

Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School

Early Years Policy

To be read by staff in conjunction with the:
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.



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OLOW Primary School Early Years Policy

Introduction:

Within our Early Years children are valued as unique individuals, who learn and thrive through a holistic approach that includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social and cultural experiences. Our pedagogy reflects the belief that children benefit from positive relationships with others, which enables them to be happy and caring, resilient, and, to value and respect one another in all aspects of their lives. An ethos of independent learning through a stimulating play-based environment is seen as essential for children to achieve their potential in all aspects of their educational lives with us, within early years.

Building on the children's previous experiences and interests, we foster a love of learning that enables children to become confident and creative thinkers. Our ethos encourages the process and enjoyment of learning and focuses on developing positive learning identities and dispositions, helping to nurture independence and confidence. The role of other children and adults within an enabling environment is also recognised and promoted.

Aims:

- To enable all children to become creative and independent autonomous learners.
- To provide an inclusive and secure environment where all children have the right to feel safe and happy.
- To provide equal opportunities for all children to develop to their full potential and for children to be respectful and appreciative of others' cultures, values and beliefs.
- To provide a well-balanced curriculum for each child to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- To enable children to play, learn, co-operate and negotiate with others.
- To promote an environment where children are safe, confident and valued, feel able to share their ideas and opinions and appreciate the needs, views and feelings of others.
- To provide a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment where learning is enjoyable, positive, fun and builds upon previous experiences and challenges thinking.
- To provide an environment that enables children to make connections and links between past, present and future learning experiences.
- To offer a variety of high-quality learning experiences and resources that give the children the opportunity and time to independently explore, discover, question, and think for themselves.
- To promote high expectations of positive behaviour through giving children choices, opportunities, ownership, and responsibility for their decision making.

- To establish an effective partnership with parents and families, supporting continuous learning and the well-being of their children.
- To ensure the smooth transfer from home and pre-school settings to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and from the EYFS to Key Stage One.
- To understand that everyone is unique and that we are all equally valued as individuals in our setting and the wider community.
- To evolve our practice so that all staff understand not just the academic aspects of the curriculum but also that staff understand and promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning and British Values within our setting as well.

Routine and Organisation

Our Early Years setting caters for children in a full time Nursery class (limited to 22 children) starting in the September after their third birthday. The children then progress into the Reception classes the following academic year (two classes of 30).

Each day provides opportunities for the children to have access to both our indoor and outdoor learning environments. Throughout the day, children initiate their own activities and have access to all resources. Adults in the setting observe the children as they play, to extend, stimulate, provoke, and support children's learning and development. Knowledge of each child informs future planning for independent and focused play that provides rich and stimulating learning experiences to challenge and enhance thinking.

We provide a wide range of opportunities that support the children as learners. These include adult initiated/led activities as well as child-initiated experiences. Learning maybe supported within whole class, group or individual activities. Further opportunities are provided by peer mentoring, support and learning using techniques such as sustained shared thinking and scaffolding. Throughout, we promote independence of thought and creativity, positive learning dispositions and reflective processes.

The adults in Early Years work as teachers, facilitators, play-partners, demonstrators and provokers during both child initiated and adult initiated activities. Adults observe, assess and question to stimulate, develop and extend the learning for all children. Each day we create an enabling indoor and outdoor environment which provides opportunities for the children to experiment, investigate, interact, socialise, communicate and develop individually, in pairs and in groups, thereby supporting progression in all areas of development.

Curriculum Progression: Areas of Learning:

The Learning and Development strands of the EYFS are made up of seven areas, three are prime areas and four specific areas, with the intention that the specific areas are taught through the prime areas. All areas of Learning and Development are interconnected and of equal importance. What children will learn and the sequence they will learn it in is planned for the six terms they are in the EY at OLOW, from the start of the Autumn term in Nursery to the end of the summer term in Reception. This has been planned in a sequential way of what we would like children to know and understand at the end of each term, working towards achieving the ELG at the end of Reception and preparing children for the transition to Year 1. A continuation of this is run through continuous provision, also bringing in children's interests, ideas, and experiences into the classroom.

The Prime areas of Learning and Development are:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Incorporating Making Relationships, Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness, Managing Feelings and Behaviour.
2. Communication and Language: Incorporating Speaking, Listening and Understanding.
3. Physical Development: Incorporating Moving and Handling and Health and Self-Care.

The Specific areas of Learning and Development are:

1. Mathematics: Incorporating Numbers and Shape, Space and Measures.
2. Understanding of the World: Incorporating People and Communities, The World and Nature.
3. Literacy: Incorporating Reading and Writing.
4. Creative development: Incorporating Exploring Media and Materials and Being Imaginative.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

As a school we reflect on the different ways that children learn. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning within the EY 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; and
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Throughout Nursery and Reception children will build up an e-portfolio of evidence towards the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (C of EL). These 'characteristics' assess how a child learns, problem solves, perseveres, engages with activities, and demonstrates higher order thinking. This is shared with parents termly within their pupil review card prior to parent consultations.

Learning Identities and Dispositions

We have developed an approach with the children whereby we use learning identities within the curriculum. When talking to children about their assessment for learning, they are spoken to as a '*reader/writer/speaker/artist/designer/builder*' due to the dispositional role that they are carrying out in their play – adult led or child-initiated activity. This gives the children the ownership of their role and helps to raise their self-esteem in all areas of the curriculum. By saying to a child, '*you are such a lovely writer because...*' this gives the child the understanding of the role that they are playing within their specific learning experience.

British Values

This is also an integral part of our curriculum, and we are looking at how to explore moderation effectively and make this an everyday part of our practice alongside the Characteristics above, along the Catholic values that underpin each day in Nursery and Reception

Assessment

Throughout the year we build up a clear understanding of each child's achievements and the next steps in their learning in the following ways:

- We record any observations of the children's learning in both Nursery and Reception through the use of online observations on eyLog, initial and follow up observations, and chasing time/intervention catch up time, all of which give an accurate, holistic and progressive account of any child's learning. Every child has an online portfolio and within each portfolio there is information about children's ongoing creations and evidence to support their learning. This is started in Nursery and is continued into Reception. These systems evolve over time, are not set in how much they are used, and do change periodically. This online portfolio is also used as a planning tool to help to support individual children and classes, professionals in the setting and home culture too – which we feel offers a holistic strategy.
- We use photographic and video evidence as a way of recording learning and achievements in child initiated and adult-led activities. The children have ownership in this area and therefore we encourage the children to take their own photographs.
- On a regular basis we conduct a variety of assessments both summative and formative, including termly phonics assessments (following Little Wandle), a maths assessment, and we carry out ongoing writing moderation and next steps.
- We moderate as a team to make sure that our judgements in each area of learning and 'level' of achievement are accurate and consistent. Nursery and Reception staff record evidence in subject exemplar e-folders for all areas of learning to support our own moderation, subject leads across school have access to these to inform what their subject looks like in EY.
- Every term the class teacher makes a judgement per area of learning if a child is 'on track' 'almost on track' or 'not on track' based on the ELG. This is then collected and analysed by the Early Phase Lead to support closing gaps, interventions and more specific support that might be needed across the phase. This gives us our predicted Good Level of Development for the cohort.
- At the end of the summer term Reception data is submitted to the Local Education Authority, where it is compared with local and national statistics.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

At OLOW we believe parents are the first educator and so it is crucial there is a strong partnership between school and home. In order to build and maintain a positive relationship with parents we operate an open-door ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the start and end of the day, where appropriate. Parents are welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

In order to promote this partnership and bring parents along for their child's educational journey we hold regular workshops where parents can come into school to carry out activities with their child. We provide opportunities for the parents/carers to extend their child's learning at home through activities that are sent home each week. Parents also can communicate with practitioners through a daily reading diary in Reception, and EYLOG. We share information via our EYLOG app, class page on the school website, weekly update emails, curriculum overviews and send out specific letters. Building positive working relationships with parents/carers is central to the effective provision within the Early Years. Practitioners share children's development,

progress, and achievements with their parents and/or carers informally on a regular basis, this is in line with the school's parent/carer consultations carried out half termly, as well as an end of year Report for Nursery and Reception. Personalised feedback and next steps in learning are discussed at parent/carer consultation meetings.

Induction and transition

We provide a smooth and effective transition from pre-schools, our neighbourhood onsite Pre-School and children's homes into our Early Years. All children and families are offered a home visit in Nursery which is repeated in Reception.

'Stay and play' sessions where the parents/carers can stay with the children if they wish to, start at the beginning of the academic year to ensure a smooth transition for the child and their parents/carers. The Nursery and Reception children join the Early Years by a system of staggered entry in September, enabling the adults to welcome each child and family individually.

The Early Years professionals aim to make contact with each pre-school setting to gain relevant information about each child as well as meeting and developing a relationship with the children, if and when appropriate.

It is important that parents/carers are comfortable with their child starting school. For this reason, parents/carers are invited to an induction/welcome meeting where they can look around the setting, meet all adults in the setting and ask any questions. This provides an opportunity to establish the vital partnership between parents and school.

We also provide further parent/carer meetings throughout the academic year to support their understanding of how our Early Years setting is organised and to extend their knowledge of learning and development in all areas of the curriculum.

The School Day

Nursery and Reception doors will open at 8.30 am to allow for a soft start to the school day, the register closes at 8.55am. Collection is from 3:25pm From the Nursery and Reception main doors. All doors into the EYFS will close promptly at 8.55am any children who arrive after this time will need to report to the office.

Attendance

Class registers are taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. A record is kept of attendance. Should your child's attendance begin to raise concern, we will contact you to discuss our concerns. If attendance does not improve, you will then be contacted in writing and asked to attend a meeting to address any issues and discuss any support required.

Children who arrive at school late or leave early (e.g. for a medical appointment/illness), should be signed in/out at the school office.

Absences

In the case of absence through illness, the school must be notified by 9am on the first day of absence, as follows:

- By calling the main school number – and either speaking to a member of staff directly to or by leaving a message.

To ensure the continuity of learning, please try to arrange medical appointments outside of the school day. For certain medical appointments this is not always possible. If this is the case:

- Please inform the school in advance if your child is going to be absent for part of the school day.

Collection from School

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Staff will need confirmation from a parent and/or carer if anyone different will be collecting their child before we will allow them to go home with them. Staff will hand a child directly over to a known, named adult (must be over 16 years of age). We operate a password system as an extra layer of security, so this will need to be passed on to anyone who is collecting on the day

It is the parents and/or carers responsibility to turn up on time to pick up their child from school. In the event of a child not being collected staff will keep the child with them. They will then telephone the adults named on the contact form in the order that they appear on the form. A member of staff will remain with the child until the child is collected. If frequent late collections occur, we will discuss this with you as a welfare concern.

School Readiness

At Our Lady of the Wayside, we agree with the Solihull ethos of being 'School Ready' and we feel that children should be supported by Parents/Carers and the early education community to be 'ready' for their life in school at age 5. This will include being able to express themselves and understand the language around them, to be physically and emotionally well and able to manage to care for themselves independently and to access the rich and varied experiences of the day. At five a child should be socially competent to explore the learning experiences and interactions with others demonstrating dispositions and attitudes for future life-long learning and development. We hope to support, in partnership with the child's parents and other providers, high self-esteem and a sense of curiosity, enthusiasm, empathy and fun. Educational attainment is currently described as achieving a Good Level of Development across the core aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage with strong Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Equal opportunities

All children have equal opportunities regardless of gender, race, religion, culture, or ability. They all have equal access to the curriculum and resources. We promote an ethos of valuing, understanding, and appreciating other cultures, beliefs, and values.

All practitioners have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, can experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting.

Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs may be identified prior to entry to our Early Years, or at any time after, as appropriate. Each child identified as having Special Educational Needs will be assessed, with guidance from the school's SENCo and they will have an intervention plan in place depending upon the child's needs. All adults working with children that need extra support/intervention will be aware of their next steps and will provide feedback through observations, and discussions about the child.

All Early Years adults and the school's SENCo will support the child and parents in getting extra help from outside agencies as appropriate. We also use adaptive teaching for all children in our weekly and daily planning as part of our commitment to achievement and learning – this is through all the activities and interactions we offer with the children. We are an inclusive school and believe passionately that we want to support all children in our setting.

Intervention

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Continuous provision and support is given to all children by the use of adaptive teaching, small intervention groups, focussing on Communication and Language, Mathematics and Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Phonics and Reading as appropriate.

We have specific areas of intervention that target children who need extra support within Literacy, Phonics, Reading, Numeracy, PSED, Wellcomm, physical and SEND next steps. These targeted children are assessed continuously in the necessary areas and each half term we reflect on their progress.

We also have whole class intervention skill sessions, that takes place on a daily basis, which offers all children throughout each week, extra support and extension in the areas of Numbers, Shape, Space and Measures, Fine and Gross motor skills and name writing in the Reception, though other areas maybe focused upon as and when necessary.

Safeguarding

All school staff follow the OLOW policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection, please refer to the main school policy.

The procedures which we follow for Safeguarding have been laid down by the Solihull Safeguarding board. Our Lady of the Wayside Primary School has adopted a Safeguarding Policy in line with this, for the safety of all children. Staff are aware of the procedures regarding Safeguarding and concern logs and how this system works at OLOW (CPOMS). There is a team of DSL's within OLOW including; Mrs Enstone, Mrs Ashcroft, Mrs Lloyd, Mrs Compton.