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# Foundation Stage and Learning in the Early Years Policy

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## 1. Introduction

The Trust intends and expects that all decisions around the use of Trust resources will be underpinned at all times by its vision and values:

**Our aim:**

To create centres of educational excellence that inspire all pupils to turn their potential into performance

**To achieve this our schools will:**

Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions

Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers

Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society

**The Trust will support our schools by:**

Maximising the resources and expertise available to individual schools

Providing a platform for the sharing of excellent practice

Challenging and developing staff to turn their potential into performance

### 1.1. Aims and Scope

Early Years education at Red Oaks means an exciting and balanced curriculum that encourages exploration and independent learning. We always put the child at the centre of the learning, making learning enjoyable and accessible to all. Teachers respond to the children and plan accordingly. Therefore, the planning is fluid and dynamic and responds to the child meaning every child is an individual and our child initiated, response-based planning aims to provide them with opportunities to develop their abilities.

At Red Oaks we embody the principles of the new EYFS statutory framework;

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the right foundation

for good future progress through school and life. The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.”

(EYFS framework Sept 2025)

The EYFS in Red Oaks seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

There are four overarching principles which shape our practice in the early years. 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 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 practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

## 1.2 Other Linked Policies

- Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment Policy

## 2. Policy Statement

### 2.1. Policy Terms

#### **What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?**

##### **The Setting**

The Nursery (FS1) is for 32 children FTE pupils. We offer 15 hour and 30-hour provision. We offer two sessions one in the morning between 8:30am and 11:30am and one in the afternoon between 12:10pm and 3:10pm. The 30-hour children attend all day with a lunch session between 11:30 and 12:10. Each session is staffed with a Nursery Lead. There will also be other support staff in the session, this will be dependent on the number of children. There are two reception classes (FS2). These are staffed by two teachers and a variety of teaching assistants. There is also specialist support for individual children with specific needs. The Foundation Stage (FS1& 2) are in class and have their own playgrounds. FS2 also make use of KS2 MUGA and field.

### **Beginning School**

- Visits prior to admission are available to parents
- Home visits are carried out in June or July for all children in the FS who are new to Red Oaks. During these home visits parents are asked to complete a profile of their child
- A series of welcome events are held in the summer term prior to the children starting school as part of the induction process. Information is given about school procedures as well as an insight into what their children will experience.
- Parents are introduced to teachers and support staff
- The children attend induction sessions where they meet their teacher, support staff and class friends
- Links between Nursery and Reception are strong. Nursery children have some allocated playtimes with Reception children, joint assemblies/Nativities together and story times with staff in order to ease the transition process (see transition policy)
- Information on emergency contacts, permissions for websites and medical conditions is collected for each child and is updated regularly

### **After Admission**

- Parents are invited to attend workshops based on English and Maths, Speaking and Listening and the personal, social and emotional aspects of learning. These workshops are to give parents an idea of what a typical school day looks like in a Foundation Stage classroom and guidance and support of how to help them at home.
- Parents are invited to contribute to their child's learning through the school's assessment system SONAR and Class Dojo.
- All parents are encouraged to share books with their children at home through the use of the reading logs.
- Parents are invited to help at school with activities such as reading, cookery and school trips.
- Newsletters are circulated to parents regularly
- The school website is regularly updated
- Parents' evenings are held three times a year, but staff are always happy to listen to parents if they have any worries about a child.
- In addition, parents are invited in to termly open mornings where the children will involve them in the learning environment, e.g. A teddy bears tea party. 'Book Looks' and "Relative reads" where Special books will be shared and parents will reflect on these.

## **Curriculum**

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS all of these areas of development are important and inter-connected. These areas are important in igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

Within the 7 areas there are 3 Prime Areas which underpin all learning and skills:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Then there are 4 Specific Areas which will draw upon skills from the Prime Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

Each area of learning and development through planned and purposeful play delivered through a combination of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

*“Play is essential for children's development, building confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and in taking part in play which is guided by adults.”* (Statutory Framework for the Early Years, DFE, 2020)

The seven areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provide a framework for our planning which enables us to achieve our aims for the under-fives provision. We ensure that all children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Underpinning this is the Characteristics of Effective Learning; Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically. Teachers and support staff plan together to ensure consistency across year groups.

The three stages of planning are:

- Long- term planning (LTP), which provides a broad framework for the curriculum to meet the needs of the Nursery and Reception Classes. This is drawn from the objectives that will be covered in each term.
- Medium-term planning, which specifies learning activities and learning objectives over each term. This is child focused and all stake holders are invited to contribute ideas to the MTPs.
- Short term planning, which focuses on the day-to-day details of teaching and learning and allows for revision and modification of learning activities informed by on-going assessments and observations. At each stage there needs to be clear identification of the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes that are the focus for the intended learning both for individuals and groups.

## **The Environment**

Children learn best in a stimulating but ordered environment where the opportunities for active learning are thoughtful and purposefully planned. It is organised into working areas, where children have easy access to a full range of materials which they can choose to learn with. The Early Years staff provide a variety of different learning opportunities and these can include:

- Imaginative/Dramatic play
- Sound/Music
- Speaking and listening
- Art and Craft
- Maths/Science/Investigation
- Mark Making
- Construction
- Physical Play/Forest Schools (Indoor/outdoor)
- Malleable Materials
- Small World/Role play

Learning opportunities inside the classroom are also reflected in the outdoor classroom.

Appendices

### **3. GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES**

#### **3.1. Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective teamwork is essential in providing an appropriate curriculum and environment for young children.

#### **Role of the Foundation Stage Manager**

Within the Early Years Team there is a designated Foundation Stage Manager, whose role includes:

- Managing the implementation of the Early Years curriculum including the interface between the EYFS and the National Curriculum.
- Over-seeing the drawing up and implementation of a FS policy
- Ensuring that ALL school policies and schemes of work address the needs of the youngest children
- Reporting regularly to the Headteacher, SLT and link governors about the achievements and planned developments for Early Years
- Being an advocate to the highest possible quality and practice for young children
- Training and evaluation

#### **Role of the Teacher**

The teacher has day-to-day management responsibility for:

- The children
- Non-teaching support staff
- The organising and smooth running of the Nursery/Reception class overall planning, assessment and evaluation of the curriculum and the children
- Creating links with colleagues in school, home, community and other agencies
- Maintaining strong links with parents
- Attending courses and updating themselves and the team on current practices
- Ensure assessment of all staff is accurate and direct targets for children and key groups

#### **Role of the Support Staff**

They will be accountable to the Nursery Lead /Reception teachers and:

- have a valuable and vital role within the team
- have a special knowledge and understanding of play and are able to present a range of activity in a supportive role
- have the skills to observe and report accurately
- alongside the teacher will ensure the smooth running and organisation of the room
- are able to play a part in training other teaching assistants/students
- are willing to attend courses to further personal skills and knowledge

### **Staff Training**

We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so ALL staff are encouraged to participate in local education authority courses and in house training. ALL FS and Year 1 teachers will be involved in EYFS and Trust led cluster moderation throughout the year.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents should be fully involved in their children's learning and we believe that a partnership between the home and early years setting contributes significantly to a child's social, personal and academic development. Children's experiences at home have a significant impact on achievement and parents have a key role to play in their child's learning. We provide opportunities for parents to come and help in the school and we value their opinions and suggestions.

The following opportunities for contacts with parents are:

- Parent consultations and advice (formal and informal)
- The school's assessment system SONAR and Class Dojo
- Reports
- Termly curriculum letters
- Parent help in school activities
- Parental involvement in homework activities such as reading/FS1 'News' books.
- The school website; [www.redoaks.org.uk](http://www.redoaks.org.uk)
- Open mornings
- Staff greeting at the door
- Workshops and family learning events

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

At Red Oaks we are always observing the children as part of our ongoing assessment and moderation processes and entering this onto SONAR our assessment tool.

#### Initial Assessment

- Home/school booklet which is completed by the parent/s prior to the home visit
- Baseline
- On entry observations and informal assessments

### **Ongoing Assessment**

See Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment Policy

### **Special Educational Needs**

We believe that all children are entitled to a learning environment in which they are encouraged to reach their potential in a supportive atmosphere which fosters a growth towards independent learning appropriate to their age and stage of development.

We aim to identify the children with special needs at the earliest possible stage and differentiate their activities accordingly. If we feel that differentiation alone is not sufficient support then we have a SENCO who can offer support.

Support and advice to staff, children and parents/carers are given by additional outside agencies e.g., Educational Psychologist, Learning Support Service, Speech Therapists and others outlined in the school's Special Needs Policy.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children, regardless of gender, ability/disability, belief, ethnic or social background, have equal access to the Early Years Curriculum.

