



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (Including teaching and learning)

We believe the experiences children take part in from an early age shape their future learning. By creating a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences we are building lifelong learners with a love of education. These values are underpinned by the four guiding principles from the EYFS guidelines.

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
4. Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. The statutory framework covers the education and care of **all children** in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities

At the Golden Thread Alliance we believe that every child must be provided with opportunities to develop socially, emotionally, academically and physically to achieve the highest possible standards. We are an inclusive learning community that is forward thinking, innovative, confident and committed to ensuring that all children in our care are happy, enthusiastic and purposeful learners.



The importance of play

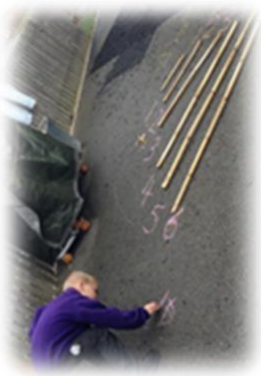
We want children to be engaged in the learning process and for their learning to be relevant and purposeful. We believe that children learn best by doing. We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is an ideal vehicle for young children's learning. It provides the opportunity for them to explore, investigate and make sense of the world around them. Play enables children to be challenged in their thinking and practice and rehearse skills, and be motivated in their learning. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively, communicating with others as they investigate and solve problems. Children are curious and inquisitive by nature and we want to build on this in a positive and enjoyable way.

'Play is the highest form of research' Albert Einstein

An enabling environment

The environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending the children's development. Seen as the third teacher by Reggio Emilia inspired schools, our environments support children to be fully engaged in purposeful play of their own choice and interest. The indoor and outdoor areas are organised, allowing children to explore and learn securely, safely and independently. There are spaces where children can be active and where they can be quiet.

The indoor areas are set up as workshop style environments which enable children to independently find and locate resources to aid their learning in whichever way possible. The areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of each day ready for the children to select according to their interest. This allows the children to be in control of their learning. They are able to select the area in which to play, the resources to use and what to do with them. Choices are limited by areas and resources available and it is therefore crucial to have appropriate areas with high quality, open ended resources. It is also vital that the areas are well stocked, tidy, clearly labelled with picture and word or shadowed and arranged to allow optimum access. The environment is constantly reviewed and reflected upon to ensure it meets the needs of the children.



Outside learning is as important as the learning that takes place inside! Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant in natural areas.

We value outdoor learning because it allows learning to become fun and memorable. The opportunity to learn and interact outside throughout the year, in all different kinds of weather is as important as learning and engaging inside.

We believe that well organised and supervised, "risky freedom" helps all children to find out about themselves and their capabilities. It helps develop self-confidence, independence and lays the foundations for a healthier life. We are aware that there can be risks associated with outdoor learning experiences; however, it is important that children recognise risks and learn how to manage them and this is a part of their growing up using a 'risk: benefit' model.



The most valuable resource in any setting is the group of adults. The adults are there to teach, they do this through observing and interacting. Adults are trained to **spot teachable moments** while children are engaged, they **know the children very well** and have a **sound understanding of child development**. This ensures the adult **enhances** and **extends** the learning at the appropriate level for each unique child. The

children become involved in activities of their choice. The adults *observe* the children carefully, *join* them when appropriate and *engage in quality interactions* (teaching) to move the learning on. They **'teach'** through **modelling, suggesting, providing vocabulary** or **resources, explaining** or **encouraging**. In this way, if a child encounters a challenge, then they will not give up. Rather they will be supported to persevere, overcome the challenge and move forward in their learning.

'The effective practitioner tunes into the child rather than expecting the child to tune in to them.' (Julie Fisher 2016)

The adults are the key in creating the *emotional environment* that supports children to be confident, independent and ready to try new things in the knowledge that the adults will help them if necessary, without taking over.

'Children will learn to do what children want to learn to do' (Sugata Mitra) so we support them by creating enabling environments including providing them with enabling adults.



'Early Years provision is only as good as the quality of interaction between adults and children'

Sir Michael Wiltshire

Teaching through play

'Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.' (Revised EYFS).

Our practitioners continually teach children within their play. Each time they interact with a child, they are observing, assessing, planning for, and responding to, that individual child. The traditional cycle of

observation, assessment and planning is recommended in numerous documents including Development Matters and The National Strategies document '*Learning, Playing and Interacting*'.

*'Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest (the teachable moment) that the skilful adult makes a difference. By using this cycle on a moment by moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (**observation**), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (**assessment**), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (**planning** for the next moment and **implementation** of response).'*

From National Standards document *Learning, Playing and Interacting* P.22-23



When deeply engaged children's brains will be lit up, adults will notice when support is needed, interactions will ensure that obstacles are overcome or that new directions and possibilities are available and learning will be meaningful and fun. The **children are the focus** rather than an activity planned by the adult.

The transition periods are crucial; in these times, routines and expectations can be established efficiently. Ground rules are essential when so much freedom is given – all children need to feel safe. Clear and consistent expectations are paramount for example, when indoors we use quiet voices and walk.

Sessions are organised to maximise the amount of 'free flow' time available. A short time at the beginning and end of each session/day is given to group/adult directed time where the focus is communication and community time. In Reception, 20 (building to 30) minutes at the end of each morning session and beginning of the afternoon session is given to group/adult directed time with a phonics/literacy focus in the morning and magic maths focus in the afternoon, as appropriate to their stage of development across the year. In Nursery, a similar approach is adopted whereby there is a short adult-led activity time at the beginning and end of each session, adapting throughout the year to support all areas of learning as identified by the class teacher.

In Nursery, after children are settled, a small group of focus children will be selected each week and a letter sent home notifying parents. Parents will be asked to upload photos onto Class Dojo to share with the class. During the week positive interactions for that child are recorded on Dojo. These can be completed by any member of staff working with the child at the time. The whole cycle should be recorded; the observation, the assessment, the planning, teaching and outcome. These observations will be shared with the parents/carers. Alongside focus children, others will pursue their own learning, in the same environment, supported by the same adults. Key group interests will be added to the class planning sheet

to guide future enhancements and support. In almost all cases the next steps are completed immediately. We work in this way because high level involvement occurs in child-initiated activity. When children show high levels of involvement that is when there is progress and development occurring – when the brain is at its most active. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment, supported by skilful staff.

The characteristics of effective teaching and learning (Revised EYFS)

1. **Playing and exploring** – do they investigate and experience things and have a go?
2. **Active learning** – do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?
3. **Creating and thinking critically** – do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things?

These characteristics underpin everything we do in all areas of our Early Years setting and permeate through all parts of the day. They closely link with the Building Learning Power ethos that our children develop a deeper understanding of as they move up through the school.

The Early Years Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and care. It gives all professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare experiences to all children. We offer provision, which takes into account the starting points of the children in the Early Years across the seven areas of learning.

1. **Communication and Language:** These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundation for literacy. We place a strong emphasis on children's developing confidence and skills in expressing themselves in a range of situations and also their competence in talking and listening and in becoming readers and writers. Visuals are used to reinforce understanding including a visual timetable. Within the environment and throughout the sessions we provide many talking opportunities including hearing language, using language and resources to stimulate discussion. Language use is modelled through play, routine and interaction. Adults enable speaking and listening at every opportunity, extending children's conversation skills and vocabulary in a relevant way using current interests and fascinations. Our environments stimulate, inspire and encourage speech, conversation and negotiation and therefore language development.
2. **Physical development:** Physical development is implicit in all areas of the Early Years Framework. Teaching concentrates on developing children's physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Such programmes as Write dance, funky fingers, dough disco, BEAM and 'squiggle while you

wiggle' are used as appropriate, for individuals or groups of children to support development of fine and gross motor skills. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life and towards healthy choices in food.

3. **Personal, social and emotional development:** These outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and schools behaviour policy, adapting where need be to be age appropriate. We use The Zones of Regulation to support children learning what initial steps they need to take to regulate their emotions and behaviour. Where needed positive behaviour strategies are used depending on the needs of the individual child. Children are encouraged to build positive relationships with their peers and adults based on respect.

4. **Literacy:** Children are encouraged to link sounds and letters and begin to read and write. Children are able to access a wide range of stories and non-fiction texts which are frequently used to inspire storytelling, role play and activities across all areas of learning. Phonics is taught using the Read, Write Inc. scheme. Children are introduced to letters and sounds using rhymes that support letter formation.



At the same time children are encouraged to blend sounds in simple words and segment words in to sounds. We use 'helicopter stories' (Trisha Lee) and story scribing to encourage children to tell their stories without the pressure of writing, and act out their stories at group times. Adults model writing and children make links between the spoken and written word.

5. **Mathematics:** We cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundations for numeracy. Focusing on achievement through practical activities using and understanding language and vocabulary in the development of simple mathematical ideas. In reception new concepts and skills are introduced in a class/group 20 minute 'magic maths' session. This can use a story or game to introduce the concept and key vocabulary related to this. Resources are made available in the environment children to explore this in their own time and in a practical way.



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6. **Understanding the World:** This area of learning and enquiry focuses on developing the children's knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and man-made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. Children come to school with a wealth of personal

experiences and these are used to inform and educate others using the focus week or at relevant times throughout the year (Diwali, Eid). The local area is used for shopping trips and seasonal observational opportunities. Parents are encouraged to share information to increase children's knowledge and experience, for example a talk from a fire fighter or postal worker. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journal, particularly in relation to the child's use of technology at home.

7. **Expressive arts and design:** This area focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways. Opportunities to role play and to use small world continuous provision. Similarly, creative resources enable children to explore colour, texture and form as part of the continuous provision. Children have the opportunity to create using large and small resources. Loose parts available inside and out support children's creativity.



All areas of learning are equally important and depend on each other. They are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activity.

Enriched Curriculum

The Golden Thread Alliance strives to provide an enriched curriculum for every child. Outdoor learning is available to all early year's pupils. Using natural resources we reinforce learning taking children on an outdoor journey, learning new skills along the way. We make use of the local area to enhance learning and experiences. Local parks are used to experience big open spaces as well as make observations on seasonal changes. Trips to local shops to buy ingredients for cooking as well as businesses (for example the vet) are carried out to develop understanding. Reception children will experience a year group day visit towards the latter part of the year. Children have the opportunity to grow and eat their own produce and plants. Gardening helps to reinforce children's understanding of life and growth which, they can see and witness at first hand. Being able to eat their produce is an added bonus! The natural world is known to have a beneficial impact on the wellbeing of our children therefore we make use of this whenever possible. Woodwork is also developed across the year. This activity is perfect for demonstrating the characteristics of effective learning as well as developing the seven areas of learning. Children have access to things in a controlled and safe way.

Keyperson Approach

All children in the nursery have a keyworker who will support the children's emotional and cognitive needs. They will also be committed to building up trusting and reciprocal relationships with parents/carers. Staff in the nursery are responsive and choose to engage with children in a way that matches the child's preferred learning style. All keyworkers closely observe children and document the child's learning.

Parents as Partners

Children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We acknowledge that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. Before starting school, we offer an induction meeting for parents. We will visit all children in their home prior to starting school. To support parents, we offer parent workshops throughout the year on key topics such as phonics, early mark making and writing, every day magic maths and much more. We have an open-door policy and parents are able to ask questions and discuss their child at any time. Additionally, we will meet with parents following their child's focus week to discuss their development and next steps. All parents will be able to view their child's Class Dojo Journal observations and will get a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the year. Nursery parents will get two other mini report throughout the academic year. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to their Tapestry journal with photos of home learning experiences.

All staff involved in the Early Years develops good relationships with the children through their interactions. In both Reception and Nursery, we aim to build a collaborative approach whereby most of the support is provided by working alongside the children, letting them guide the direction of their learning, facilitating learning and development whenever we can.

Nursery Admissions

Admission to nursery is not covered by Statute but is the policy for The Golden Thread Alliance.

Children are normally considered for admission to our nursery classes once they turn 3 years of age.

Admissions criteria for allocating nursery places are as follows:

8. Children in Local Authority Care or Previously in Local Authority Care
9. Current Family Association
10. Health, Social and Special Access Reasons
11. A Child of Staff at the School
12. Children Eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium
13. Age

Note:

14. To be eligible under the second criterion, the sibling must still be attending the mainstream school when the younger child takes up a place in the nursery.
15. A place in the nursery does NOT guarantee a place in the Reception class of the mainstream school. Therefore a separate application MUST be made for admission to the main school.

30 hours of free childcare Fee Structure/Delivery Pattern

Oakfield Primary Academy Nursery is a sessional, term time only (open for 38 weeks a year) early years provision. Our session times are split into morning and afternoon sessions and we also operate a number of 30 hour places.

Morning Session: 8:30am-11:30am (3 hours) Monday to Friday

Afternoon Session: 12:30pm-3:45pm (3.25 hours) Monday, Tuesday Wednesday and Friday
12.30 – 2.30pm (2 hrs) Thursdays

Universal Free Early Education

All children are eligible for 15 hours of free funding from the term after the child's 3rd birthday. This can be claimed in 3 hour sessions as shown above. We do not offer a compressed hour delivery pattern.

Extended Funded Hours (the 30 hour scheme introduced by the Government from September 2017)

Working parents (if criteria met) can apply for extended funding to cover up to 30 hours per week.

Our totally free pattern of delivery is 8:30am until 2:30pm.

An additional session of 2:30pm-3:30pm is available daily (Monday to Friday) at a cost of £7.50 per day.

This scheme is also delivered in the following way: 08:30am until 3:45pm (7 hours per day) Monday to Friday with an additional charge of £7.50 per day. This additional £7.50 charge per day includes a school meal for each child.

We currently run both a breakfast and an after school club for Nursery Children in our current provision called The Hideout.

Welfare

The Golden Thread Alliance aims to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. We understand that we are required to:

1. Promote the welfare of children
2. Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
3. Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
4. Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
5. Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
6. Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs

It is important to us that all children in the Foundation Stage are safe. We aim to educate children about behavioural boundaries and school rules to enable them to make appropriate choices. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We provide sun cream during spells of hot weather, which the children are encouraged to apply themselves. The school encourages the use of sun hats and provides waterproofs for outdoor messy play. Continuous access to fresh drinking water is provided along with a fruit snack and milk.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding within the Early Years foundation Stage forms part of the whole school safeguarding policy. Procedures that are in place for the whole school apply to EYFS. Safeguarding training takes place annually as organised by The Golden Thread Alliance safeguarding lead. New child protection issues are addressed as appropriate. All staff new to EYFS will receive an induction and safeguarding training as appropriate. They are trained to use My Concern effectively and are required to undergo regular refresher or update training throughout the year as advised by the Safeguarding Lead for the Alliance. The Nursery lead is also a Designated Safeguarding Leader within the school.

Supervision

All EYFS staff are provided with appropriate supervision in accordance with the statutory requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage 2025. Supervision ensures that:

1. All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
2. All staff have the opportunity to discuss any issues, particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing
3. All staff can confidently identify solutions to address issues as they arise (including safe guarding as a routine item for discussion)

4. All staff are able to create an environment where all members of staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role
5. All staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time and they can receive coaching and mentoring as needed.

See separate supervision timetable document.

Transition

When a child sets off for their first day at school, they should be full of positive emotions- excitement, confidence and happiness. This happens if they know exactly where they are going, who will be there, what they will be able to do when they get there and how long they will be staying there. A successful transition means the child settles quickly into school, learning and developing from day one. Practitioners welcome a class of children and these children are settled, confident and ready to learn. Transition will be successful if:

1. Practitioners know each child, including interests and needs
2. The school is able to meet these interests and needs
3. Practitioners have formed a relationship with each family
4. Children know the practitioners
5. Children are familiar and happy with their new school environment, its routines and expectations
6. Children have met and made friends with some of the other children who will be in their class

We have developed a thorough transition programme that begins with Nursery/ Reception and continues on to Year 1.

See separate transition document.