be vigilant when children are eating and drinking, ensuring that they are within sight and hearing of an adult at all times, and are appropriately supervised and seated safely. There will always be adequately trained staff available to support First Aid when required. Staff will be aware of individual dietary, allergy and medical needs and will work closely with parents and relevant professionals to ensure these needs are met.

Children will be encouraged to develop independence during mealtimes while being supported to eat safely. All staff will receive appropriate information and training relating to food safety, allergies, choking prevention and emergency procedures, and arrangements for food provision will comply with current health and safety and safeguarding requirements.

Staff will model and promote positive eating behaviours, including sitting while eating, chewing thoroughly, taking appropriate-sized bites and avoiding distractions during mealtimes, to help children develop safe lifelong eating habits

9. Intimate Care

Oldbury Park Primary is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity and independence of all children. Staff will support children with intimate care needs in a respectful, sensitive and age-appropriate manner, recognising that children develop toileting skills at different rates. Wherever possible, children will be encouraged to manage their own personal hygiene independently, with support provided as required. Any intimate care provided will be undertaken by suitably trained staff, in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy, safeguarding procedures and health and safety requirements. Staff will work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure consistent approaches are in place, particularly where a child has ongoing medical, developmental or SEND-related needs. Appropriate records will be maintained, and the privacy, dignity and well-being of every child will be protected at all times. The school will make reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs and ensure that no child is discriminated against or excluded from any aspect of school life due to their intimate care requirements.

10. Parental involvement

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents, carers and families.

The school values parents as children's first educators and seeks to establish effective two-way communication from the outset. Information about children's interests, experiences and achievements at home is used to support curriculum planning and to build a complete picture of each child's development. Parents are provided with regular information about the EYFS curriculum, phonics, reading and ways to support learning at home.

Parents will be invited to parents' evenings twice a year; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. Classrooms or office space will be utilised for confidential discussions between staff and parents.

Parents will be asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

11. Transition arrangements into Reception

Effective transition arrangements are established with nurseries, pre-schools and families. Information gathered before children start school is used to support a smooth transition and inform early curriculum planning. Oldbury Park routinely visits Nurseries and families and provide ample time for children and their parents to visit their new classroom environment.

12. Digital Technology and Screen Time

Oldbury Park Primary School recognises that technology can be a valuable tool to enhance learning when used purposefully and appropriately. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, screen-based activities will be carefully planned and used only where they add educational value to children's learning and development. Technology may be used to support areas such as early literacy, communication and language, mathematics, creativity and understanding of the world.

Screen time will not replace opportunities for high-quality adult interaction, sustained shared thinking, physical activity, outdoor learning, imaginative play or hands-on exploration. Staff will ensure that children's learning is primarily rooted in practical, play-based and language-rich experiences, recognising the importance of direct experiences and social interaction in early development.

Any digital technology used within the EYFS will be age-appropriate, closely supervised and aligned with the curriculum intent. Staff will model safe and responsible use of technology and will promote children's understanding of digital devices in ways that support their learning, well-being and development. Parents will be encouraged to support healthy and balanced approaches to technology use at home.

This paragraph reflects Ofsted's view that technology should enhance, rather than dominate, children's learning experiences and keeps the focus firmly on interaction, language development and active learning.

13. Monitoring and review

The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS will be required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

This policy will be reviewed annually. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.