



# Oxenhope Church of England Primary School

## **Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy**



**If you are concerned about the safety of a child, act!**

Our Named Persons for Child Protection are Alice Jones (Headteacher), Caroline Auty (Class Teacher), Oliver Thurlby (Class Teacher), Joanne Brown (Class Teacher), Laura Woodhead (Diversity and Inclusion Manager), Nichola Costello (Office Manager) and Janet Hopkinson (Cover Supervisor & Explorers Playworker)

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NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

West Yorkshire Police – 101 or 999

Created By:	Last reviewed:	Next Review Date:
A Jones	September 2025	September 2026

## School Vision

We provide the rich soil allowing children and adults to flourish and develop deep roots. We nurture **growth**, enabling children and adults to thrive as our Christian values blossom in their lives. We cultivate a sense of pride in our rural **community** where children and adults are **loved** and valued.

*May our children flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants. Psalm 144 v 12.*

Throughout our curriculum and school life, along with our school vision, these three golden strands permeate through everything we do.

## Community

Jesus often spoke of unity in our communities and encouraging one another on our journey. He spoke of bearing each other's burdens in love and helping those in need.

'Live in harmony with one another.' Romans 12 v 16



## Love

It says in the Bible that God is Love and encompasses all that is loving and good. Jesus showed the ultimate unconditional love when he laid down his life for us on the cross. Therefore, this love should lead to a desire to love other people.

'Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us.' Ephesians 5 v 2



## Growth

Just like a plant, we must endure the difficult times along with the good; but God has sent us his Holy Spirit to help and strengthen us so we can bear fruit and grow in the likeness of Christ.

'Grown in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2 Peter 3 v 18



## Aims:

- To give each child a happy, positive, and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure, and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Oxenhope C of E Primary School follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework document, which is available from the school office or to download at: Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

This clearly defines the core of what we teach. In addition, we use Development Matters to help us fulfil the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework document. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2021), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are:

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and communities, The world and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Prime Areas			
Communication & Language	Personal, Social & Emotional Development		Physical Development
Specific Areas			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts & Design

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teacher plans activities with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

## EYFS Curriculum

Our progressive curriculum is skills based, showing clear, sequenced progress throughout the year. We focus on knowledge and skills whilst balancing the child's interests and likes. Our curriculum is robust and clearly mapped out, developing curiosity, questioning and awe and wonder with our exciting activities and tasks.

## Teaching strategies

The early years staff ensure there is a balance of adult led, adult initiated and child-initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. Our aim is to build independent learners. To help with this, we also have rainbow challenges which are modelled by the teacher and then accessed by the child independently. They move the relevant coloured stick into their named pocket.

The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

## Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They can practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace.

Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to our EYFS setting.

## Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills

and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place.

We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered on the carpet as a class. In these sessions we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc. Reading and story play are an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of reading books and leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

### Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Class Teachers create long-term (yearly) and medium term (termly) plans, outlined in the Statutory Framework and Development Matters. The Early Years Team work together to ensure that all aspects of the seven areas of learning and development are considered and that children are receiving a broad and balanced curriculum, which is supplemented with valuable educational visits throughout the year. Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to ensure challenging and enjoyable experiences for all. Where children have a special educational need or disability, staff will consider whether specialist support or resources are required to allow access to the same broad curriculum. Subject leaders monitor subjects covered in EYFS to ensure transition into the primary curriculum is smooth.

### Early Reading and Phonics

Staff in our Early Years classroom will focus on instilling a life-long love of books.

Children will be read high quality texts to daily. A variety of books including story books, non-fiction books, poems and rhymes will be available throughout the setting (indoors and outdoors). Children will be encouraged to take home a book of their choosing from the class library each week.

Story time is a precious time which is highly valued in the Reception Class. The class teachers, support staff, SLT, other members of staff, visitors, volunteers, and older children reading regularly.

Phonics:

Reception staff will teach phonics using the Read Write Inc. (RWI) literacy programme. Children are given reading scheme books (which include the sounds that they are familiar with), to be able to practise their reading skills at home. Parents/Carers are encouraged to listen to their children read at least 5 times a week. Progress will be monitored and assessed on a regular basis and children will be grouped according to their ability. Some children in the Reception Class may work with Key Stage One children of a similar ability. For more details, see the School Reading at Oxenhope document.

### Writing

Throughout the EYFS, children are encouraged to mark-make using a wide range of high-quality tools, including felt-tips, crayons, chalk, pencils, paint brushes etc...

When children are making these early marks, they are practising to hold a pencil and are attempting to control their marks with their muscles. This enhances their physical development by improving their fine motor skills and helps to develop their hand-eye coordination. Other activities to enhance muscle development and fine motor control are also planned as part of continuous provision, including playdough manipulation, model building and threading etc...

As part of the RWI lessons, children are taught how to form the alphabet letters using the handwriting pattern, outlined in the RWI literacy programme. Opportunities to write for a variety of purposes are planned for and are provided by a range of stimuli, including stories and role play. Reception follows the same writing phase planning as the rest of the school (see English at Oxenhope Document) **Along with the rest of the school, Reception follow the Letter Join handwriting scheme. The first 2 terms focus on pattern making and print letters, and focussing on:**

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

**In the Summer term, most children will progress on to cursive writing, in readiness for Year 1.**

### Mathematics

Play based learning is very much a feature of maths in Reception. In addition to this, maths skills are taught daily through whole class lessons, using the maths at Oxenhope approach (See the school Mathematics at Oxenhope document for more details). Planning is adapted from the White Rose scheme. Daily maths challenge activities are available and maths manipulatives are available for use throughout the classroom (indoors and outdoors). Number formation is taught explicitly, and the number formation pattern is adhered to throughout the EYFS. We also use a scheme called Nomics which focuses on subitising.

### Outdoor Provision

In the Early Years class, children have free flow access to the outdoor space. This learning environment is set up to support and extend children's learning in all areas of the curriculum. Waterproof clothing is provided for the children and the children are asked to provide wellington boots, so that they can access the outdoor area all year round. 'Outdoor Learning' sessions are planned weekly and take place in the school's nature area. These sessions are designed to help children build self-esteem and self-belief, improve social skills, develop team working skills, enhance fine motor skills and make connections between theory and the real world.

### Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Oxenhope C of E Primary School is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. These can range from a visit to the local shop, to travelling further afield by coach. Where possible, we encourage parents and carers to support us with our school trips but for safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along.

Visitors also really enhance a topic, and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor or police officer for example. We often ask parents if they are able to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bath a baby, painting mehndi patterns on hands or playing a musical instrument.

### Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classroom has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. The classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Our EYFS unit is designed in a way so that children can cover the seven areas of learning in endless different ways. We try to move away from having designated areas for writing and maths and instead have a structure of incorporating these resources in to all the areas. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. As with the inside learning areas, we also have created an outdoor space that allows children to consolidate their existing knowledge and learn new concepts. This is, once again, planned in a way that doesn't box children's learning to one area. There are reading, writing and maths resources around the outdoor space, so

that children can use these wherever they are. Whilst outside, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling, ball skills and other active games being key.

Each child has their own labelled peg, and we encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their PE kits, book bag and other belongings safely in one place.

We also spend an afternoon in the nature area each week following our outdoor Alfresco curriculum.

### Assessment, observations, and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves all staff observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

On Entry to Reception Class, we carry out baseline assessments for each child. At three points during the year the Class Teacher submits assessment data to the Head Teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning.

Assessment is part of everyday life in Reception and takes place in a formal and non-formal manner. Staff assess daily through activities and knowing the children really well, and information from this is used to build on planning moving forward.

At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Reception.

### Role of staff and key workers

Staffing arrangements are in line with the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage document.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. This role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child, and build a relationship with their parents.

All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between parents, teachers and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class, and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

### Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. A cohesive and effective induction process is vital to this success.

We are aware that most parents will be part of the school for the next seven years and want them to get to know their child's peers and their families at this time. Wherever possible, we hold events to allow children and their families to come together. This allows parents to form connections with one another that can help support their children and their peers throughout their primary school experience. An induction event is available for new parents and carers where information is shared with the parents about their child's next steps in schooling at

school. We provide the opportunity for a home visit where parents can share concerns and ask questions and the teacher can find out as much as possible about individual children from birth to 5.

We ask that parent's hand over to the class teacher at the classroom door. We have a short, staggered entry into Reception, this aids children as they settle into new routines and learn the rules of school. Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting three times a year and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters. We also offer coffee mornings, family assemblies and stay and plays throughout the year.

Parents receive a New Starter Pack prior to their child starting with us which provides them with detailed information. They are invited to attend events such as our 'Meet the Teaching Team' event and Stay and Play sessions, where they will receive further details about their child's class and phonics and be given the opportunity to ask questions.

The EYFS staff believe that it is extremely important to develop good relationships with parents/carers. It is the role of a key person to not only build relationships with their key children, but also with their parents/carers. Each key person is available for parents/carers at the beginning of each day/session, for questions or if they have concerns. Staff encourage parents/carers to contribute to assessments, as they can play a vital role in helping staff to understand the whole child. Before the children start they can create a holiday diary with parents and carers and other little activities during this transition time. As well as this, when a child can take reading books home parents/carers are asked to comment about their child's progress through reading diaries. Robust communication systems are in place (notice boards, ClassDojo platform, classroom and ParentPay) to keep parents/carers up to date. Parents/Carers are also regularly invited to attend special events.

### Nutrition and Health

We are a healthy school, and our children receive their daily free fruit and milk entitlement.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements are met regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (May 2025) changes. This is to ensure we provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and enabling the children to develop positive eating habits early on.

The children eat together as a class, within sight and sound of an adult and supervised at all times, to avoid choking. This encourages the children to try foods they might not try at home.

Dried fruit, fruit in syrup, fruit juice and squash are to be avoided. As are high fat foods such as cake, biscuits, chocolate and sweets. Fresh drinking water is always also available and accessible during the day.

Providers create a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat. If a child requires a special diet, it is important to have written confirmation from their qualified health professional about the nature of their specific needs so that their nutritional requirements can be achieved. This information will be recorded, updated regularly and communicated to all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. All staff are made aware of each child's allergies, and food will be stored separately to avoid cross contamination. All foods brought from home will be checked for allergens.

Best practice and tips for keeping food fresh and safe are shared with parents

- Suggested snacks – e.g. hummus and vegetable sticks, tuna dip and wholemeal pitta
- Clearly label their child's name on lunch bag and detail the contents (if serious allergy in class)
- Pack foods that can safely be kept at room temperature
- For perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. The 4 hour rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for 4 hours.
- Prepare food in a way to prevent choking. E.g. chop grapes in half
- Recommend fruit platters or non-edible options such as stickers or bubbles for celebrations.

Children are offered free school meals, but they are also welcome to bring their own packed lunch if preferred. We have a kitchen set up in the Hall which no child is allowed to enter unless with an adult for a specific reason.

### Health & safety 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 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and Reception follow the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their digital devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with any digital devices. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads and devices to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS – staff will adhere to the code of conduct regarding taking photographs. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

All support staff who work in the Reception Class are Paediatric First Aid Trained.

We also have a safeguarding lead for EYFS.