

Olney Pre-School: Our Curriculum and Goals in our Two Year Olds Room

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.

In our Two Year Olds Room we focus particularly on the development of the three Prime Areas of Learning:

- Communication and Language;
- Personal, Social & Emotional Development;
- Physical Development.

These support children to develop their sense of self, their independence and their individual interests, and to develop ways to interact and communicate with others in a positive and effective way. We do this using three key strategies:

- building warm and positive relationships between the children and the Early Years Practitioners;
- implementing a learning environment and continuous provision that is based on our knowledge, understanding and experience of how to support two year olds' wellbeing and scaffold their learning and development;
- supporting children's individual needs and interests through our flexible short-term planning.

The Specific Areas of Learning (Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design) are interwoven into children's play and daily routines by our skilled Early Years Practitioners at an age-appropriate level to open up the world around them and to provide foundations for continued learning as your child grows.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers and to provide accessible information for continued development and learning at home. We also work with parents to complete the Progress Check Aged Two and put in place any supportive work needed.

The elements described above also work to support children to make a happy transition into our pre-school unit around the age of three. Below you will find details of our aims for our two year olds in all seven Area of Learning by the end of their time in our Two Year Olds Room, and the ways in which we support them to get there.

PRIME AREAS OF LEARNING

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE (C&L):

Where we want children to get to:

Speaking:

- * Able to share their feelings, experiences and thoughts with adults and their peers through language
- * Link up to five words together
- * Have a widening vocabulary that includes using some descriptive words
- * Ask simple questions using what, where and who
- * Beginning to use some word endings such as plurals and _ing
- * Use some simple prepositions

Listening & attention:

- * Able to switch from one task to another, if you get their attention fully, eg by using their name
- * Enjoy play with sounds, songs and rhymes
- * Enjoy small-group stories with props and/or noises

Understanding:

- * Respond to simple questions
- * Follow simple instructions, showing an understanding of some action words

How we do this:

We provide a language-rich environment with adults modeling speech, communication and listening skills, and a wide vocabulary, through conversation, during activities, and through stories, rhymes and songs. 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. Practitioners work alongside children during their play, providing a narrative and modelling simple language structure and vocabulary, while using thoughtful questioning when appropriate to extend thinking ("I wonder if...?", "What do you think might happen when....?"). There is no expectation that children will take part in adult-led group times until they are developmentally ready. Adults support all children to enjoy the rich language experiences from songs, rhymes and stories during play, and encourage children to join small-group stories or singing when ready. Our provision includes mirrors for children to see themselves as they talk, resources to support imaginative play in which children can explore and develop language, and experiences to spark wonder and give strong reasons to communicate.

We carry out termly assessments of each child's communication development, using guidance from Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters, along with our professional judgement. If needed we use a range of trusted Communication & Language assessment tools too, such as those from I CAN and our local authority SALT services. This means we can identify communication issues early on and plan support for children who need additional help. We welcome children who speak English as an additional language and support them and their families to value their home language as we work alongside 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:

- * Make choices and decisions in their play
- * Show their preferences and interests
- * Talk about themselves and their own abilities
- * Show pride in their abilities

Working within rules and boundaries:

- * Begin to work within the routine eg helping to tidy away some toys, finding own coat

Building relationships:

- * Enjoy the company of other children and show interest in their play
- * Show awareness of others' emotions eg when another child is upset
- * Sometimes take turns or share, with adult support, showing understanding of "yours" and "mine"
- * Seek out others to share experiences with

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 the child best and supports them to build warm relationships outside the family. They use this knowledge and their professional experience to ensure that our activities provide suitable learning opportunities for each child's interests and stage of development, that their progress is on track, and to plan additional support or intervention as needed.

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 time in our setting. Our continuous provision is designed to enable children to display developmentally-appropriate behaviours as they develop their sense of self and learn about interacting with their peers. Two year olds learn through revisiting experiences, exploring and experimenting, often structuring their learning through "schemas", so our learning environment is set up to support this stage of play as children build on their fascinations and develop individual interests and preferences. Practitioners work alongside children to scaffold play and support and extend child-led investigations. Enhanced activities are planned for at least a week at a time, so that children have opportunities to experiment with new things, develop skills and build on ideas.

Children are supported to develop the skills they need to cooperate and interact with others through practitioners modelling positive social behaviour and adding a narrative, for example at snack-time or when sharing a toy. Children are supported in their journey towards physical independence through nappy changing with their Key Person and the introduction of toilet training in partnership with parents. Each child is supported to store their belongings and outdoor clothing and helped to find it when needed, as part of the daily routine to help children develop independence and their sense of self.

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 plan individual support as required. We also carry

out termly assessments of each child's progress within the Personal, Social and Emotional Development Area of Learning, using guidance from Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters, along with our professional judgement. This means we can identify concerns early on and plan support for children who need additional help.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (PD):

Where we want children to get to:

Moving and Handling:

- * Sit comfortably on a chair with both feet on the ground
- * Run safely on their whole foot
- * Move their whole bodies in response to music or rhythms
- * Use tricycles with increasing confidence and skill eg getting on and off unaided, pedalling
- * Be able to throw a large ball and kick a stationary ball
- * Be able to climb up and down stairs, placing both feet on each step
- * Use resources to dig, scoop, pour
- * Use paintbrushes, pens, dabbers and crayons to explore mark-making
- * Manipulate materials, such as playdough
- * Balance blocks to build towers and fit age-appropriate construction elements together

Health and Self-Care:

- * Can feed themselves competently
- * Hold a cup with two hands and drink without spilling
- * Can help with taking off and putting on simple clothing such as wellies and hats, showing increasing independence
- * Starting to communicate their need for the potty or toilet
- * Show an awareness of handwashing routines, although still needing adult support

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 indoor and outdoor learning environments to help develop coordination, strength and balance, including tummy-time floor-based activities, digging outside, using the stairs in our play house and our climbing blocks inside, using tricycles, and providing engaging resources such as buggies, large trucks and pushcarts to support the development of core muscles and shoulder strength. We explore a range of movements through games, outdoor play and by moving in response to music. We provide a wide range of activities, such as playdough, threading, messy play, mark-making resources, block play and construction, to develop grip, dexterity and coordination through play. We encourage children with physical disabilities to take part in all our activities through closer support.

Children aged between two and three are developing their physical independence at a great rate and our routines are designed to support this important stage. Children are supported in their journey towards physical independence through nappy changing with their Key Person and the introduction of toilet training in partnership with parents. Children take part in hand-washing routines and are supported to understand the importance of hygiene, oral health and looking after their bodies through conversation and stories.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF LEARNING

LITERACY (L):

Where we want children to get to:

- * Enjoy a range of songs and rhymes and join in with some words, sounds and actions
- * Enjoy rhythmic and musical activities with percussion instruments or clapping along to a beat
- * Enjoy sharing books with an adult
- * Have some favourite stories
- * Make comments about a story
- * Enjoy experimenting with mark-making with a range of tools, resources and their fingers
- * Distinguish between the marks in their drawings

How we do this:

Our provision and routine provides many engaging opportunities for children to access and enjoy a wide range of books and stories, both independently and to share with adults, and to enjoy hearing and participating in songs, rhymes and poems. We use open-ended block play, small-world resources and puppets to support children to explore storytelling within their play. We use books to support play in all areas, providing them as resources to extend activities eg books about construction alongside our block play resources, as well as sharing them at story times and encouraging children to comment on the words and pictures. Rhymes, songs, activities with percussion instruments, listening games and rhythmic activities such as clapping games support children to tune into and differentiate between different sounds and sound patterns. Every Session includes opportunities for exploring mark-making with a variety of resources and adults support children to talk about their work. As noted under Physical Development above we plan activities and a learning environment to ensure that children develop essential gross motor muscle control and then begin to strengthen and coordinate fine motor muscles, so that they develop the physical command needed to sit, focus and write later on.

MATHS (M):

Where we want children to get to:

- * Take part in finger rhymes with numbers
- * Say numbers in sequence during play
- * Count, not always correctly, in everyday contexts such as snack time
- * Show some counting behaviour such as making rhythmic sounds and finger pointing
- * Use words like “lots”, “more” and “same” to compare amounts

- * Explore space with their bodies eg climbing or squeezing into spaces and tunnels
- * Build with a range of resources
- * Make arrangements, patterns and groups with loose parts and larger objects
- * Notice and investigate differences in size, length/height, weight and capacity
- * Complete tray puzzles
- * Become familiar with Session routine and anticipate some parts, such as snack time

How we do this:

Children have many opportunities to develop an awareness and understanding of core maths concepts through play and in supported activities, counting songs and stories. We sing number songs, using our fingers to denote number and quantity. Adults introduce counting into children's play and into everyday routines, such as modelling counting the children at the snack table and talking about how many chairs/plates we need. Adults model the language to describe and compare quantity and size when playing alongside children. Our provision gives children opportunities to explore space, shape, measurement and position in their play, for example when climbing, constructing or exploring block play, and adults model positional language and language to describe size, weight etc. Small-world resources and loose part play provide many opportunities to sort, group, compare and make arrangements. Children explore capacity and volume through play with containers in sand and water. Our Session routine is simple and repetitive so that children can gain awareness of the pattern of time within an everyday context.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD (UW):

Where we want children to get to:

- * Confident to investigate the world around them using repetitive schemas as a mental framework for their learning
- * Investigate natural materials and their properties indoors and outside
- * Enjoy and explore the natural world eg splashing in puddles, searching for worms, focusing closely on natural objects and using them in self-chosen play
- * Enjoy playing with small-world sets that link to their experiences
- * Notice similarities and differences between people and families
- * Have a sense of their own family
- * Operate some simple technological toys eg pressing a button on our remote control cars to effect movement or using the colour change button on the light-up pebbles

How we do this:

The learning environment and routines in the Two Year Old room are designed to support two year olds' exploratory instincts and need to repeat actions and investigations again and again as they learn. Our continuous provision contains natural materials, such as sand, and open-ended resources, such as block play and loose parts, which enable children to tailor their own play to their current fascinations. Our early Years Practitioners involve themselves in children's play and introduce or adapt additional activities to support and extend individual interests. We experience the local community, and find out about a range of people and families through books and local trips to, for example, the library or to One Stop. We offer small-world

resources that children can use to process their understanding about eg farm animals or trains, and provide age-appropriate books to extend these interests with an adult. We incorporate an awareness of changing seasons and the natural world through outdoor play in a range of weathers, our planting area outside, exploration and the use of natural materials in our play and creative work. We plan activities incorporating simple technology eg cameras, light-up pebbles and remote control toys to enable children to develop understanding of cause and effect

EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN (EA&D):

Where we want children to get to:

- * Experiment with mark-making using a range of resources
- * Explore paint and other mark-making materials with their fingers as well as brushes etc
- * Manipulate and explore a range of materials, using their senses to investigate
- * Use everyday materials to explore, understand and represent their world
- * Enjoy and respond to playing with colour
- * Move and dance to music
- * Explore their voices and enjoy making sounds
- * Explore a range of percussion instruments and enjoy the different sounds they make with them
- * Take part in some action songs
- * Start to develop pretend play eg using loose parts to stand for “food” in the home corner

How we do this:

We provide and plan many opportunities for children to express their interactions with the world around them creatively, using a variety of techniques and media. 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 using elements from our continuous provision and in planned creative activities. We support children to develop their imagination and creative thinking linked to their first-hand experiences in the home corner and small-world activities. We enjoy music, singing and percussion instruments daily and support children to respond to music and explore sound.