Oakwood School
"Working Together"

Explorers (Semi-formal)



Explorers Pathway

Semi-formal

'Learning to do and explore'

Overview

- Children working at a **Semi-formal** level are beginning to secure early and concrete concepts such as colour, shape, size, position and early number as well as develop more functional understanding and use of early language.
- Learning is meaningful and child driven to motivate and engage.
- **Structured play based** approach with a focus on **developing key skills** either within a small group or 1:1 to **introduce early subject specific work.**
- Regular sensory opportunities.

Rationale

The Explorers Pathway seeks to maximise pupil engagement and support outstanding progress in all areas of learning through a variety of engaging structured play-based activities with the introduction of some subject specific learning, focussing on four key areas:

Communication and Language

The focus of which is to support the development of independence when utilising their communication skills. This ensures that pupils are able to indicate their need and desires and be able to socialise with peers and adults. Communication may include the use of Makaton, PECS, communication technology, gestures, vocalisations and spoken language. We embrace a holistic approach to communication.

Pupils will encounter a wide range of literature through shared stories, interactive stories and books, supported by adults where appropriate. This will develop pupils listening and attention skills and increase levels of engagement alongside the use of Attention Autism/Curiosity approach sessions where appropriate.

Problem Solving

This includes the ability to be responsive to stimuli, to anticipate outcomes, to be persistent and to independently investigate. Through this, pupils develop critical thinking skills, awareness of cause and effect, as well as finding out about number and quantities, shapes and measurements - giving pupils the ability to process and interpret information in order to find out more about the world around them.

Creativity and Physical Development

This includes exploration using the five senses, as well as fine and gross motor skills, vestibular awareness (balance) and proprioception (body awareness). Pupils are supported to learn how to control and organise their bodies and to explore their environment in a meaningful way. They are then able to self-regulate using sensory integration resources and techniques.
As part of more structured PE and swimming sessions, children will learn specific skills and build upon these alongside their peers, showing clear progression.
Fine motor skills are developed via a progression from sensory exploration through to more structured handwriting sessions.

Pupils are encouraged to express themselves creatively and develop a love of creativity through activities which encompass art, craft, music and dance which are developed through our termly themes.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This includes social and emotional literacy. Pupils are given opportunities to participate in cultural and religious experiences in a meaningful way. Pupils learn to recognise and manage their emotions and to regulate their behaviour, supporting them to be an active member of their community: school, home and in the wider world.
Time is built into each day to develop personal skills including self-care and independence as part of daily routines, including playtimes, swimming and PE sessions.

Organisation of Learning

Pupils working on the Explorers Pathway are taught through cross curricular learning and structured play-based learning, with a strong focus on developing key skills in the 4 areas of the curriculum (Communication and Language, Problem Solving, Creativity and Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development). Learning is delivered in a combination of structured focussed activities and play in order to capture pupils' interests through meaningful and motivating activities, often 1:1 or in very small groups to make progress against personal learning targets.

Structured play-based learning with an element of some subject specific focus is a key aspect of our Explorers Pathway. This ensures our learning is meaningful and child driven. Within this pathway, learning can look like:

- Structured play- based opportunities and lots of exposure to continuous provision.
- Opportunities to develop children's imagination and social skills by joining in with practical activities that they find enjoyable.
- Small group work or 1:1 in the introduction to early subject specific work.
- Regular sensory input through sensory diets, sensory circuits/breaks and in class activities designed to help develop connections in the brain and explore the feelings associated with each sense.
- Regular and embedded opportunities to develop a communication system that works for each individual child. This may be using verbal communication, photographs, symbols, aided language displays, object of reference or a combination of two or more strategies.
- Individualised teaching approaches to suit the needs and targets of each child.
- Specialist approaches such as Intensive interaction, MOVE, Sherborne, Rebound Therapy Attention Autism or Curiosity approach.
- Repetition and routine to embed and develop learning.

Success Indicators

Through the Explorers Pathway we will see children:

- Able to learn and play co-operatively with each other – engaging in focussed small and whole group sessions.
- Progress will be evident through clearer communication intentions and increased engagement.
- Develop secure attachments within school.
- Demonstrate a growing understanding of what is happening in their bodies, their minds and their surroundings and be able to communicate this.
- Increasing engagement with opportunities developing their social communication, emotional regulation and shared attention, as a result of which they will be happy and settled members of the school and home community.
- Show a growing development of cooperation with others and gaining friendships.

- Further increase their independence in daily personal routines.
- Use of a familiar, and personal communication system to share wants, and beginning to share needs.
- With reduced behaviours which may challenge because of a better understanding of themselves, and an improved communication system.
- Be increasingly able to self-advocate through clearly demonstrating their likes and dislikes; towards managing personal safety.
- Make progress in a very individual way; this may be lateral as well as linear. Progress will be seen against their personal learning targets (home and school), EHCP targets, occupational/physiotherapy and speech and language targets.

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 children themselves in a personalised way.