



# **Overstone Combined School and Pre-School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Updated: December 2024

To be reviewed: December 2026

## Introduction

“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 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework - Department for Education, 2024

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Overstone Combined School and Pre-School, children are admitted into Pre-School from their third birthday and into Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

### 1. Aims

At Overstone Combined School, we adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, and the four guiding principles that shape the practice in Early Years settings.

These include:

- **Unique child** – We recognise that every child is unique and is continually learning, resilient and capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – We recognise that children learn to be strong, secure and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** – 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, parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with SEND.

### 2. Curriculum

According to the ‘Good Practice in Early Education’ Research Report, January 2017, good practice in relation to curriculum planning includes approaches that:

- Are tailored to individual needs
- Capitalise on children’s interests in order to achieve learning outcomes
- Are flexible and responsive so that plans could be changed or adapted to follow the interests of the children and respond to external events
- Are informed by on-going assessment
- Are grounded in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

### The EYFS Curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Our children’s learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

A balance of adult led and child-initiated activities are needed in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three **Prime Areas** are particularly crucial for igniting children’s

curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others
- **Communication and Language** – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment
- **Physical Development** - children have opportunities to be active and develop coordination (both gross motor and fine motor) and they learn about healthy choices

Staff will also support children in four **Specific Areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

- **Literacy** – involves children learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write
- **Mathematics** – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculating skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures
- **Understanding of the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people, culture and communities, the natural world and past and present
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design

Children's development levels are assessed, and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

#### **The Characteristics of Effective Learning:**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to become an effective and motivated learner.

### **3. Continuous Provision**

At Overstone Combined School and Pre-School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development and deepening their understanding of the EYFS curriculum.

The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment in which:

- Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.
- Children's interests, passions and abilities are reflected.
- Materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world are used.

#### **4. Welfare and Safeguarding**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024). Please also see our Child Protection Policy.

#### **5. Transition**

We have several transitions throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage that we manage with care.

The first transition is into Pre-School, which is very often some children's first experience of any type of setting or school. We offer:

- 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Pre-School setting are arranged prior to the child commencing.

These provide an invaluable opportunity for the children and parents to meet the adults in the setting and become familiar with the environment.

- A meeting is held with new parents in which we talk more in depth about the school and the Pre-School session.
- Home Visits, in order to strengthen relationships further.

The second transition that occurs during Early Years is the transition from Pre-School to Reception. This transition can be very daunting for both parents and their children and we aim as a school to ensure that any transition is as smooth and comfortable as possible. We offer:

- A meeting for new parents during the Summer Term to provide information about the school, the curriculum and teaching staff. General information is shared regarding school dinners, reading books and an opportunity to meet their child's new class teacher.
- Two transition sessions for children. During the first session, children visit the Reception class and have a story time with the teacher. This enables children to become familiar with the environment and staff. The second session allows the children to further explore and familiarise themselves with the cloakrooms and meet other children who will be starting at the same time.
- Parents of all children are offered an in-school or door-step appointment with the Reception teacher during which important information, including that from previous settings, can be discussed.

The third and final transition is that between Reception and Year 1. The children attend a transition day in which the children have an opportunity to spend time with their new class teacher. At the end of the summer term, we provide opportunities for Reception and Year 1 teachers to meet to discuss each child's level of development, ELG achievement and any other relevant information (e.g. medical, SEN, EAL, etc.).

## **6. Assessment**

### **Aims**

- To gather information that informs our understanding of a child's development and next steps
- To ensure that our children have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- To develop children's awareness of the learning process and to involve them in and be part of their own self-assessment
- To involve all significant people in a child's life
- To monitor the development and progress of every child
- To assist in the monitoring, evaluation and planning of the curriculum
- To share information with staff, parents/carers and other agencies
- To produce written information that will be forwarded to the child's Year 1 teacher.

### **Baseline Assessment**

Teachers complete a baseline assessment for every child starting Pre-School and Reception.

In Pre-School, an individual Play-Plan will be completed, detailing achievement in the three Prime Areas and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We will also identify ways in which school and home can work together to support the child's development. This will be shared with parents during Parents' Evening.

In Reception, children will complete the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment; a series of maths, phonics and comprehension activities, during the first 6 weeks of the Autumn term. (RBA, May 2021).

### **Daily Assessment**

EYFS staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning.

Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys, using Target Tracker.

### **Termly Assessment**

Target Tracker - Each term, we assess each child's level of development to be emerging, developing or securely working within the Development Matters age-bands and Early Learning Goals. This is then recorded on our whole school assessment software, Target Tracker. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

### **End of the Academic Year**

Parents receive an annual written report that discusses the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning, giving examples when these have been evident.

### **End of EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory assessment that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- 'expected' level at the end of the EYFS

or

- 'emerging' level at the end of the EYFS

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers in children's annual reports. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

## **7. Staff Development**

All staff members involved in EYFS are supported through ongoing professional development to stay informed about the latest practices and standards.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with the EYFS statutory framework and alignment with best practices.