

## **Curriculum policy**

This Policy outlines the documents and procedures followed by Little Oaks Nursery to ensure the children in our care receive the best possible start in life.

### **Frameworks and Guidance**

Little Oaks Nursery uses a number of frameworks and guidance documents to plan and deliver the curriculum.

#### **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

This framework is what all providers must do by law to ensure children receive a high quality of care and education in early years' settings. Little Oaks Nursery uses the EYFS to shape the policies, procedures and practices delivered throughout the nursery. The EYFS states:

"The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years' settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years' settings
- the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)"

### **Overarching principles of the EYFS**

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years' settings. These are:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There are 7 areas of learning outlined in the EYFS which are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

#### British Values

There are four Fundamental British Values that early years' providers must support and develop across their practice to meet the statutory requirements in the Prevent Duty guidance:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance

These fundamental British Values are already embedded into the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) and practitioners will be working with these values in their everyday practice, preparing children with the skills and attitudes they need to positively interact and engage in the world.

#### **OFSTED inspection Framework**

OFSTED are the registered organisation who are responsible for inspecting all Early Years settings. During their inspection OFSTED will look at the quality of provision and how well the nursery meets the needs of the children in their care. The OFSTED inspection framework sets out the systems used to inspect settings to ensure consistency across all settings when deciding the final outcome.

## Cultural Capital

The framework states:

“Cultural capital is the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success. It is about giving children the best possible start to their early education. As part of making a judgment about the quality of education, inspectors will consider how well leaders use the curriculum to enhance the experience and opportunities available to children, particularly the most disadvantaged [...]

“Some children arrive at an early years setting with different experiences from others, in their learning and play. What a setting does, through the EYFS curriculum and interactions with practitioners potentially makes all the difference to children. It is the role of the setting to help the children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.”

### **Birth to 5 matters**

Early Years settings can choose the way in which they fulfil the standards set out by the EYFS and meet the inspection requirements. Little Oaks operates using the guidance set out in the non-statutory Birth to 5 matters guidance.

Birth to 5 Matters provides comprehensive guidance, drawing on previous guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which has been updated in order to reflect recent research, to meet the needs of practitioners, to respond to current issues in society, to meet the needs of children today and to lay a strong foundation for their futures.

Birth to Five Matters will support practitioners in all their statutory responsibilities within the EYFS areas of learning and development and educational programmes, and to help children make progress toward the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

The Birth to 5 matters guidance provides information about children are typically able to do at any given age, taking into account that children learn at different rates. These are referred to as “ranges”.

The ranges are used to assess children’s developmental progress observed in nursery.

Copies of the birth to 5 matters are available for Practitioners to use in all rooms and parents are provided with information as part of the settling in routine when their child starts nursery.

### **SENIT Development Journal**

The SENIT DJ has been designed to be used in collaboration between Early Years Practitioners and families to support the learning needs of young children who experience a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of their peers and who are therefore considered to have Special Educational Needs. Little Oaks Nursery uses the SENIT DJ to track children’s learning and development when an additional need has been identified.

### **Leuven Scales**

The Leuven scale is a 5 point scale that allows practitioners to measure a child’s emotional well-being and involvement. The idea of emotional well-being and involvement is particularly important

in early years because it safeguards a child's emotional development whilst encouraging engagement for the learning development.

Emotional well-being is particularly important for children. If children feel confident in their surroundings they are more likely to learn productively and develop in a healthy way. Promoting an environment where children feel happy, safe, and supported is key to this.

By keeping the emotional well-being first and foremost, and keeping practitioners conscious of a child's emotional well-being, the Leuven scale provides a way to consciously identify how best to support an individual child.

To use the Leuven scale's level of engagement practically, it is useful to note down what particular tasks or activities a child is engaging with most.

This will help identify a child's area of interest or areas of interest, and help identify the best resources (for example, the most engaging toys, resources, textures, or environments) for that particular child.

When a child is engaged to a high level they tend to also experience high levels of emotional well-being, as they are being challenged but are still comfortable enough to feel fully engaged.

## **Our Curriculum in Practice**

The guidance outlined above is brought together to ensure the curriculum provided is of a high quality and meets the needs of all children in our care. There are a number of elements which, when brought together create an effective curriculum.

### **The Curiosity Approach**

The Curiosity Approach is the Pedagogy that drives our curriculum. It is designed to see, hear and understand every child.

- Instead of directing children, and telling them what to do, the curiosity approach is based on child-led learning.
- Children make their own choices, and figure things out for themselves which leads to enhanced confidence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- Create children who are 'thinkers and doers' instead of passive learners who simply follow the direction of an adult.
- Children are in charge of their own development and choose activities which play to their own interests

It relies on the high expectations of educators, to reignite their passion and to create a culture that places children at the centre of everything we do. Bringing magical play experiences and opportunities back into play and provision. Raising standards and understanding that we need to offer more for our children in this increasingly technological age. It's about the holistic development of children, physically, spiritually and mentally. It's about bringing joy, happiness, life and soul into our practice, to live it breathe it, feel it and together grow a mentally healthy generation of children who have childhoods to remember and cherish.

Children will be supported to develop skills that will be relevant to them, growing up in an ever-changing world.



These include:

- Independent thinking
- Stronger non-verbal communication
- Language and verbal communication
- Problem-solving
- Lifelong learning
- Risk taking
- Imagination
- Respect for resources and the natural world
- Creative and critical thinking

### **Observation and assessment schedule**

#### **Starting nursery – Settling in visits and Baseline assessments**

When children start nursery, information is gathered from Parents/Carers to find out children's likes and dislikes and any individual care needs. Through conversations with parents, practitioners will use the ranges from the birth to 5 guidance to build a picture of the child's current development in all 7 areas of the EYFS. This is called a baseline assessment. The baseline assessment helps practitioners to identify if there are any areas the child needs additional support in from the start.

#### **Keyworker system**

All children who start nursery are provided with a key worker. The role of a keyworker is to build a close working relationship with their key child and find out about each child in detail. Keyworkers can then use this knowledge to ensure children are provided with resources and activities which match their unique interests and current developmental needs.

#### **Observations**

During the child's time at nursery, practitioners will observe children learning through play, being curious and exploring. Staff will take photos, videos and written notes about these experiences and celebrate any achievements they may witness. These observations are recorded on our online system iconnect and can be shared with parents and carers. Photographs and videos are used to support the observations and ensure parents are able to share in these celebrations.

#### **Keyworker reviews**

Every 6 weeks, Practitioners spend time with their Room supervisor to talking about their key children in detail. During this discussion, keyworkers will reflect on their key children's progress and development needs. This keyworker review offers an opportunity to check that all children's needs are being met and that keyworkers know all their children well.

#### **Assessments**

Assessments are completed each term. The assessment tracks children's development using the ranges outlined in the birth to 5 guidance. This assessment is shared with parents/carers via iconnect.

### Cohort tracking

Once assessments are complete, the management team look at the data to identify if there are any gaps in provision which can needs to be addressed. The management team will also use cohort tracking to ensure all children are making progress and that any gaps from children's starting points are reduced.

### Parent Consultations

Once the keyworker review and assessments are complete, practitioners arrange a parent consultation. These are conducted either by phone or in person and are an opportunity for keyworkers and parents to discuss their child's development in more detail. If there is a concern about a child's development, it is usually discussed during these meetings. A plan can be put in place to ensure any intervention is in place at an early stage. If specialist support is required, the referral process can be initiated once permission is given by parents.

### 2 year checks and summative assessments

Additional checks are carried out at 2 years of age and before the transition to primary school. These are completed and shared with parents in line with the requirements set out in the EYFS.

### Reflective Practice

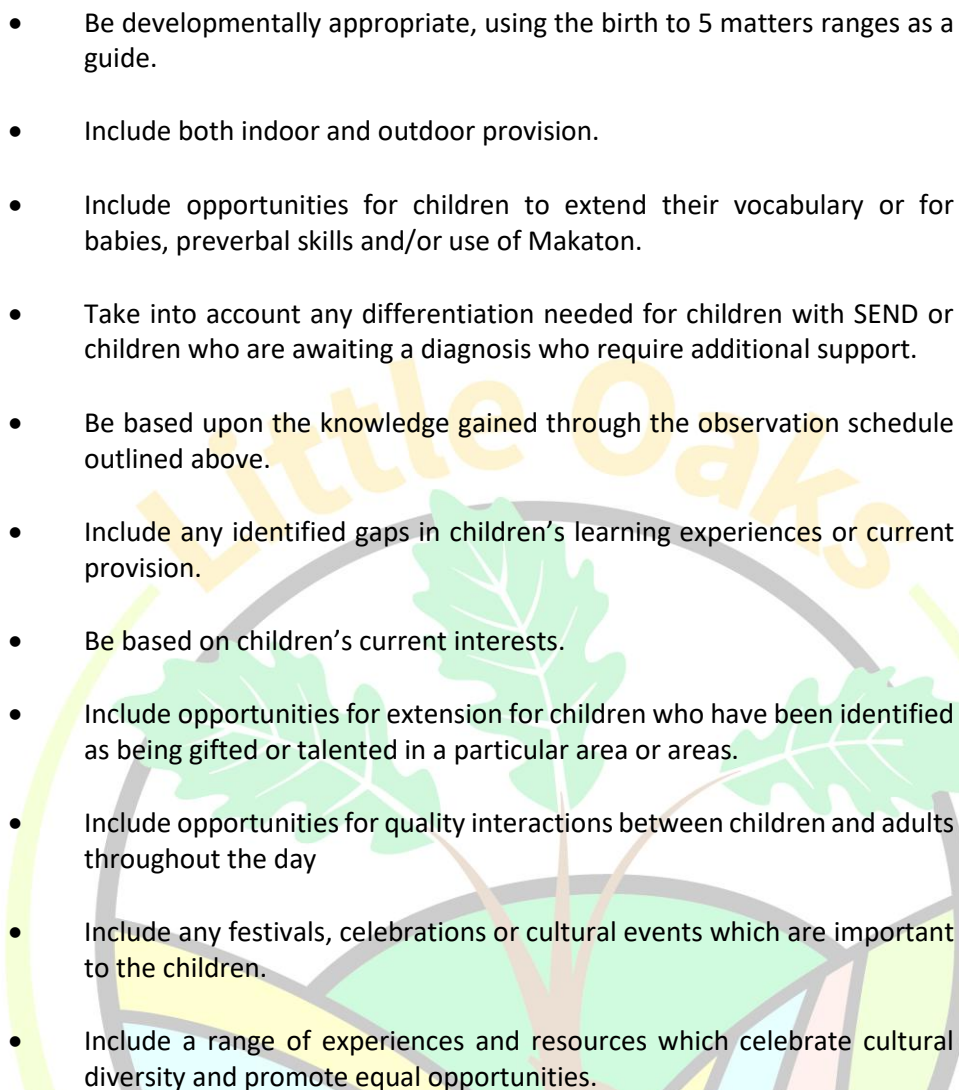
Information from the keyworker reviews, assessments, cohort tracking and parent consultations is gathered and used to reflect on current practice and provision. This information is also used to inform future provision.

### Reflective Planning

#### General Guidance

Each key worker looks at their key children's interests and uses these interests to further their learning. Planning is done reflectively and then is used to inform provision moving forward, setting up invitations to play and pockets of magic. Reflective planning is done bi-weekly. It is tailored to individual children, putting them at the heart of their own curriculum. Planning and provision should:

- Include a range of learning opportunities which cover the 7 areas of the EYFS.

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- Be developmentally appropriate, using the birth to 5 matters ranges as a guide.
  - Include both indoor and outdoor provision.
  - Include opportunities for children to extend their vocabulary or for babies, preverbal skills and/or use of Makaton.
  - Take into account any differentiation needed for children with SEND or children who are awaiting a diagnosis who require additional support.
  - Be based upon the knowledge gained through the observation schedule outlined above.
  - Include any identified gaps in children's learning experiences or current provision.
  - Be based on children's current interests.
  - Include opportunities for extension for children who have been identified as being gifted or talented in a particular area or areas.
  - Include opportunities for quality interactions between children and adults throughout the day
  - Include any festivals, celebrations or cultural events which are important to the children.
  - Include a range of experiences and resources which celebrate cultural diversity and promote equal opportunities.

Planning should also include opportunities for children to interact with their local community and learn about the people and places within it. This could include visits from the fire service, trips to the local shops, making links with the library or inviting key members of the community to visit nursery.

### **Positive interactions**

Early Years Practitioners spend time with children building strong relationships and finding out about their likes, dislikes and current stage of development. They focus on:

- Recognising when children need support and comfort and providing this in a sensitive and supportive way
- Using positive words and encouragement.

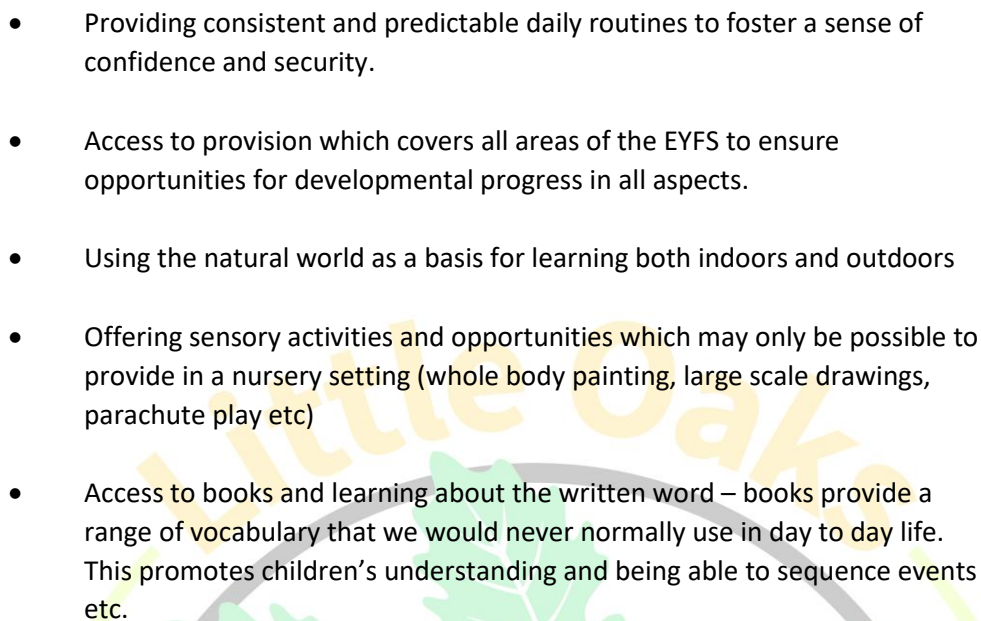
- Being respectful and helping children to become emotionally resilient individuals
- Encouraging children to problem solve and manage conflicts in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Providing opportunities for children to make friends and learn about turn taking and sharing
- To build upon children's experiences and current level of development and offer opportunities to succeed
- Keeping children safe – using knowledge of child protection and safeguarding to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and being aware of what to do in the event that a concern is raised.
- Supporting children's physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensuring boundaries are consistent and that any unwanted behaviour is challenged sensitively.
- Close working relationships with children's families – sharing information between home and nursery (parent consultations)

### **The learning environment**

The nursery setting is divided into 3 rooms. Each room is designed with the age of the children using the room in mind. Age appropriate resources are provided and Early Years Practitioners use their knowledge and skills to provide learning opportunities which cover all 7 areas of the EYFS. The following aspects are considered when planning the learning environment:

- Language rich environments – lots of opportunities for conversation, questioning, and sharing ideas.
- Providing invitations to play – activities which foster children's curiosity and need to explore new things
- Opportunities to take risks and take on new challenges
- Having opportunities to participate in spontaneous play
- Providing experiences both indoors and outdoors daily
- Include regular and predictable daily routines to help children feel settled and secure.
- Provision being linked to the community – educational visits and events within the nursery setting (i.e. multi-generational working)



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- Providing consistent and predictable daily routines to foster a sense of confidence and security.
  - Access to provision which covers all areas of the EYFS to ensure opportunities for developmental progress in all aspects.
  - Using the natural world as a basis for learning both indoors and outdoors
  - Offering sensory activities and opportunities which may only be possible to provide in a nursery setting (whole body painting, large scale drawings, parachute play etc)
  - Access to books and learning about the written word – books provide a range of vocabulary that we would never normally use in day to day life. This promotes children’s understanding and being able to sequence events etc.

### **Leadership and Management**

The Senior Leadership team aim to support Practitioners and offer information and challenge as needed. Having an overview of the achievements that children are making helps to shape the curriculum and identify areas for improvement. Leadership and Management support the team in the following ways:

- Supervisions – Regular discussions with staff ensure that any training needs or gaps in knowledge are addressed and support provided.
- Learning walks – Regular learning walks will take place to ensure the environment and provision is meeting the needs of the children.
- Mentoring – Supporting Practitioners who are working towards an early year’s qualification
- Induction – Supporting new practitioners to ensure they are fully aware of the nursery policies and procedures
- Sharing information – Information is shared using Senior Management team meetings (SMT’s) and regular staff meetings. Further information is shared through parentmail as needed.

### **Transitions**

We recognise that children will undergo a number of transitions during their time at nursery. These include:

- Starting nursery
- Moving between different rooms within the nursery
- Starting school or moving nurseries

We aim to ensure these times of transition are planned for and children are supported through the process by adults they know and trust.

- We offer a number of settling in visits for children when starting nursery. The child's keyworker will spend time with the child and their parent to find out about the child's likes and dislikes and form a good working relationship with the family.
- For children moving rooms within the nursery, we offer regular opportunities for children to visit their new room with their keyworker. During these visits, information will be shared with the child's new keyworker. Depending on the needs of the child, visits may be spread out over a few weeks or months to ensure children are fully ready to transition to the new room.
- When children are close to transitioning to their new room, practitioners make slight adaptations to the child's routine in preparation for their move. For example, children moving from the Bluebell room to Daisy room will be provided with a chair without a strap and an open cup at meal times so they are ready for the new routine. We also provide social stories to take home, where appropriate. These aid discussions at home about the move and can be a conversation starter for worries etc.
- Parents are kept informed of how the transition process is progressing. Parents will have the opportunity to visit the new room and meet the staff and new keyworker prior to the move.
- Children who are moving onto Primary education are supported by their keyworker to prepare for the transition. This will include regular discussions around going to school, looking at photos of their new school and the uniform they will be wearing.
- We encourage primary school teachers to come to nursery and visit the children. Feedback is provided at these visits to help teachers find out more about children's current development.
- All children receive a summative assessment when moving to primary education. This assessment is completed in consultation with parents and carers and passed onto the child's new school.

### **Parents as Partners**

We know that parents and carers know and understand their own child best. We work with parents and carers from the start to ensure children's needs are met and that any concerns about children's wellbeing and development are discussed in a timely manner. Information is shared in the following ways:

- During initial visits to nursery

- Through the website – policies are available for parents and carers to read
- During settling in visits to nursery
- On a daily basis at pick up and drop off time. Information would include information about their child's day, celebration of their child's achievements and any accidents or incidents which may have occurred.
- Through Iconnect – parents and carers are provided with information about their child's day at nursery.
- Through Parentmail – important nursery updates are shared through this app.
- Parent and carer consultations – these are held every term either face to face or via telephone.

Parents and carers are encouraged to ask questions about their child's development and practitioners are able to provide support and information. If further professional advice is required, we can refer to a number of services who can provide further support.

If a concern is raised regarding the welfare of the child, we will address these concerns in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy. Information will be shared with parents/carers initially before any further action is taken. The exception to this is if the nursery feels there is a significant risk to the child or family, in which case concerns will be raised immediately without parental consent being provided.

### **Putting it all together**

At little Oaks Nursery our aim is to ensure children have access to a curriculum which celebrates their individual achievements and provides opportunities for them to build upon what they already know and can do. Our approach to delivering our curriculum is flexible and adapts to the ongoing needs of the children in our care and this is shared with parents and carers on a daily basis. Through assessment we can reflect on the learning which is taking place and be sure that our planning and provision is working and that keyworkers know their children well.

