

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

"A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up".

(DfE, Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage).

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum sets the standards that ensure that children learn, develop and are kept safe and healthy. They develop quickly between birth and five years old and their experiences in this time period, have a major impact on their future. The broad knowledge and skills gained at this key time in their lives, provide the firm foundations needed for future progression in their time at school and beyond.

The four guiding principles at the heart of the EYFS curriculum, build firm foundations for children. They are:

- **A Unique Child:**
Every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:**
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments:**
Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with support from adults who respond to their individual needs and interests.
- **Learning and Development:**
Children develop and learn at different rates. The areas of learning and development shape activities and experiences for all children.



The Areas of Learning

There are seven interconnected areas of learning and development that are divided into three **prime** areas and four **specific** areas.

• *The prime areas are:*

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

• *The specific areas are:*

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



The Prime Areas

The three prime areas are important as they build the children's enthusiasm and curiosity for learning and form positive relationships, preparing them for their future learning as they move through the Key Stages at school.



Communication and Language:

This area is very important as it underpins all of the other areas of development. The children are taught new vocabulary through listening to stories, rhymes, non-fiction books, taking part in role play and through conversations modelled by adults. They will experience and use a range of language and develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves.

Physical Development:

Physical activity is a vital part of the development of children. They will learn the importance of being healthy and active. This area gives the children opportunities to be active and develop their co-ordination, strength, control, and agility. They will develop their gross motor skills, which provide the foundations for developing healthy and active bodies; also their fine motor skills which help Literacy skills by developing hand-eye co-ordination.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

This area is important in helping the children to lead happy and healthy lives. The children will learn to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, form positive relationships and develop respect for others. They will continue to develop their social skills, learn how to manage their feelings and how to adjust their behaviour in different situations. The children will learn the importance of a healthy diet, talk about how to keep healthy and manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs (e.g. dressing themselves and going to the toilet independently).

The Specific Areas

There are four specific areas, which strengthen and apply the three prime areas and include the essential knowledge and skills that children need to develop further.

Literacy:

This area is important in helping the children to develop a life-long love of reading. The children will learn how to read words by decoding them and read more familiar words on sight when reading books. They will talk about what they have read and will respond to questions. The children will begin to write simple sentences that can be read by others and will learn how to form letters correctly.



Mathematics:

This area provides opportunities to develop and deepen their understanding of numbers to 10. They will learn number bonds to 5 and 10 (addition and subtraction facts) and to double numbers. They will verbally count to and beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the number system. The children will also learn to recognise 2D and 3D shapes and describe them.



Understanding the World:

This area teaches children how to make sense of their physical world and community. It will build on their personal experiences, learn about the lives of the people around them and understand the difference between past and present events. The children will also learn about similarities and differences in places, objects, materials and living things, talk about their own environment, observe animals and plants, and explain why things happen and change. They will learn about different religious and cultural communities through their own experiences and reading in class.



Expressive Arts and Design:

This area gives children the opportunity to explore a wide range of media and materials, and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.



The Characteristics of Teaching and Learning

In planning and guiding children's activities, there are three characteristics of development considered. These characteristics move through all areas of learning and enable the adults to reflect upon the ways that individual children engage with other people and their environment, and become a motivated learner.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** - Children will investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** - Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.



Observation and planning

We plan around the children's interests, needs and stage of learning development to ensure that they achieve their full potential and have a positive start to school life. The children are guided through set routines when they start school, to ensure that they feel confident in their learning environment.

The unique child is at the centre of our planning at St Oswald's. We achieve this through observation and ongoing informal assessment to help us recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to then plan for their next steps.

We observe the children in their play through daily activities and routines, child initiated activities, planned adult directed and led activities, and learning that happens at home, shared by parents. 'Evidence Me' is a secure online learning journey that we use to capture observations, and we share some of these with parents. You will receive more information about this in September.





Assessment

In the first half of the Autumn term, (the first six weeks of school) a Baseline Assessment is carried out. The children are unaware of this, as it is completed by adults observing the children at their activities, both in the indoor and outdoor environments. This baseline is essential as it helps us to find out the starting point of each child and plan accordingly to ensure progress is made.

In addition to this baseline, all children starting Reception across the country, will be taking part in a Government 'statutory baseline'. This assessment focuses on Language, Communication and Literacy and Mathematics. The children will again be unaware of the assessment as it is activity based and used to find each child's starting point before they begin their school journey.

In the Summer term of Reception, **The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)** is completed. These assessments provide us with a clear picture of the child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, and their readiness for Year 1. Each child is assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals and teachers determine whether children are working at the 'Emerging' stage or at 'Expected' stage of development. The national expectation is that children achieve 'Expected' in 12 of the Early Learning Goals to achieve their GLD (Good Level of Development). More information about this will follow in the Autumn term.

The EYFSP is shared with parents/guardians through an end of year report and is discussed during an end of year Parents' Meeting.

An example of a typical day in Reception

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| 8:45am | School opens and registration begins |
| 9:00 - 9:30am | Letters and Sounds activities |
| 9:30 - 10:30am | Literacy and Communication and Language activities |
| 10:30 - 10:45am | Break |
| 10:45 - 11:45am | Maths activities |
| 11:45 - 12:30pm | Lunch time |
| 12:30 - 1:00pm | Reading activities |
| 1:00 - 2:00pm | PSED/RE/PE/Understanding of the World/ Expressive Arts and Design |
| 2:00 - 2:15pm | Break |
| 2:15 - 3:00pm | PSED/RE/PE/Understanding of the World/ Expressive Arts and Design |
| 3:00 - 3:15pm | Story time |
| 3:15pm | Home time |

Children have access to Continuous Provision in both the indoor and outdoor environments throughout the day during activity times.