

Olney Pre-School: our Curriculum and Goals

Olney Pre-School serves children and families from Olney and surrounding villages with an average of 90% of each cohort moving on to Olney Infant Academy. Our catchment area and our ethos as a community setting provide us with children from a wide range of backgrounds, including those from relatively affluent homes, those from more deprived backgrounds, children for whom English is an additional language and children who need extra support due to speech delay or diagnosed SEND. We welcome them all and ensure that our curriculum supports all of our children to join in Pre-School life and to make good progress. Our curriculum provides children with a wide range of learning opportunities, both through independent play, supported activities and sustained shared thinking, taking into account their individual needs and interests. Our curriculum is designed to support children to make progress, whatever their starting point, in what they know, in what they can do, in how they learn and in their emotional & social development. We use our Session routines and our strong Key Person system to support all our children to become comfortable and confident in a group setting and to develop the behaviours and characteristics of effective learning. We focus on developing the skills and individual resilience which will help children make a positive transition to school, and support children to value learning and their own growing independence. We aim to do this in partnership with parents and carers and to provide support and accessible information for continued development and learning at home.

Below you will find details of where we want children to get to in each Area of Learning before they go to school and the ways in which we support them to get there. Our *Long Term Plan* for the year sets out how we aim to organise our activities and learning experiences across the year.

We have an intake every half-term and each child's attendance pattern is individual, with some attending for just two Sessions a week and some accessing our full 30 hours. Our continuous provision and weekly activities therefore remain flexible so that they can be differentiated in response to the needs of individual children and learning opportunities can be accessed at a range of levels of development.

PRIME AREAS OF LEARNING

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE (C&L):

Where we want children to get to:

Speaking:

- * Articulate and speak clearly enough for non-family members to understand them
- * Speak in 4 to 6 word sentences
- * Explain feelings in simple terms eg "I am sad because..."
- * Express their wants and needs, such as asking for particular resources
- * Use conjunctions to connect ideas, such as "and" and "because"
- * Use some positional language to explain, rather than just pointing
- * Retell a familiar story or event (not always in the correct order)
- * Use language to describe

Listening:

- * Respond to questions and instructions directed to them

- * Respond to own name at Registration
- * Take turns in conversation, listening and responding to another person's words
- * Follow simple two-part instructions

How we do this:

We provide a language-rich environment with adults modeling speech, communication and listening skills through conversation and during activities. We structure our routines to provide many and varied opportunities for both independent talk and adult-led “speaking and listening” activities. We value staff training and ensure that staff are trained to a high level in supporting emerging language and extending children’s thinking and communication skills. We carry out termly assessments of each child’s communication development, using the Development Matters Observation Checkpoints. If needed we use a range of Communication & Language assessment tools too. This means we can identify communication issues early on and plan support for children who need additional help. We plan activities around core songs, rhymes and stories, which we share with parents and explain their value as means to extend vocabulary and language. Repetition of core stories and rhymes helps our children gain confidence to talk about them during group discussions. We use small-group Floor Book activities as a further way of developing children’s confidence to talk about their activities and have their opinions valued, as adults scribe them next to photos of our activities. We use adult-led group times, such as Registration and Story Time, to model and scaffold speech, vocabulary, listening skills and explanatory language. We welcome children who speak English as an additional language and support them and their families to value their home language as we support the children to develop understanding and confidence in English.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PSED):

Where we want children to get to:

Developing a sense of self:

- * Be aware that they belong to different communities eg Pre-School and their family
- * Name and talk about their feelings, using age appropriate terms or pointing to pictures
- * Talk about their likes and dislikes
- * Enjoy and value their growing independence

Working within rules and boundaries:

- * Follow our Pre-School Golden Rules eg tidying up when prompted
- * Follow simple two-part instructions eg put on your coat and then line up for the garden

Building relationships:

- * Work and play co-operatively with others eg building a simple role play in the home corner
- * Show empathy for others eg comforting another child when they’re upset
- * Take turns in activities with some support and usually share resources appropriately

How we do this:

We use our Key Person system to support children to make the jump from life at home to confidence in our setting and when making transitions between settings. Each child’s Key Person carries out an Induction

meeting with the parents, and they will be the practitioner who knows them best. They use this knowledge and their professional experience to ensure that our activities provide suitable learning opportunities for each child's interests and development stage, that their progress is on track, and to plan additional support or intervention as needed. We carry out assessments on children's wellbeing and involvement at least twice a year, using the Leuven Scales system, and make changes to the environment or interventions to support individuals as required. We aim for our Session routine to be simple and repetitive, with a visual timetable in each room, to enable children to understand and thus have some control over their day. Our simple behavioural rules are explained to children visually through our Golden Rules board and are developmentally appropriate so that children are able to operate independently. Our activities are planned for a week at a time, so that children have opportunities to try new things, to gain skills and develop ideas across the week and to re-try when things "go wrong". Children are supported to use the toilet independently and wash their hands, and encouraged to manage their own shoes and clothing as they become ready.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (PD):

Where we want children to get to:

Gross Motor Skills:

- * Put on and take off their coat independently; manage their shoes with a little support
- * Manage own basic hygiene (toileting, washing hands)
- * Run in a straight line
- * Gallop (pre-skipping)
- * Balance on one foot for a short time
- * Be able to throw a large ball, and make good attempts to catch it
- * Be able to climb the climbing frame with support
- * Be able to make large up & down and circular arm movements from the shoulder

Fine Motor Skills:

- * Use resources to dig, scoop, pour
- * Be able to feed self with a spoon and drink from a cup
- * Use a range of equipment comfortably with developing coordination, including bilateral coordination (both hands performing different tasks to complete the task), including pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, playdough tools, threading toys, large tweezers and construction toys
- * Be making progress towards a three-finger pencil grip
- * Shows preference for a dominant hand

How we do this:

We plan physical activity into our curriculum and support children to understand the value of keeping themselves active. We plan activity and challenge into our environment and routines to help develop gross motor muscle coordination, strength and balance, including climbing and descending the stairs in our play house and the steps at our front entrance, and support children to assess and manage age-appropriate risks when, for example, using the workbench, during large block play or when using the stairs in the play house.

We provide a wide range of activities, such as play dough, threading, messy play, craft projects, cutting activities, mark-making activities and construction, to develop fine motor muscles, focusing on coordination and grip strength, and aim to develop an effective pencil grip and scissor skills. We encourage children with physical disabilities to take part in all our activities through closer support. Children are supported to use the toilet independently and wash their hands, and encouraged to manage their own shoes and clothing. We use pictures around the setting and during snack & lunch times to spark conversation about healthy living and oral hygiene, as well as planning activities around these areas to develop children's understanding about how they can look after their bodies.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF LEARNING

LITERACY (L):

Where we want children to get to:

Pre-reading, pre-spelling and pre-writing skills:

- * Listen for and identify a range of environmental sounds such as an aeroplane, and be able to attempt an imitation
- * Be able to copy a simple clapped repeating rhythm
- * Hear and identify the initial sounds in words
- * Have experienced activities based around identifying rhyming words and around segmenting and blending the sounds in simple words
- * Hear and use new vocabulary from stories, rhymes and non-fiction books
- * Enjoy stories and be able to talk about characters and significant events in familiar stories
- * Be familiar with a range of traditional tales and core texts and be able to retell aspects
- * Begin to predict what might happen next
- * Show an interest in making marks and give meaning to their marks
- * "Write" for a range of purposes, eg their name on a picture, a shopping list (not always using correct letters)
- * Developing both gross and fine motor muscles (see Physical Development above) to support children's physical readiness for writing at school

How we do this:

All children have opportunities to enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, both independently and during supported activities, and to become familiar with core stories and rhymes (see *Long Term Plan*), using these to introduce new vocabulary and phrases. We provide examples of familiar logos around the setting so that children can start to understand that print carries meaning. We use books to extend interests and knowledge, providing them as resources to extend activities as well as sharing them at Story Time and encouraging story recall. Children have frequent opportunities to experience the written word within the setting environment and during activities and to try out mark-making and emergent writing in a range of different contexts. Children are supported to write their name on their work when ready, and introduced to letter formation as that becomes developmentally appropriate. This area overlaps with the work we do in Physical Development to ensure that children are physically ready to hold and use a pencil. We follow Phase

One of “Letters and Sounds” (the National Literacy Strategy guidance), focusing on differentiating sounds and exploring rhythm, rhyme and alliteration. We also introduce children to the pictures, “pure sounds” and letter formation phrases used in the Read, Write, Inc synthetic phonics system taught at OIA and many other local schools. We have a short daily letter sound activity during Registration, once children are ready, in which we explore the sound linked to each week’s picture, look at how to form the lowercase letter (in the air, and on paper if ready), and talk about a selection of objects that begin with our sound.

MATHS (M):

Where we want children to get to:

Numbers & Counting

- * Subitise (identify by sight without needing to count) small amounts up to 3
- * Count reliably to 5 items and beginning to count beyond 5
- * Verbally rote count to 10
- * Show “finger numbers” up to 3
- * Say one number name for each item in order 1,2,3,4,5
- * Know that the last number reached when counting a set of objects tells you how many there are (“cardinal principle”)
- * Solve real world mathematical problems up to 3
- * Knows and sings some simple number rhymes
- * Begin to recognise some numerals

Number Patterns:

- * Extend and create simple AB repeating patterns
- * Talk about and identify patterns eg stripes on cloth
- * Spot and explore errors in simple repeating patterns
- * Begin to describe a simple sequence of events and use words such as “then”

Comparing:

- * Be able to sort objects by self-chosen criteria, such as colour, size, shape
- * Describe similarities and differences
- * Compare quantities by “more than”, “less than”, “the same”

Shape and Space:

- * Talk about and explore 2D and 3D shapes, using informal language: “sides”, “corners”, “flat”, “round”
- * Select appropriate shapes eg a triangular prism as a roof when building with blocks
- * Understand and use positional language, such as “under”, “behind”
- * Make comparisons between objects relating to size, length, weight and capacity

How we do this:

All children have many opportunities to develop an awareness and understanding of basic maths concepts through play and in supported activities, counting songs and stories. We use developmentally-appropriate maths resources, to enable children to develop confidence in subitizing, sorting, counting and number work, linking numerals to quantity, estimating, using more than/less than/ the same, investigating one more/one less and sequencing. Children have many opportunities to investigate such mathematical concepts as shape, space, weighing & measuring, volume, pattern, time and money through their play in our continuous provision, and through supported activities and experiences. We use role play activities such as “shops” and “cafes” to enable children to explore the practical applications of mathematical concepts, and construction sets and activities to enable children to explore practical maths and problem solving. We incorporate opportunities for mathematical mark-making opportunities into activities and introduce children to numeral formation songs.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD (UW):

Where we want children to get to:

Past and Present (History):

- * Able to say who they are and who they live with
- * Able to talk about some family members or pets
- * Can sequence some family members by height/age and identify them as baby, child or grown-up
- * Show awareness that eg Mummy was once a child
- * Comment on pictures of experiences in their own life eg pictures from home or in our Floor Books
- * Take part in group discussions about story illustrations and similarities or differences with our lives now

The Natural World (Science & Geography):

- * Demonstrate a growing awareness of the world around them: seasonal change, growth, simple life cycles, plants and animals
- * Know that weather changes and that different places have different weather
- * Show respect and care for the pre-school environment, inside and outside
- * Talk about what they see in their own environment
- * Talk about their own house/flat
- * Use their senses to explore and find out
- * Identify similarities and differences in collections of materials and objects
- * Explore and talk about “how things work” and some properties of familiar materials, eg sand, water

Culture and Community (RE and Geography):

- * Talk about themselves and their family/community and special events in their own life
- * Know that different families celebrate different things, and identify some similarities in a range of festivals (presents, special food etc)

- * Show a positive attitude to differences between people
- * Know that there are other countries, and other towns than Olney

How we do this:

We provide all children with play opportunities and experiences so that they can explore a range of different materials and their properties, and use their senses and natural curiosity to investigate “how things work”, basic forces and patterns. We encourage children to explore and observe the natural world around them, in our garden, on walks and in our planting and observational painting activities. We use these activities to introduce a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness, by talking about recycling, not wasting materials and how to look after the plants in our garden. We find out about the local community, different occupations and the wider world through books, visitors and trips within the town. We incorporate “talking times” into our Sessions, for example as part of Registration and during supported activities, as well as during planned Circle Time activities, and use these to eg introduce pictures of animals in their natural environment or people in different countries, and to talk about what we can see. We structure topic work around the changing of the seasons and plan experiences such as egg-hatching and caterpillars-to-butterflies to develop an awareness of life cycles and changes over time and an understanding of our responsibility to provide care. We plan activities around a selection of festivals, supporting children to learn about and value similarities and differences in families across the world. We use activities about ourselves and our families to instill a sense of our own life stories and then compare and contrast them to those of others. We incorporate a sense of the past into relevant activities, for example by looking at our family stories and how eg Mummy was once a baby, pointing out ways in which stories show people’s lives in different times and looking at pictures of fire engines from the past as part of a “people who help us” topic.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN (EA&D):

Where we want children to get to:

- * Express their own ideas in a variety of ways – through music and dance, drawing, painting, making models, pretend play and more
- * Work independently to develop skills and ideas
- * Work cooperatively with a friend to copy ideas and develop skills/work together

Exploring Materials and Techniques:

- * Recognise colours and choose colours for a purpose
- * Begin to use primary colours to mix secondary colours
- * Be able to explore and talk about texture and colours
- * Add further materials to models to make features
- * Manipulate play dough in different ways (roll, squash, pinch, cut)
- * Mark-make for a creative purpose eg to represent objects or experiences, to explore colour, space or shape

Music:

- * Respond to music, either verbally or through movement
- * Copy basic movements in response to music eg song actions

- * Be able to use percussion instruments to explore fast, slow, loud, quiet
- * Play a given instrument with a simple beat
- * Know a range of nursery rhymes
- * Sing in a group and keep in time
- * Know names a range of instruments (drum, tambourine, triangle, maraca, claves, bells)

Imaginative Play

- * Engage in imaginative play based on their own knowledge and experiences
- * Develop simple narratives and storylines
- * Use props and small-world figures to explore and retell familiar stories/themes
- * Use small-world figures and sets to tell own "stories"

How we do this:

We provide all children with many opportunities to express their interactions with the world around them creatively, using a variety of techniques and media. We investigate colour and colour-mixing in a range of activities. We place value on the processes involved in children's creative work as much as on the end product, and encourage children to design, adapt and personalise their work according to their own interests. We provide many opportunities to design, problem-solve and create in 3D through construction and supported work-bench activities. We support children to develop their imagination, story-telling skills and creative thinking through role-play and small-world activities. We use music, singing and percussion instruments as standalone activities and to support development in other areas, such as identifying rhythm and sound differentiation as part of our pre-reading work, and moving in response to music during our physical development work. We use nursery rhymes as essential learning tools, and encourage parents to continue this at home, to support development in areas such as extending vocabulary, developing an idea of story and character, looking at rhyme, looking at rhythm, and looking at repeating pattern.

PROGRESS TRACKING:

We value our Early Years practitioners and their experience and knowledge of child development, and see them as our most important tool in fostering and tracking children's progress. We put a lot of thought into planning the learning environment, our Session routine, our continuous provision and our weekly activities, and this is subject to continual review, so we are confident that most children will make progress through their independent play, supported activities and interactions with others during their time with us.

Practitioners use their skills and their observations of children's play and experiences to assess whether they are "on track" or not, referring to the non-statutory "Development Matters" and "Birth to Five" to structure their analyses, and then plan interventions and support when necessary if a child is not on track in the Prime Areas. When a child starts with us, observations are used to form a baseline from which to foster and judge progress. We also write these formally in the statutory Progress Check Age Two when children start with us before their third birthday. We use the Observation Checkpoints detailed in "Development Matters" for the three Prime Areas of Learning to focus our analyses of each child's progress when they reach age three. We then continue to focus in detail on the Prime Areas and intervene with additional support where needed.

We discuss children's progress in all Areas of Learning, and pool our knowledge and understanding of how to identify and support continued forward development, at staff meetings, during colleague discussions and

during termly Supervision Meetings. Each child's Key Person carries out a termly analysis of progress in each Area of Learning, and plans intervention and support if necessary. We make a record of our life as a setting, based on photographs, pieces of work and the children's comments about their learning, as well as individual Learning Journeys for each child to share with their parents showing some of their key development moments.