



EYFS Policy

We are 'seeds sown in the good soil'
(Matthew 13:23)

Adopted:

Approved by Governors:

Review date:

1. Aims and Objectives

At Orford Church of England Primary School, we have designed a curriculum with the following aims and objectives for our pupils:

Being - For pupils to value themselves as unique, special individuals, to know they have a right to be in relationships which ensure they are happy and safe and be confident that they can meet challenges and barriers and overcome them.

Belonging - For pupils to understand that they are part of a family, community, region, country and world, to provide meaningful opportunities for them to explore that idea and to help them recognise that they can make a significant contribution to those places through their actions, words and ambitions.

Growing - For pupils to understand that their life is a learning journey marked by important milestones, that making good use of opportunities and experiences will help them become the person they want to be and that the skills and knowledge they learn in primary school will benefit their future.

Experimenting - For pupils to understand that through questioning, taking risks, curiosity and sharing their ideas with others they can open doors to wider opportunities. For pupils to understand that their passions and interests may be the foundation of their future and should be valued, nurtured and developed.

This policy aims to ensure we:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through nursery and school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

1. It builds on what our children already know and can do;
2. It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
3. It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
4. It provides a knowledge and experience rich stimulating environment;
5. It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers in order to provide a holistic picture of each child's learning and development.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2021)

3. Structure of the EYFS

Our Early Years unit offers funded nursery places for children in the term following their second birthday. We offer 15 hours of universal funding applicable to all children, which can be extended to 30 hours funding for those eligible due to family circumstances. Our Early Years unit consists of

Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children led by an experienced qualified teacher and a strong team of dedicated staff. Class 1 is open from 8.30 am to 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday. Nursery sessions run from 8.30am to 11.30am and 12pm to 3.00pm.

As pupils move through our EYFS provision, we support their transition from Nursery to Reception and onto Year 1.

4. Curriculum

Curriculum intent

The intent of our whole school curriculum is to ensure our pupils develop the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to achieve fulfilling lives. The Early Years' Unit at Orford is the first step of our pupils' school learning journey towards achieving this important goal. Therefore, our curriculum is designed to provide a broad range of rich learning opportunities and experiences that motivate, inspire and challenge our pupils.

Drawing on the concept of a spiral curriculum, pupils' acquisition of knowledge develops through coherently planned learning opportunities that facilitate repeated discussion, as well as support for moving from the simple to increasingly deepened learning experiences. Our learning environments are created to provide children the opportunities to flow freely when exploring issues that spark their natural curiosity and interest. At Orford, our pupils' benefit from a curriculum that seeks to broaden their horizons and enrich their life experiences to develop their cultural capital. We regularly reflect on our curriculum to ensure we adapt it appropriately and tailor it with sensitivity to ensure each individual thrives within this setting, including those with special educational or behavioural needs and/or disabilities.

(For more information please see our Early Years rationale (Appendix A).

Curriculum Implementation

In the Early Years Unit At Orford Church of England Primary School we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum laid out in the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021. We continuously develop our practice in line with the statutory guidance and the specific needs of our children.

The early years curriculum is split into seven areas of learning:

The 'Prime Areas'

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

The 'Specific Areas'

- Literacy Development
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design.

Learning in these areas is supported by a focus on developing children's 'Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'. These are as follows:

Playing and exploring

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to have a go

Active learning

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping on trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways.

In our daily classroom practice, we implement the curriculum by drawing on the principles of the following statement from the statutory framework for EYFS:

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated play. As children grow older it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults to help children prepare for the more formal learning of Year 1.'

The role of the adult is an important aspect of our provision as it is the quality interactions with children that enable learning to be enhanced through language and communication. Adults carefully scaffold children's learning through support and resources, when needed, and skillfully remove support at an appropriate time to enable children to learn independently.

Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are planned to compliment each other, providing activities, resources and opportunities for pupils to pursue and develop their own interests and lines of enquiry. Adults work alongside pupils to extend their learning through discussion and questioning. They build on their knowledge of the child through observation and enhance learning opportunities by adapting the provision in accordance with pupils' ideas, curiosities and imagination. The environment is carefully planned to facilitate valuable learning experiences as pupils' engage with the different resources that promote independent exploration and early development.

At Orford, we particularly value the processes involved in children's learning and celebrate their efforts. We are very fortunate to have two separate outdoor areas in the Early Years Unit. We have a wheely area with a track, wheeled, ride-on toys and a fixed play structure to enable children to develop their gross motor skills and manage their own risks. We also have an outdoor area which is an extension and reflection of our indoor continuous provision and enables the children to explore all areas of the EYFS whilst learning outside. This includes a large loose parts area which challenges the children to think creatively and 'outside the box' when using open-ended, everyday objects in their play. There are further opportunities to develop gross motor skills through the use of an interchangeable climbing frame, balancing apparatus and ball games.

At Orford, the adults are skilful in facilitating implementation of the EYFS curriculum through:

- Communicating and modelling vocabulary and language
- Setting challenges
- Exploring ideas
- Demonstrating
- Sharing
- Explaining
- Scribing
- Encouraging independence
- Recalling
- Facilitating
- Questioning

Cultural Capital

Our EYFS curriculum supports the development of each child's cultural capital. The curriculum design includes opportunities that broaden children's thinking and outlook on life, as well as engagement in experiences that promote their sense of awe and wonder. We build upon opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their sense of self in their local community to enhance their knowledge of the wider world. Our planning for these experiences draws on the concept that *'The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences'* Malaguzzi.

Early Reading

In our Early Years' practice, reading is everywhere and we firmly believe in promoting reading for pleasure for all children at Orford. We are constantly modelling reading - which includes sharing stories, looking for signs and logos, researching facts or engaging with children when they choose time in the classroom reading area. We encourage children to explore a variety of good-quality fiction and non-fiction books, as well as a range of phonetically decodable readers. Outside, children enjoy sharing books together and incorporate them into their play. We enjoy story time together each day. The books we use are carefully chosen to match the needs of the children and to support all areas of the curriculum. In line with the aims of our school's SSP (Little Wandle) each book is read daily for a full week. This allows the children to develop a strong understanding of the story in order to retell it in detail and to concentrate on a different reading focus as a whole group each day. It also allows staff to discuss and explore new and existing vocabulary. Acquisition, use and understanding of language and vocabulary have been identified as a priority for our school due to children arriving in Class 1 with language below the expected standard. With the introduction of our new Oracy project (Voice 21) we are able to use the daily opportunity for storytime to explore language, talk about different types of text, conventions of English writing, features of the text and illustrations. The children are able to take home a book each week to share with their families.

Phonics is the teaching strategy we use and children learn to match sounds (phonemes) to letters (graphemes). As a school we have adopted 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' for our phonics programme. This was introduced in September 2022. Children in Reception have a discreet 20/30 minute session following the scheme to develop; grapheme recognition, grapheme/phoneme/correspondence (GPCs), blending and segmenting skills, and letter formation. Children in Nursery take part in a tailor-made pre-phonics session, preparing them with the skills they will need to begin formal systematic synthetic phonics in Reception. Nursery phonics activities are from 'Little Wandle' and called 'Foundations for Phonics'. This is a holistic approach which provides the skills children will need before they begin the more formal aspects of Literacy. Children take part in many different listening games, developing skills such as being able to distinguish between environmental sounds, identifying the first, middle and last sound in a sequence, and alliteration.

"One of the most important aspects of Foundations for phonics is developing an awareness of sound, through activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending." Little Wandle

Curriculum impact

On entry to Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. DfE baseline assessment captures the starting point from which the progress that we, as a school, make with our pupils will be measured. To evaluate pupils' progress and the effectiveness of our curriculum intent and implementation, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers. The thorough assessment of a child's development across the key seven areas of learning is shared with parents each term, through parents evening, along with snapshots provided on Tapestry. Parents contribute to both of these assessment strategies and this further enhances the effectiveness of our support for their child's learning and development.

Tapestry is used to inform our assessment of all EYFS children. Staff record new learning of skills and knowledge and tag each observation to the correct area of learning.

At the end of the EYFS, teachers assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals - indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development ('expected')
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers.

5. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy provided on our school website.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the senior leadership team every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

Appendix A. Early Years Rationale

Orford Church of England Primary School
Early Years Rationale

Why we do what we do in Early Years

Our pedagogy is based on research into child development over many years. Our highly skilled team of staff have experienced and lead learning through play in a combination of different ways throughout the years from structured learning, to adult-led activities and child initiated learning. Through years of experience in the Early Years, at Orford our planning reflects a range of strategies which we believe best suit the individual needs of our children and the unique aims of our school and wider community.

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn." Ignacio Estrada

Children's engagement levels are higher when they are focused on their own interests. With carefully planned continuous provision in place the opportunities for learning are rich. Our children are able to plan in the moment and decide where and what they would like to learn, supporting the development of executive function skills.

"Play is the highest form of research." Albert Einstein

*Play based learning in an early years setting is identified by EEF to have +5 months impact
Education Endowment Foundation | EEF*

Children enter the setting and find their name card to show what they are having for lunch then place their picture in the tens frame to self register and support them to count how many children are in the setting each session. We begin each day with children choosing from the continuous provision within the classroom. We introduced this to support the daily transition between home and school. It encourages the children to concentrate on exploring the environment and lessens the impact of separation from parents and carers. Children are prepared for their future school career by the introduction of a formal registration time and we talk to the children about the importance of this for safety purposes.

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Little Wandle

We believe that a sustained period of play is beneficial for the children to develop their own ideas, to become fully engaged in their play and to maximise the use of the provision. Our continuous provision is carefully planned to cover all areas of the EYFS.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning." Fred Rogers

We have a strong focus on encouraging children to be independent thinkers and learners. Children are encouraged to complete tasks independently, with adults providing support or encouraging peer support where absolutely necessary. Good relationships are key in Nursery and Reception. This method of working allows staff to spend quality time talking with children, developing adult/child relationships and supporting child/child relationships within the setting. The older children support the younger children and when new skills are learned the children become the teachers for each other.

Self-regulation has a high profile within the new EYFS Statutory Framework (2020). Play provides opportunities for children to develop the skills required for self-regulation and executive function. Within the continuous provision, children are able to initiate tasks, plan what they want to do, organise the resources they need, exercise self-control (particularly when others wish to join in), develop their attention span, become flexible and persevere when things do not go to plan. Adults are ready to step in and support where needed but often we will step back and allow children to safely solve their own problems and difficulties.

"If a child can do advanced math, speak 3 languages, or receive top grades, but can't manage their emotions, practice conflict resolutions, or handle stress, none of this other stuff is really going to matter." Applebaum Training Institute

Self-Regulation strategies in an early years setting is identified by EEF to have +5 months impact Education Endowment Foundation | EEF

Communication and language are vital building blocks for future learning. Our children are encouraged to talk with one another and the adults in the setting from the very beginning. This happens in a range of situations and for different purposes. Some children may not be comfortable speaking to adults or children in a more formal setting initially while others may be very confident to do this. We give the children the time and space to develop the confidence they need to be comfortable communicating with the adults and the children within the setting. Some children may be more confident to speak when they are outdoors or in a one to one situation. Vocabulary is explored, enriched and developed through books, quality firsthand experiences and the children's own interests. Our daily story times provide opportunities for children to develop listening and understanding skills in a larger group.

Communication and language approaches in an early years setting is identified by EEF to have +5 months impact Education Endowment Foundation | EEF

Physical skills are developed in many different ways within the setting. Gross motor skills are important for strengthening the upper body and core stability, enabling children to write and sit at a table for longer periods of time. We have a range of fixed play equipment outdoors and in the school hall. Children have access to this equipment as staffing allows and it is used to provide targeted interventions for children who require further practise and development of their gross motor skills e.g. PE and gym trail. Fine motor skills are developed through activities such as Funky

Fingers and Dough Disco, but also through the use of play dough, small world equipment, construction and creative activities such as cutting.

Physical development approaches in an early years setting is identified by EEF to have +3 months impact Education Endowment Foundation | EEF

"Children need to develop proprioception and vestibular sense via adventurous play. This then assists them in learning to listen, focus and follow directions. Children with healthy neurological systems naturally seek out the sensory input they need on their own." Neurochild

At Orford, emergent writing is encouraged and supported alongside fine and gross motor development. Resources are available to support children with their writing skills, but they are encouraged to select and use these independently within the provision. Writing skills are encouraged through provision by creating plans for their models or creations, writing their own name on pictures, writing labels, lists and captions and writing their own stories. We ask parents to support their children's writing development at home by encouraging them to write for different purposes in order to give meaning to the marks they make.

Maths is an area of learning that lends itself very well to every area of provision. Children are encouraged to discuss shapes, measures, space and number in many different scenarios. For example, within the construction area we will discuss the shape of the materials being used, their properties (e.g. does it roll? Is it the best shape to use?), the length or height of a model or tower in relation to themselves or another object, the weight of some of the materials, the number of blocks required to create a model, positional language to provide instructions about making a model; the possibilities are endless. The Maths areas within the provision are well-resourced and are regularly added to in order to reflect the specific concepts being taught during adult-led sessions. It is important that the children understand when and how to apply the concepts taught and have the opportunity to continuously practise and refine these skills by using resources and equipment during continuous provision.

We use conversations to discuss the three main strands of Understanding the World with the children. They talk regularly about people at home, in their families and their wider community. We use maps and globes to create provocations for learning around the unit and develop some of those fascinations further through looking at different places of interest. For some children this may be related to holidays, for others it will be places they have heard about on TV and for others it may be places where extended family members live. Many of our children arrive at school with an interest in animals. This is developed through books, the internet and various other sources of information. This is often a way to engage children in reading and writing activities, where they may not always display much natural interest.

"Before we ever put a pencil in a child's hands, those hands should dig, climb, press, pull, squish, twist and pinch in a wide array of environments and with a variety of materials." Amanda Morgan

There are a number of creative areas set up within the provision. Children are able to explore role play in the home corner, through different enhancements we are able to respond to the different interests of the children, as well as exploring different themes, festivals and cultures. It provides children with the opportunities to explore the world around them in a context they are very familiar with. Musical opportunities are available within the provision. Children often ask for music to be played on the IWB. They will also use the CD player to perform familiar songs using the scarves to create dances. The messy table is very popular with our children and is an area where they not only make imaginative creations with a variety of tools and materials but an area where informative and purposeful conversations take place. Our junk modelling area is always well stocked through donations from parents and staff. Children plan out what they will make and what they will need prior to making their creations and are encouraged to change and develop their designs as they work, adapting where necessary and as problems arise.

"Much of what young children do as play – singing, drawing, dancing – are natural forms of art. These activities engage all the sense and help wire the brain for successful learning." David A. Sousa, "How the Brain Learns"

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Children take responsibility for a small garden area, growing their own fruit, vegetables and flowers over the year. This provides amazing opportunities for children to see the full life cycle of a plant and where some of our food comes from. Small world and role play takes on a whole different form in the outdoor area, with the introduction of natural landscapes. We have a large outdoor mud pit which allows children to increase upper body strength and develop their arm pivots through digging with large and small tools. A mud kitchen provides further opportunities for messy play and role play, as well as exploring different materials and beginning to use scientific vocabulary. In the UK, our weather is always changing and the outdoor areas provide many opportunities to explore this. We look at the changes in the trees and temperatures in the autumn time; explore ice and snow and what happens in the cold during the winter months; spring time provides many different opportunities for looking at new life and growth, as well as splashing in puddles; and the summer allows us to find different ways to cool down often using water play and learning the best ways to use the shade of the trees! Writing opportunities on a much larger scale are provided and encouraged, particularly with children who are more reluctant to write indoors. Outdoors, on a much larger scale, they are able to use their whole body to create marks and begin to write.

"As academic demands on children increase, many children are asked to take a seat. They aren't sitting for just a brief period, followed by lots of rich opportunities to learn through hands-on experience. On the contrary, the majority of children are expected to sit for hours every day. This lack of movement combined with an unrelenting sitting routine is wreaking havoc on children's minds and bodies." Angela Hanscom, "Balanced and Barefoot"

All children in Nursery and Reception are fortunate to attend weekly Forest School sessions in our extensive forest school grounds. Mrs Marriott is a highly skilled and trained Level 3 Forest School Leader. The sessions further develop many of the skills from our main provision and extend the children's experiences beyond those of the classroom. Children are expected to put on their own Forest School kit, considering what the weather might be like and what they will need to keep themselves warm and safe. Forest School allows children to take risks within a safe environment. Children enjoy exploring our interesting Forest School area, excitedly talking about the environment, building dens, playing in muddy areas, climbing trees, finding insects, using tools and cooking in the mud kitchen. These experiences help to develop motor skills, communication, social interaction, self-regulation, executive function and managing risks.

Snack times are a chance for all the children in the unit to come together with the adults in the setting. Children sit at a table together with a member of staff, whose role it is to engage them in polite conversation, as well as supervise the children eating and provide support if necessary. The children wash their hands, collect their water bottles and take a seat at the snack table. They then help themselves to a piece of fruit and cup of milk or water.

Nursery and Reception children currently eat together at lunchtimes in the school dining room with the rest of the school. The children receive their meal from the lunchtime staff and are encouraged to be independent within the lunchtime session. They pour their own water, make an attempt at cutting up their own food and clear away their plates and leftovers independently. As well as developing independence, this time is a social time where children are able to chat freely with their friends. As we are a small school, eating together in the dining hall with the rest of the school enables our Early Years children to share mealtimes with other family members, much the same as they do at home.

Our environment is light and airy. We operate free-flow play for a large part of the day but this must be instigated and requested by the children in the first instance due to staffing restraints. We have a large main room where our whole group learning and continuous provision occurs. Our wall displays showcase the children's learning and provide useful information to help support independent learning. We have a smaller room called 'the learning lab' where small group, 1:1 and quieter focussed activities take place and a fantastic book nook which provides a sensory, cosy area where the children can curl up on the sofa with a blanket and enjoy a book.

