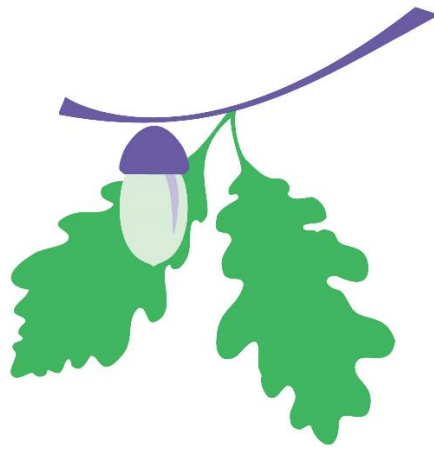




Early Years Policy

Policy owner: Principal / EYFS Lead

Date reviewed: September 2026

Next review: September 2027, or earlier following statutory change

Oak Hill First School

1. Statement of intent

At Oak Hill First School, we believe that the early years should give every child a strong, happy and successful start to school life. Our Nursery and Reception provision is nurturing, ambitious and inclusive. We want children to become curious, independent and resilient learners who communicate confidently, build positive relationships and develop a genuine love of learning.

Secure relationships, high-quality interactions, purposeful play and carefully planned teaching sit at the heart of our provision. We recognise that children arrive with different experiences, strengths and needs. Our curriculum therefore identifies the important knowledge and skills children are entitled to learn, while allowing staff to respond intelligently to individuals and cohorts.

2. Statutory framework

This policy reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026. It applies to children in Oak Hill First School's Nursery and Reception provision, aged 3 to 5.

The school meets the EYFS learning and development requirements and safeguarding and welfare requirements through this policy, associated whole-school policies and day-to-day practice. Where a requirement is already addressed fully through another school or Trust policy, it is not duplicated here.

3. Aims

We aim to:

- provide a safe, welcoming environment in which every child feels known, valued and able to belong
- offer an ambitious, coherent curriculum across all seven areas of learning and development
- give particular attention to communication and language and the three prime areas as foundations for later learning
- provide a thoughtful balance of purposeful play, adult-guided learning and direct teaching
- identify barriers and additional needs early and adapt provision so that all children can participate and make progress
- develop children's independence, self-regulation, confidence and positive attitudes to learning
- work in genuine partnership with parents and carers

- prepare children successfully for their next stage, from Nursery to Reception and from Reception to Year 1.

4. Our curriculum

Our curriculum is shaped by the statutory EYFS educational programmes and by our understanding of the children and community we serve. It sets out what we want children to know, understand and be able to do, building knowledge and skills progressively over time.

We use CUSP Foundations to support the organisation and sequencing of our Early Years curriculum. This provides a rich framework of vocabulary, knowledge, stories and experiences, while allowing practitioners to respond to children's interests, experiences, developmental needs and the context of our school community.

CUSP Foundations supports our curriculum rather than replacing the EYFS. Practitioners remain responsible for ensuring that children experience the full breadth of the seven areas of learning and development through an appropriate balance of purposeful play, high-quality interactions, guided learning and direct teaching.

5. Teaching and learning

Children learn through a carefully judged balance of child-initiated play, adult-initiated experiences, guided learning and direct teaching. Staff make deliberate decisions about when to observe, model, explain, question, practise, revisit or teach directly. As children develop, the balance changes to reflect what they need to learn next.

Indoor and outdoor provision is planned intentionally. Resources and experiences give children opportunities to apply and deepen what has been taught, make connections, solve problems, communicate and develop independence. All children have regular daily access to outdoor learning.

Planning is a working process rather than a fixed script. Staff draw on curriculum expectations, assessment and professional knowledge of individual children. Important knowledge and skills are revisited so that children remember more and can apply their learning in different contexts.

Practice reflects the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically.

6. Communication and language

Communication and language are central to our Early Years curriculum. Adults model rich language, introduce and revisit vocabulary, engage children in sustained conversations and use stories, rhymes, songs and purposeful talk throughout the day. Staff are alert to children who need additional support and work with families and other professionals where concerns arise.

For children whose home language is not English, we value their home language and work with families to understand their wider language development. Children are given sufficient opportunities to learn and develop their use of English so that they are increasingly able to access the curriculum and participate confidently.

7. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching. Practitioners build a secure picture of what children know, can do and are ready to learn through everyday interactions, observation and professional judgement. Assessment informs teaching, provision and any additional support required.

Assessment is proportionate. Staff are not expected to collect excessive written observations or physical evidence to prove their judgements. Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress and any concerns are discussed promptly.

In Reception, the Reception Baseline Assessment is completed within the statutory timescale. At the end of Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed in accordance with statutory requirements and shared with parents and carers and Year 1 staff.

8. Inclusion and SEND

We are ambitious for every child and recognise that fair access does not always mean providing the same support. Practitioners consider each child's needs, interests and development and make reasonable adjustments to teaching, routines, resources and the environment where needed.

Where there is concern about a child's progress or development, staff work with parents and carers to agree appropriate support and consider whether specialist advice is required. The school SENCO works with Early Years staff, families and external professionals. Oak Hill has regard to the SEND Code of Practice and the school's SEND Policy.

9. Relationships, behaviour and self-regulation

Positive relationships and a strong sense of belonging underpin our approach. Adults explicitly teach, model and reinforce routines, expectations, emotional regulation and positive interactions. Children are supported to understand feelings, develop independence, resolve difficulties and build positive relationships with others.

Our approach in Nursery and Reception is consistent with the Oak Hill First School Behaviour Policy, with expectations and responses applied in a developmentally appropriate way.

10. Key person and partnership with parents

Each child has a key person in accordance with EYFS requirements. In Reception, the class teacher fulfils the role of key person. In Nursery, each child is allocated a named key person within the Nursery team. The key person helps the child to become familiar with the setting, develops a settled relationship with the child and their family, understands their individual needs and supports their learning and development. They also support families to access additional help where appropriate.

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We maintain regular two-way communication about children's learning, development and well-being. Families receive information about the curriculum, routines and relevant school arrangements and are encouraged to share information that helps us to understand and support their child.

11. Safeguarding and welfare

Safeguarding and children's welfare are paramount. The school meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS through robust whole-school policies, procedures and practice. Staff working in Nursery and Reception understand the arrangements relevant to their role and know how to identify, record and report concerns.

This includes appropriate arrangements for safeguarding and child protection, attendance, safer recruitment and suitability, staff induction and supervision, paediatric first aid, medicines, allergies and safer eating, intimate care, behaviour, premises and security, educational visits, risk management, online safety and the appropriate use of mobile phones, cameras and other devices.

Children are appropriately supervised and staffing arrangements meet the requirements of the current EYFS statutory framework and, where applicable, infant class size legislation. The school ensures that the premises, resources and outdoor spaces are suitable for the age and needs of the children and that relevant risks are identified and managed.

Digital technology is used purposefully and in an age-appropriate way. The school has regard to current Department for Education guidance on children's screen use in early years settings.

Children do not routinely sleep during the Nursery or Reception day. Where an individual child needs to rest or sleep, appropriate arrangements are made to ensure their comfort, safety and supervision, taking account of their individual needs.

12. Attendance

Good attendance supports children's safety, well-being, relationships and learning. Parents and carers are expected to notify the school when a child will be absent. Unexplained or prolonged absence is followed up promptly, with patterns and vulnerabilities considered as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. Detailed arrangements are set out in the school's Attendance Policy.

13. Transition

Transitions are planned carefully so that children and families feel secure and staff understand each child's strengths, needs and previous experiences. Nursery and Reception staff work closely together to support continuity. Reception staff also work with Year 1 colleagues so that information about children's learning, development and support needs informs an effective transition into Key Stage 1.

14. Leadership and monitoring

The Principal and EYFS leadership maintain oversight of the quality of Early Years provision and ensure that statutory requirements are met. Leaders monitor curriculum implementation, teaching, children's learning and development, inclusion, safeguarding and welfare through normal school quality-assurance processes. Staff receive appropriate support, supervision, training and professional development.

The impact of our Early Years provision is seen in what children know, remember and can do, their personal development and well-being, and their readiness for the next stage of learning. Leaders use this evidence to identify strengths and priorities for improvement.

15. Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read alongside the school's and Trust's current policies and procedures, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Administration of Medicines arrangements
- Allergy Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

- Educational Visits Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy.

16. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where changes to statutory requirements, guidance or school practice make this necessary. Leaders will ensure that related policies and operational procedures remain aligned with current EYFS requirements.

Key statutory and inspection references

Department for Education: Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026.

Ofsted: Early years inspection toolkit and inspection information for use from 1 September 2026.