Oakwood School
"Working Together"

Early Years Pathway

Early Discovers, Early Investigators, Early Explorers, Early Adventurers

Rationale

The Early Years Pathway is founded on the principles and practice of play-based learning, utilising the specific interests and intrinsic motivators of our learners. This ensures the highest levels of engagement from our learners in a structured and supportive learning environment.

At Oakwood School, we believe in providing our learners with the best possible start to their education will establish the building blocks for their future learning. There are a whole host of new experiences which learners must encounter during their first years in school. For example, learning to separate from parents, establishing relationships with new adults, being amongst other learners, eating in school, following daily routines, participating in transitions and learning boundaries and rules, which are essential for safety and social reasons. We have high expectations of all learners within Early Years and understand the vital role that early intervention has in providing aspirational outcomes into adulthood.

Our Curriculum Approach

Our curriculum is based on around the guidance of 'Development Matters' and is delivered through our whole school 5 tier curriculum pathway approaches, this offers each and every pupil their own individual approach to learning that is tailored to their individual needs. It is delivered mainly through topic-hook based planning which aims to offer a wide variety of themes to provoke interest throughout the year.
In our Early Years classes children will follow the Early Discovers, Early Investigators, Early Explorers, Early Adventurers and Early Voyagers pathways. The delivery of our curriculum is formed around learning through play to engage children into active learning, exploration and becoming a critical thinker. A three year topic cycle ensure breadth and balance. Individual children's learning intentions are formed around the outcomes of their EHCP to ensure that learning is relevant and personalised and these are driven by broken down more manageable smaller steps called Personal Learning Targets.
Our pathways include:
Early Discovers: Learners are beginning to explore and develop the earliest communication, cognitive and social interaction processes and skills on which all future learning is built.
Early Investigators: are focusing upon refining communication, cognition and social interactions skills with greater intentionality through the use of range of multi-sensory approaches. They are beginning to build skills in using a range of functional communication methods and recognising actions can cause a reaction / interaction.
Early Explorers: are beginning to access more formal activities / learning concepts and developing and securing a more sophisticated understanding and use in key areas including speech and language progressing into literacy skills and problem solving skills progressing into maths core strands.
Early Adventurers: are working between 3 to 4 years developmental stages and are working toward the expected age related stage standards. They are developing more formal, knowledge-based understanding in all prime and specific strand. All these children have some gaps in their understanding of earlier skills and knowledge and will

be learning how to use and apply their knowledge and understanding to different context.
At Oakwood we use Learning Journeys as our assessment system for children working at the early development levels right through to children working towards their expected early learning goals. This assessment system also help support tracking the progress and development of each individual child in order to support their profile assessment at the end of Reception.

Organisation of Learning

As stated above, Oakwood Early Years follow the Development Matters as the core framework alongside our 5-tiered curriculum. We use the Early Years Foundation Stage framework to inform and guide our provision.

The curriculum areas are as follows;

- Communication & Language (Prime)
- Physical Development (Prime)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Prime)
- Literacy (Specific)
- Mathematics (Specific)
- Understanding the World (Specific)
- Expressive Arts and Design (Specific)

Our focus for our EYFS learners are centred on the three prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development which is widened and enriched by the specific areas of Understanding of the World and Creative Development. The teaching of Literacy and Mathematics is introduced when a child is developmentally ready, although stimulating experiences are provided as part of continuous provision. The Prime Areas of Learning form the core of early child development and are key areas of need for our learners. These areas provide the skills that support learners in their lives and help them start to thrive both at home and in their learning environments. 'The Specific Areas of Learning' cannot be developed alone and rely on the skills gained in 'The Prime Areas of Learning'. The four Specific Areas of Learning, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design build on these, encouraging many of the skills in Prime Areas as learners learn new skills from the four Specific Areas.

Communication and Language – at Oakwood we ensure our Early learners experience a rich language environment where all learners are immersed in language to support them in developing skills in expressing themselves and maintain attention and listen. Learners are supported in building skills and confidence in using a vast range of methods including Intensive Interaction, Attention Autism, PECs, Aided Language Displays, Makaton, vocally, gestures and through body language and eye contact. EYFS staff will also closely work alongside Speech and Language therapists to support and identifying the correct method of communication for each individual.

Physical Development – Our Early learners will be supported and empowered to develop fundamental movement skills including close liaison with physiotherapists and occupational therapist, becoming increasingly competent and confident and access a broad range of opportunities to extend their agility, balance and coordination. Learners will develop an understanding of the important of physical activity and how to make healthy choices in relation to their diet.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Our Early Learners will be supported in building positive relationships, social interaction skills, a positive sense of themselves and others and managing their feelings. Throughout EYFS our learners will be guided and supported in developing strategies that promote self-awareness and self-regulation, as well promoting a sense of community within the classroom and wider school.

Literacy – At Oakwood our learners have access at all times to a reading rich environment including books such as big books, sensory books, big book, magazines and story corners. We promote a love of reading through daily story time opportunities that are brought to life through motivational resources and multi-sensory approaches. Teaching staff will dynamically adapt and tailor reading materials to the children's interests and skill levels including a range of communication aids including symbols, Makaton, choice switch to support expressive and receptive skills. Our pre phonics and phonological awareness skills are delivered through a range of programmes including RWI, First Steps and Book Bands, Early Writing Skills – Our learners will experience building their fine motor skills alongside their gross motor skills to support the development of hand-eye co-ordination. Fine motor skills, mark making and writing skills are intertwined and taught through daily activities in imaginative and exciting ways in order to develop the fundamental movement's skills in preparation to beginning to write including literacy opportunities and focused sessions such as dough disco, wiggle squiggle and write dance. Learners have access to a wealth of writing resources and media as part of continuous provision in order to practice these skills.

Mathematics – Our learners engage in Maths through everyday life experiences, play and continuous provisions. Mathematics involves providing opportunities to develop skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, and calculating simple addition and subtraction problems as well as build awareness of shape, space and measure. Maths learning also takes place through the use of learning tools including Number blocks, White Rose Maths and Numicon.

Understanding of the World- Our EYFS learners have a vast range of opportunities to help process and be an active participant in the world around them including wider community visits, outdoor forest sessions and educational visits. Learners are invited to engage in celebrations of other cultures, religions and traditions through hands on experiences. We model and promote awareness of what staying safe in the wider world and online in a digital world and when using technology.

Expressive Arts and Design – Our learners are provided with opportunities to express themselves through a range of media and materials and through a range of creative activities including music, drama, role play, dance and design technology.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The "**Characteristics of Effective Learning**" from the Early Years Curriculum are at the heart of our Early Years Curriculum Pathway and explore the different ways in which learners learn. These characteristics highlight the importance of:

- playing and exploring - where learners investigate and experience new things.
- active learning - where learners concentrate and keep on trying when they encounter difficulties
- creating and thinking critically - where learners develop their own ideas make links between them and develop strategies.

In our Early Years setting, we teach learners individually, in small groups, in class bases and in whole cohorts. Through a combination of teacher input, continuous provision opportunities and outdoor learning. Sessions are carefully planned to encourage learners to develop their learning independently through play, exploration and challenge. Within the classroom learners learning builds on their individual strengths and interests, enabling progress through the vehicles of sensory learning, play, and discrete specialist teaching. Emphasis will be given to:

- The teaching and reinforcement of transferable skills
- The design of highly motivating experiences 'enticements to learn'
- Collaborative work with therapists and other agencies ensuring that therapeutic provision is incorporated into the curriculum
- Sufficient time for mastery and retrieval so that learning can be truly cumulative
- Outstanding classroom environments to stimulate and engage quality thinking and reasoning
- 'Hands-on', enquiry-based learning

Success Indicators

Through the Early Years Curriculum / Pathways, we will see learners:

- making sense of the world around them.
- achieving their full potential in all aspects of their development regardless of their starting point.
- becoming confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners
- Increasing in independence
- Increasing in communication
- develop a love for learning through high levels of engagement.
- who are comfortable in the setting, engage with familiar staff and build positive relationships with people.
- seeking to challenge themselves and extend their skills in the provision areas.

Success and hard work are celebrated directly with parents through regular contact, more formal termly parent meetings and class blogs. They are shared with the school during our weekly celebration assemblies and are shared 1:1 with learners themselves in a personalised way.

By the time children leave Early Years we aim to identified and secure the pathway that they will transition into either Discovers, Investigators, Explorers, Adventures or Voyagers. We also aim that they will:

- Be developing their ability to communicate and have a detailed communication profile / portrait that will support them throughout their transition to Key Stage 1 / 2.
- Develop their skills in all areas of cognition, physical and personal, social and emotional.
- Enjoy and engage in a range of multi-sensory learning opportunities.
- To feel safe, secure and settled in their surroundings and with adults and peers.
- To be able to tolerate and access different areas of school with less anxiety around transitions.