



*"Inspiring minds to ignite lifelong learning"*



**Onchan Primary School**  
School Road, Onchan, Isle of Man IM3 4PD  
email: [OnchanEnquiries@Sch.im](mailto:OnchanEnquiries@Sch.im)  
tel: 01624 673465

## **Onchan EYFS Policy**

### **Rationale**

"It is vital that we get to know and value all young children. All children learn more in the period from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow." (*Development Matters 2023*)

At Onchan Primary School, we recognise the Early Years Foundation Stage as a distinctive and important phase of education, where care and education are closely connected. We believe that all children are unique, bringing their own experiences, interests, strengths and knowledge. We take time to understand each child as an individual and use what we learn about them to build on their prior experiences, respond to their needs and support them to become confident, capable and enthusiastic learners.

### **Effective Teaching and Learning**

We aim to provide highly effective teaching and learning within a culture of challenge, nurture and support. We support all children to make progress and achieve the best they can. Our curriculum is designed to provide children with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to make strong progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), supporting as many children as possible to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Reception and providing a strong foundation for their continued learning in subsequent years. Children develop and learn at different rates and therefore understanding the holistic child and their individual needs is at the heart of our pedagogy.

Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in the EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The seven key features of effective practice outlined in Development Matters and the characteristics of effective teaching and learning set out in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS inform our approach to teaching and learning.

Our EYFS curriculum follows the curriculum requirements outlined in the current EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, which are all important in supporting children's development as a whole. The three prime areas are particularly important for building strong foundations for learning, developing relationships and supporting children to thrive. The four specific areas provide essential opportunities for children to strengthen and apply the skills and knowledge they have developed through the prime areas.



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The three prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening, Attention and Understanding – Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Gross Motor Skills – Fine Motor Skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self-Regulation – Managing Self – Building Relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- **Literacy** – Comprehension – Word Reading – Writing
- **Mathematics** – Number – Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World** – Past and Present – People, Culture and Communities – The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials – Being Imaginative and Expressive

### **Role of the Adult**

We recognise that teaching and learning can take place throughout the day through directed teaching sessions, play and experiences both indoors and outdoors. We encourage children to make choices about where they would like to learn, while also inviting them to explore other areas and experiences that they may not have encountered.

We strive to create inviting, stimulating environments that encourage children to actively engage in their learning. The environment is regularly adapted in response to children's interests, learning and current themes.

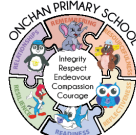
We have flexible curriculum plans which are reviewed regularly and may cover a fortnight or a shorter period, depending on the focus of learning. These reflect seasonal changes, celebrations, significant events and children's interests, and include possible experiences, resources and activities to support children's learning.

We also incorporate adult-directed learning opportunities linked to our areas of learning and current themes. These may involve finding out what children already know, encouraging them to think of questions, and supporting them to investigate and research the answers. This approach encourages children to take ownership of their learning and build on their existing knowledge and understanding – digging deeper!

Learning is personalised by building on children's interests and involving them in reflecting on what they have learned and considering how they can develop their skills further. This supports our Mission Statement of 'Inspiring minds to ignite life-long learning.'



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At appropriate opportunities the adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage children in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking.
- Extend children's vocabulary, knowledge and skills.
- Encourage children to develop independence and take responsibility for their learning.
- Introduce resources that stimulate, motivate and engage learners.
- Demonstrate, model and work alongside the children.
- Help children to make links between their learning and experiences.
- Support, encourage and challenge children.
- Provide targeted support where gaps in learning are identified.
- Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators.
- Support and extend children's play and learning where appropriate.
- Help children to develop skills to negotiate and resolve conflicts.
- Promote children's wellbeing.
- Observe, assess and record children's learning using appropriate observations and Tapestry.
- Record professional judgements and identify next steps in learning.
- Provide appropriate feedback to children, other adults and parents.
- Ensure that the learning environment is safe, secure and supportive.

### **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**

We believe that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

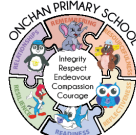
The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **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.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.



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We aim for children to leave the EYFS with a strong understanding of and ability to demonstrate our school's core values, which they will continue to develop throughout their time at Onchan Primary School:

- Endeavour
- Compassion
- Courage
- Integrity
- Respect

### **Early Language and Communication**

At Onchan, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other. Adults use the ShREC approach to support children's communication and language development, focusing on shared attention, turn-taking, responding to children, introducing new vocabulary and extending conversations. We provide opportunities throughout the day for children to develop their listening, understanding and speaking skills through play, stories, discussions and everyday interactions.

Speech and language is assessed after children are settled using the Speech and Language Link tool. This helps us to identify children who may require additional support with their speech, language or communication, including areas such as vocabulary, verbs and tenses. Where appropriate, targeted support is provided through intervention groups, and referrals to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) are made when necessary.

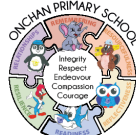
### **Early Reading, Phonics and Literacy**

For early phonics teaching, the school follows Monster Phonics. Phonics is taught systematically, with children learning to recognise, pronounce and apply sounds through blending and segmenting. Children are encouraged to apply their developing phonics knowledge when reading and writing. Home reading books are carefully matched to children's phonic knowledge, and book bands are used to support the progression of children's reading. Children initially take home lilac books, which contain no words, encouraging them to talk about the pictures and develop a love of books. As children learn Phase 2 sounds, or if they already have knowledge of sounds from Nursery, they progress to books containing words and are encouraged to segment and blend sounds.

Comprehension is also a key element of reading, and children progress through the book bands when their comprehension is at an appropriate stage alongside their word-reading skills. This supports the development of children's vocabulary, inference and deduction.



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We ensure that children read with an adult twice a week, with additional reading provided for children who require further support.

Adults promote a love of reading through daily story time and carefully chosen books within the learning environment, including those linked to our current themes. Teachers closely monitor children's progress in reading through 1:1 reading, guided reading, phonics sessions and termly phonics assessments, enabling gaps in learning to be identified and addressed promptly.

Literacy-based learning is supported through Drawing Club, which immerses children in the world of stories and imagination. Using high-quality texts, children develop their vocabulary, comprehension, storytelling and fine motor skills through drawing and writing. Children are encouraged to enter the world of the story, develop their own ideas and characters, and create and communicate their own stories. Specific vocabulary is introduced, modelled and revisited throughout the sessions, with Widgets used to provide visual support and reinforce children's understanding and use of new vocabulary. Children have opportunities to write for different purposes within sessions and across the wider provision and are encouraged to apply their phonics knowledge to support their writing.

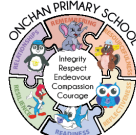
## **Mathematics**

Mathematics is taught through a range of experiences, including within daily routines, discrete teaching, follow-up group activities and play-based opportunities within the learning environment. We use the White Rose Maths scheme to support progression and coverage throughout the year. We recognise that mathematics can take place in any environment and promote opportunities for children to develop and apply their mathematical skills through play and everyday experiences.

We adopt a Teaching for Mastery approach to mathematics, supporting children to develop a secure and deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Children are given opportunities to explore, revisit and apply their mathematical knowledge in different contexts. Teachers use targeted questioning during whole-class teaching to extend children's understanding and revisit and develop key concepts over time. Children's mathematical understanding is assessed through ongoing observations and interactions, allowing adults to identify where further support or challenge is needed. Children are supported through targeted activities, small-group work and play-based opportunities where appropriate, helping them to consolidate and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.



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## **Play**

We believe that play is a fundamental way in which children learn and develop. Adults support and extend children's learning through play, both indoors and outdoors, recognising that children engage in different types of play, from lively social play to quieter, more focused experiences. Through play, children develop skills and knowledge across all seven areas of learning and development. Adults provide opportunities for children to explore, investigate, practise skills, solve problems and develop their ideas through play, while responding to children's individual interests, needs and stages of development. Children are provided with time, space and appropriate resources to develop their ideas, revisit experiences and deepen their learning through play. We provide a balance of child-initiated play and adult-guided experiences, with adults knowing when to join, support, extend or step back from children's play. Play also provides opportunities for children to apply, practise and consolidate their learning in meaningful contexts.

## **Planning**

Teachers are responsible for planning the EYFS curriculum, informed by the EYFS statutory framework and Development Matters guidance, alongside children's prior learning, ongoing assessments and observations. Planning is flexible and responsive, reflecting current themes, seasonal changes, celebrations, significant events and children's interests. Plans provide for learning across all seven areas of learning and development and are reviewed regularly in response to children's learning and needs.

The learning environment provides a consistent range of core provision, which is planned to support the development of skills across the seven areas of learning. Enhancements are planned and introduced in response to themes, interests, learning needs and areas for development. Adult-focused and independent activities are planned alongside opportunities within the wider provision.

Children have opportunities to learn across the different areas of provision, both indoors and outdoors. Whole-class, small group and individual experiences are used as appropriate to develop and extend children's knowledge and skills. We provide a balance between child-initiated experiences and those planned by adults.

Planning is adapted in response to children's questions and emerging learning, allowing adults to provide appropriate challenge and support. In planning and guided children's activities, we consider the different ways in which children learn and reflect these in our practice.



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## **Assessment**

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Adults observe children as they play, learn and interact, using their knowledge of children's interests, experiences, development and learning to identify strengths, gaps and next steps. These observations, alongside information from parents and carers, are used to inform planning and ensure that teaching and provision are responsive to children's individual needs.

Children's development is assessed from the beginning of Reception through ongoing observations, interactions and professional judgements. A baseline assessment is completed at the start of the year across all areas of learning and is used as a starting point for tracking children's progress throughout the year. A range of formative and summative assessment approaches are used where appropriate, including phonics assessments and Speech and Language Link assessments.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child, making a judgement against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The profile is based on teachers' professional knowledge of each child, informed by ongoing assessment and discussions with other adults working with the child.

Children are assessed as either:

- **Expected** - meeting the expected level of development
- **Emerging** - not yet meeting the expected level of development

The EYFS Profile is shared with parents and carers, and the required data is submitted in the summer term to the Department in accordance with annual reporting arrangements. Parents and carers also receive a written report summarising their child's learning, development and progress across the seven areas of learning.

## **Safety**

We believe children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. Children's safety and welfare are paramount to us. We create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that supports children to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, make appropriate choices and manage risk. Our safeguarding and health and safety procedures support the safety and wellbeing of all children and are embedded within our daily practice.

We promote children's physical health and wellbeing through healthy eating, opportunities for physical activity, access to outdoor learning and the development of positive hygiene routines. We participate in the Smile of Mann supervised toothbrushing



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programme to support children in developing good oral health habits. We also promote children's emotional wellbeing, supporting them to develop confidence, self-regulation, positive relationships and an understanding of their emotions using the Zones of Regulation. We follow appropriate procedures when children become unwell or have an accident and work in partnership with parents and carers to support children's health and wellbeing.

## **Inclusion**

We value all of our children as unique individuals at Onchan Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home-language, background, ability or gender. We plan and adapt our curriculum, learning environment and provision to meet the needs of individual children and enable them to make progress from their own starting points. We make reasonable adjustments and provide appropriate support and challenge to remove barriers to learning and participation. We recognise the importance of early identification of children who may require additional support. Where concerns arise, we work closely with children, parents and carers and, where appropriate, outside agencies to identify needs and put appropriate support in place. Support may include targeted interventions, small-group or individual work, adaptations to the learning environment and additional resources or strategies. Wherever possible, support is provided within the classroom and wider learning environment, enabling children to remain included in the life of the setting.

## **Relationships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

We know what an important role parents and carers play in their children's learning journey and we aim to involve them as much as possible in school life. We recognise the valuable contribution parents and carers make to their child's learning and development and work hard to develop and sustain positive relationships with families. We begin building these relationships before children start Reception through our Stay and Play sessions, providing opportunities for children and their families to become familiar with the school and for parents and carers to tell us about their child. We value the knowledge and understanding parents and carers have of their child and encourage them to share information, raise any concerns and contribute to their child's learning and development.

Ways in which parents are involved include:

- Stay and play sessions
- Transition days
- Nursery visits
- Reading books shared between home and school
- Stay and read sessions
- Weekly website updates



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- Termly newsletters
- Parent workshops (Phonics and Mathematics)
- Home-school diaries
- Parent consultations
- Tapestry, including sharing and contributing to children's learning and observations

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in supporting the needs of our children. Where appropriate, we work with other professionals and agencies to share information and provide the best possible support for children and their families. We also draw on links with the wider community to enrich children's experiences and broaden their understanding of the world around them, through outings, such as visits to the local library, local glens, and by inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Transition**

At Onchan Primary School, we work closely with the local pre-schools to ensure that we have detailed information about children before they start school. The Reception teachers visit children in their pre-school setting in the summer term prior to their start in Reception. The Reception teachers observe the children in their pre-school settings and use this opportunity to begin building relationships with children and practitioners. We invite children and their parents or carers to attend two Stay and Play sessions, providing opportunities for families to become familiar with the school, staff and learning environment. Children are then invited to attend two further sessions without their parents or carers, helping them to develop confidence and independence in the school environment before they start Reception.

As children prepare to move into Year 1, we work closely with Year 1 teachers to support a smooth transition into Key Stage 1. Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss children's learning, development and end-of-year data. These discussions support Year 1 teachers in planning an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of all children. Children also spend time with their new teacher in the Year 1 classroom during the two transition days in July, helping them to become familiar with their new environment and feel confident as they prepare for the next stage of their learning. More information about transition can be found in the Transition Policy.

Reviewed July 2026