



# **OASIS COMMUNITY LEARNING EARLY YEARS POLICY**

## CONTENTS

At a glance.....	3
Checklist .....	3
In brief.....	4
Policy statement .....	4
Curriculum .....	4
OCL curriculum and resources.....	7
Early Years into KS1 .....	8
National Lead Practitioners .....	8
Assessment .....	9
SEND.....	10
Working with parents .....	10
Safeguarding and welfare procedures.....	11
Ratios .....	11
Medicines .....	11
Responsibilities .....	12
Training requirements .....	12
Statutory requirements.....	13
RACI Matrix .....	14
Document Control.....	15

## At a glance

Our vision is for community – a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and reaching their God-given potential. Our ethos is a statement of who we are and it is an expression of our character. Rooted in the story and beliefs of Oasis, we describe our ethos through a particular set of values that inform and provide the lens on everything we do.

- **A passion to include**
- **A desire to treat people equally respecting differences**
- **A commitment to healthy, open relationships**
- **A deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed**
- **A sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul**

It is these ethos values that we want to be known for and live by. It is these ethos values that also shape our policies. They are the organisational values we aspire to. We are committed to a model of inclusion, equality, healthy relationships, hope, and perseverance throughout all the aspects of the life and culture of every Oasis Hub and community.

We want every child to have the best possible start in life and have the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. The aim is to celebrate the uniqueness of every child, develop their personal character and improve outcomes for all children, helping to close the gap for disadvantaged children. This policy is underpinned by the Trust Curriculum Statement of Intent. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early year's 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 the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

## Checklist

- Our approach to Early Years is underpinned by the Oasis Ethos and 9 Habits. To create and maintain healthy, open relationships and to ensure we remain committed to treating children equally, we seek to intentionally focus on being patient, honest, humble and forgiving. For instance, in working with parents and children we will be compassionate and fully inclusive
- This policy mirrors Development Matters <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2> and the Early Years framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> We aim to keep it up to date with DfE changes
- The practice outlined in this policy is supported and developed by our Trust Early Years strategy group and Early Years NLP team
- We aim to share best practice through our community group and an annual conference

## In brief

This policy outlines Early Years practice and expectations across OCL.

## In more detail

This policy aims to ensure that there is:

- quality and consistency in all early years setting, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind, especially those children who are disadvantaged or have additional needs
- a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly with a focus on those children who are not on track to meet their Early Learning Goals
- 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

## Policy statement

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, this includes children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

This policy is in line with The Childcare Act 2006 (section 39(1)(a) and section 39(1)(b)).

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

Also, Development Matters which was updated in July 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2/development-matters>

## Curriculum

Our early years settings follow the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

As outlined below, the EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are

seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

### Three prime areas

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also support children **in four specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

### Planning

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring – children 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

### Teaching

The EYFS is about how children learn, as well as what they learn. Children need opportunities to develop their own play and independent exploration. This is enjoyable and motivating. They also need adults to 'scaffold' their learning by giving them just enough help to achieve something they could not do independently. Helping children to think, discuss and plan ahead is important, like gathering the materials they need to make a den before they start building.

There are seven key features of effective practice:

### 1. The best for every child

All children deserve to have an equal chance of success. High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. When they start school, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 4 months behind their peers. We need to do more to narrow that gap. Children who have lived through difficult experiences can begin to grow stronger when they experience high-quality early education and care. High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning.

### 2. High-quality care

The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner. Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for. High-quality care needs to be consistent between home and the EY setting. Every practitioner needs to enjoy spending time with young children. Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies. They notice when a baby looks towards them and gurgles and respond with pleasure. Practitioners understand that toddlers are learning to be independent, so they will sometimes get frustrated. Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children.

### 3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn

The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.

Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital. The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time. Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible. Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line. Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

### 4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help.

Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching. Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning. Children in the Early Years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning. Older children need more of this guided learning. A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.

## 5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence. Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.

Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help. Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.

Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

## 6. Self-regulation and executive function

Executive function includes the child's ability to:

- hold information in mind
- focus their attention
- think flexibly
- inhibit impulsive behaviour

These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:

- concentrate their thinking
- plan what to do next
- monitor what they are doing and adapt
- regulate strong feelings
- be patient for what they want
- bounce back when things get difficult.

Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans. Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.

## 7. Partnership with parents

It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years. This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children's progress. The help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their learning. Some children get much less support for their learning at home than others. By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most. It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children.

## **OCL curriculum and resources**

The curriculum in the Early Years provides a structure and sense of direction, whilst ensuring there are ambitious opportunities for children to learn. Clear steps are developed from EY into KS1. The EY curriculum provides the key initial building blocks from which all curriculum areas develop from. The EY curriculum prepares children for KS1 and beyond.

Through valuing every child and believing that every child is capable of making good progress, we can ensure that no child is left behind. This is achieved through mapping out overarching potential themes and key skills, careful planning of the environment and purposeful, targeted assessment.

Our Oasis curriculum is not designed to teach solely to the Early Learning Goals or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development from being read to frequently to playing with friends.

On our Early Years SharePoint site there are a series of resources available to support curriculum development. For example, there is a suggested yearly overview, including potential themes/topics that may follow children's interests, key texts to support the delivery of these themes, key dates that include celebrations and religious events, experiences that could be included to enrich the curriculum offer and the implementation of British Values across the year.

Every school, community and cohort within Oasis is different and EYFS practitioners will have autonomy in the development and delivery of their curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of their learners. Depending on academy RAG rating there will be varying levels of support from the NLP team linked to curriculum design.

## **Early Years into KS1**

The EY curriculum provides the key initial building blocks from which all curriculum areas develop from. The EY curriculum prepares children for KS1 and beyond.

Resources are in place to support the links between learning areas in EY and specific national curriculum subjects in KS1. Our EY strategy group has worked on best practice to secure strong links between the EY curriculum and that in KS1.

## **National Lead Practitioners**

We have a team of Early Years experts who we call our National Lead Practitioners for Early Years. The NLP's have developed a wide range of high-quality resources to support schools in developing a broad and balanced curriculum, rooted in Early Years pedagogy and current best practice. This team promotes and supports the development of staff across our organisation through a carefully planned calendar of training and professional development. The team also supports school on an individual level, tailored to their needs to ensure all children across Oasis are receiving the best possible start to their education in the EYFS. We also have an Early Years Strategy and Community group which enables the wider sharing of best practice across all Early Year's settings.

## Assessment

**Early Learning Goals** outline the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS.

The ELGs should not be used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development. The ELGs should support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development, and their readiness for Year 1.

The **Development Matters** guidance sets out the pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages. The actual learning of young children is not so neat and orderly. For that reason, accurate and proportionate assessment is vital. It helps colleagues make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next. It is not designed to be used as a tick list for generating lots of data. It guides but does not replace, your professional judgement.

Professional knowledge is key to helping children make progress without needing to record lots of next steps and staff are supported in making these judgments through the OCL checkpoints and regular training on assessment and moderation.

The Development Matters observation checkpoints and OCL checkpoints can help you to notice whether a child is at risk of falling behind. You can make all the difference by acting quickly. By monitoring a child's progress closely, you can make the right decisions about what sort of extra help is needed. Through sensitive dialogue with parents and carers you can understand the child better and offer helpful suggestions to support learning at home within the family. Health colleagues, like health visitors or speech and language therapists, offer vital support to this work. Every child can make progress with the right support.

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share. In line with the updated statutory framework, our emphasis is on using assessment to move children's learning on without adding needlessly to staff workload.

Parents and/or carers should be kept up to date with their child's progress and development. OCL recommend using an online journal such as Seesaw to share key moments in children's learning, supported by our Horizons programme. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

### Progress check at age two

When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners must review their progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short-written summary of their child's development in

the prime areas. This progress check must identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected.

### **Assessment at the start of the Reception year**

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception.

Within OCL, staff also undertake an internal observation and play based baseline assessment to inform us of children's current stages of development in all areas of learning to support developing a curriculum that will enable all children to make progress.

We also have a spring checkpoint to give leaders a picture of the progress being made by children in Early Years.

### **Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)**

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child.

The Profile must reflect practitioners' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

This is the EYFS Profile. Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report. Early years providers must report EYFS Profile results to local authorities.

## **SEND**

Inclusion, including SEND, is at the heart of all that we do in Oasis. When children are at earlier stages of development than expected, it is important to notice what they enjoy doing and also find out where their difficulties may lie. They may need additional support so that they become secure in the earlier stages of development. Children must be met at the stage of learning they are currently at and opportunities for development should be carefully planned and frequently reviewed and assessed in order to ensure progress. They may need lots of stimulating experiences and a tailored approach will be essential to help them develop their learning.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff must consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

## **Working with parents**

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person can also help families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

## **Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

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. Each child must be assigned a key person in the setting.

Academies must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

Leaders must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.

Oasis academies must have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and to the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'. All academies are required to have regard to the government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance.

All Early Years settings and staff follow the OCL Safeguarding Policy which details safeguarding and welfare procedures.

## **Ratios**

Oasis follows the Early Years Framework for adult: child ratios.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974907/EYFS\\_framework\\_-\\_March\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf)

When planning trips and visits in the Early Years, leaders must reflect carefully on the needs and age of the children. The OCL Trips and Visits policy details the minimum ratio of children to adults on Nursery and Reception trips and visits. Children with SEND may require one to one support depending on the complexity of need.

Nursery: one adult to a maximum of three children.

Reception: one adult to a maximum of four children.

## **Medicines**

We follow the Oasis guidance on medicines in school. This is in line with the statutory framework for the Early Years which notes that "Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular

medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable." (section 3.47)  
"Training must be provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor)." (section 3.46)

## Responsibilities

The Principal and Early Years lead are responsible for the quality of education in the Early Years. The Regional Director provides the governance for the Early Years and therefore the challenge and support for Early Years provision.

## Training requirements

CPD is organised through the following:

- NLP support
- Academy led CPD
- Early Years Community groups
- Early Years Strategy group
- INSET days
- Trust staff meetings
- Early Years conferences

Access to CPD is through the Oasis Learning and Development Zone on SharePoint.

## Statutory requirements

This policy is in line with The Childcare Act 2006 (section 39(1)(a) and section 39(1)(b)).

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

Also, Development Matters which was updated in July 2021:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2/development-matters>



## RACI Matrix

“R” for anyone who is “Responsible” for a task listed in the policy, an “A” for anyone who is “Accountable”, a “C” for anyone who must be “Consulted” under the policy and “I” for anyone who must be “Informed” about aspects of the policy.

Policy Element	Leadership				Academy			Services		Team	
	Board	OCL CEO	OCL COO	Regional Director	Academy Principal	EY Lead / EY teacher					
EY Baseline in place					A	R					
End of Reception assessment in place					A	R					
Practice matches OCL expectations					A	R					
EY practitioners have access to EY resources on SharePoint					A	R					
Strong links are made with feeder nurseries					A	R					
Regular communication is in place with parents / carers					A	R					

## Document Control

### Changes History

Version	Date	Owned and Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	February 2022	Chris Chamberlain / EY NLPs - Rosie Parsons and Kali Jauncey	All primary Principals	Share best EY practice

### Policy Tier

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4

### Owner

Chris Chamberlain

### Contact in case of query

[chris.chamberlain@oasisuk.org](mailto:chris.chamberlain@oasisuk.org)

### Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Position	Date Approved	Version
Directors' Group	OPD & Director's group	28/3/22	1.0

### Position with the Unions

Does the policy or changes to the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement?

- Yes
- No

If yes, the policy status is:

- Consulted with Unions and Approved
- Fully consulted (completed) but not agreed with Unions but Approved by OCL
- Currently under Consultation with Unions
- Awaiting Consultation with Unions

Date & Record of Next Union Review

**Location**

Tick all that apply:

- OCL website
- Academy website
- Policy portal
- Other: state

**Customisation**

- OCL policy
- OCL policy with an attachment for each academy to complete regarding local arrangements
- Academy policy
- Policy is included in Principals' annual compliance declaration

**Distribution**

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Position	Date	Version
All Primary Principals	Principals	February 2022	1.0

