



Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary

Outdoor Learning Policy

Date policy last reviewed:

May 2024

Signed by:

13.05.24

Headteacher

Date:

Chair of governors

Date:

13.05.24

Our Vision

Overleigh St. Mary's CoE Primary School, a caring centre of learning, where all individuals are inspired and enabled to achieve excellence in every aspect of school life – academic, social, personal, physical and spiritual.

Our school motto of '**Children First**' proudly beats through the heart of our thriving community.

At Overleigh St. Mary's our culture of high expectations in everything that we do ensures educational excellence for all with no child left behind. We strive for and achieve academic excellence with opportunities to develop wider sporting, artistic and social skills. We want our children to have a clear sense of moral purpose and character as well as to be enquiring, reflective and passionate learners. When our children leave us they display honesty, integrity, resilience, perseverance, compassion and self-discipline.

As a church school we nurture spiritual growth and provide an environment where each child can develop and fulfil their potential as a citizen of the future. Through a personalised, relevant and engaging curriculum we develop 21st Century skills ensuring our children embark on life confident of their place within a global society and able to become leaders in it.

INSPIRE. EDUCATE. SUCCEED

INTENT

PURPOSE / VISION STATEMENT for Outdoor learning

As a school we feel it is important to enable all children to use the outside environment as a context for learning as much as possible. Children will have the opportunity to learn in, about and through the full range of environments that our school and local area have to offer. All staff have a shared responsibility to provide regular, authentic outdoor learning contexts and to ensure that the environment is used in a stimulating and meaningful way. This includes time usually spent in class, breaks, lunchtimes and after-school activities. Outdoor spaces are used effectively to promote positive relationships and well-being. Staff take account of research linking benefits of outdoor learning and green space with physical and mental well-being. Outdoor Learning takes place both as part of discrete subject development and interdisciplinary learning where the outdoors and the wider community provide rich learning environments. Children learn and play in real settings and apply skills and make connections across subject areas in relevant context.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

We believe that the outdoor learning environment has much to offer children. It should provide relevant, engaging experiences that support learning in all areas of the curriculum. These can be presented as building on existing outdoor play, transferring activities normally carried out indoors into the outdoor environment, school garden projects, environmental education or off-site visits.

Providing positive opportunities for active learning, the outside environment can promote skills of enquiry, problem solving, communication, co-operation, creativity and evaluation, therefore we seek to offer outdoor experiences that allow children to:

- Find space to be alone or interact in social groups of different sizes.
- Plan, build, evaluate and sometimes demolish.
- Find similarities and differences, observe and classify.
- Be energetic, adventurous and assess risk.
- Make marks, use large scale media, be messy.
- Plant, grow and harvest.
- Hide, explore and discover.
- Investigate, make predictions, test theories.
- Imagine, pretend and reflect.
- Measure, locate, transport and record.
- Encourage children to have a healthy lifestyle, realising the benefits of the outdoor environment in both developing and enhancing their physical and mental health.
- Teach children to be aware of and to nurture their environment for future generations and wildlife.

IMPLEMENTATION

PROCESSES IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOL

Teaching and Learning

i. Planning the Curriculum

The expectation is that teaching and learning across all subjects incorporates Outdoor Learning opportunities during each term. Outdoor Learning opportunities will be planned in across national curriculum subjects and within the EYFS Curriculum. Teachers should actively seek within their planning and teaching to provide outdoor learning opportunities that:

- improve academic achievement providing a bridge to higher order learning
- develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments
- make learning more engaging and relevant
- develop active citizens and stewards of the environment
- nurture creativity
- provide opportunities for informed learning through play
- stimulate, inspire and improve motivation
- develop the ability to deal with uncertainty
- provide challenge and the opportunity to allow for managed “risk taking” to take place
- reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance
- improve attitudes

In addition to this, all children will access Forest School learning in our school grounds, during each academic year. Forest School sessions will be led by our specialist Forest School teacher.

A number of suggested activities suitable for each age group are listed in Appendix 1 but this is not intended to be exhaustive.

ii. Special Educational Needs

Outdoor Learning supports all of our pupils by providing multi-faceted experiences to develop learning in a variety of ways. The tactile nature of outdoor learning means that pupils will develop skills through visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning which aims to reach all of our pupils in an inclusive manner. Teachers will plan activities accordingly with support plans and taking into account accessibility of the activity.

iii. Health and Safety

Managing the Health and Safety of learners and staff in Outdoor Learning is extremely important but with thorough planning and implementation, Outdoor Learning can be safe, fun and motivating. It is often the case that an outdoor activity carries no greater risk than activities in the classroom.

All activities should be considered for a risk assessment, but only those which might deliver activities not normally undertaken in school should proceed to full risk assessment through Evolve. Off site visits and any activity involving ponds, pools, beaches, streams etc must have an approved risk assessment before the activity goes ahead.

Risk assessments of all outdoor areas should be carried out and updated annually. Any equipment should be checked regularly and used per manufacturer's instructions.

Apparatus to be age appropriate with clear and visible rotas and timetables to be available.

Any equipment that may hold additional risks must be stored in a safe place, out of the reach of children.

DISSEMINATION

This policy and all subsequent changes in practice due to developments in the subject [at a local and national level] will be shared with all staff at regular staff meetings.

RESOURCES / RESOURCE ALLOCATION

We aim to build a range of resources in the following areas. Many of these already exist within school already.

Mini-beasts	Habitats	Weather	Outdoor Literacy	Outdoor Maths
Outdoor Art	Outdoor Observations	Outdoor PE	Outdoor Music and Movement	Den Building
Outdoor Clothing	Road Safety	Bikes and Trikes	Renewable Energy	Large Scale Construction
Role Play	Camping and fire lighting	Drama and Performance		

RESPONSIBILITIES

AS A GOVERNOR

The governing body will be informed of significant developments within the subject area and, if necessary, their approval will be sought. Our governors support, monitor and review the school's policies.

AS THE HEADTEACHER

Alongside the senior leadership team and the subject co-ordinator it is the headteacher's responsibility to:

- Monitor standards.
- Support the policy by allocating time and resources.
- Make sure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Support staff training.
- Support the planning and delivery of residential experiences.

AS THE CO-ORDINATOR

The responsibility for ensuring coverage of the National Curriculum lies first with the subject leader but ultimately with the individual teacher.

As co-ordinator, it is their responsibility to ensure:

- Provide timetabling and suitable opportunities for all year groups to enjoy all outdoor spaces.
- Provide teaching staff with suggestions for planning outdoor learning across the curriculum.
- To maintain outdoor areas and provide stimulating resources that will aid and assist outdoor learning across the school.
- Engage children and inspire them to love and respect the outdoor areas through assemblies and experiences.
- Involve and motivate parents and the wider community to join in the maintenance of the outdoor areas and contribute to resources and funding.
- Work with site managers to maximise use and suitability of outdoor areas.
- To look for ways to move the outdoor learning and areas forward with in the school and wider community.

AS A TEACHER

The responsibility for ensuring coverage of the National Curriculum lies first with the subject leader but ultimately with the individual teacher. It is each teacher's responsibility to ensure that all children have access to the Outdoor Learning curriculum through quality first teaching.

Outdoor Learning opportunities should be included in short, medium and long term planning. The quality of outdoor learning is dependent upon both the available resources and the way in which they are utilised.

Staff should have access to training, how to prepare for outdoor learning and how to provide the best opportunities for the children to learn and demonstrate their learning. This training should be made available through either internal or external cpd.

The role of the adult outside can be quite different to inside and minimal adult intervention is considered best practice. Scaffolding through careful questioning and working alongside the children, guiding rather than directing work to achieve the best open ended learning.

Children should be encouraged to take ownership of outdoor areas and tidy up in the same way as they would indoors. Appreciating their school environment and respecting the outdoors is just another benefit of taking children outdoors.

AS A PARENT/PUPIL/OUTSIDE AGENCY

We aim to work in partnership with our school family and wider community. In order to do this we will look to:

- Encourage parents and carers to share their knowledge and skills to enhance learning and teaching.
- Foster home/school links by sharing learning.
- Encourage parents/carers to support outdoor learning and excursions.
- Work alongside local businesses and our local community to provide the best experiences for our pupils.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Good practice in assessing Outdoor Learning is no different from elsewhere in school. Where possible children should be given tasks that show they can use what they have learned to:

- Generalise.
- Apply exceptions.
- Give explanations.
- Make predictions.
- Evaluate.
- Find examples.
- Find solutions.
- Work independently.
- Work with a partner.
- Work with a group.

Work should be recorded in topic books through photographs, filming, written form such as reports and recounts, observations, class assessments and assemblies.

MONITORING & REVIEW

The subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Outdoor Learning. The subject leader is responsible for supporting colleagues in the delivery of Outdoor learning, for being informed about current developments in the area, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

The subject leader will present an annual report to the head teacher and governors in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the outdoor area and delivery within lessons and indicate areas for further improvement. The Outdoor Subject leader must therefore make full use of non-contact time to undertake monitoring across the whole school.

The policy will be reviewed by the head teacher at set intervals.

REPORTING TO GOVERNORS

Annual report will be shared with governors. Material changes to practice and policy will be shared through the Curriculum and Ethos Committee.

OTHER POLICIES TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS POLICY

Forest School Policy
Teaching and Learning
Feedback to Learning

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The school has a formal complaints procedure, details of which can be found in the complaints policy, available upon request from the school office.

This policy was written by Outdoor Learning Co-ordinator

This Policy was reviewed by Deputy Headteacher

This policy was signed off by Curriculum and Ethos Committee

This policy was ratified by the Governing Body on

Outdoor Learning Policy, 2024