

More Able and Talented Children Policy

At The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston, we recognise that every child is unique and develops at their own individual rate.

We are committed to providing an ambitious, inclusive and appropriately challenging curriculum which enables every child to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding from their individual starting points.

We recognise that some children may demonstrate particularly advanced development, knowledge, skills, understanding or aptitude in one or more areas.

Our role is to identify these strengths early, understand how each child learns best and provide appropriate opportunities for them to deepen, extend and apply their learning.

We do not expect children to progress through a fixed sequence or curriculum simply because they demonstrate advanced skills in one area. Instead, we provide appropriate challenge based on the individual child, while continuing to support their overall development, wellbeing, relationships and enjoyment of learning.

This policy should be read alongside the nursery's:

- Curriculum Policy;
- Assessment Policy;
- SEND and Inclusion Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy; and
- Key Person Policy.

What Do We Mean by More Able and Talented?

The terms “more able” and “talented” are not used as fixed labels for children at The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston.

In an early years context, children may demonstrate:

- particularly advanced knowledge or understanding;
- development that is significantly ahead of their peers in a particular area;
- a strong interest or passion for a particular subject or activity;
- exceptional creativity or imagination;
- advanced language and communication skills;
- advanced mathematical thinking;
- highly developed physical skills;
- strong musical awareness;
- sophisticated problem-solving skills;
- an ability to make complex connections;
- a strong memory or ability to recall information;
- exceptional concentration or persistence; or

- a particularly deep level of understanding within an area of interest.

A child may demonstrate advanced development in one area while developing typically or requiring additional support in another.

Advanced development in one area must not lead us to make assumptions about a child's overall development.

Equally, a child does not need to demonstrate advanced academic skills to have a particular talent, strength or area of exceptional interest.

Our Approach

Our approach is based on the principle that every child should experience an ambitious curriculum and high-quality teaching.

We will:

- have high expectations for every child;
- recognise and build on individual strengths;
- use children's interests to deepen learning;
- provide appropriate challenge;
- avoid unnecessary repetition when a child has already demonstrated secure understanding;
- encourage children to think, reason, investigate and solve problems;
- provide opportunities for children to apply their knowledge in new situations;
- encourage independence and perseverance;
- develop children's communication and vocabulary;
- provide opportunities for creativity and self-expression;
- promote positive attitudes towards learning;
- work closely with parents and carers; and
- review children's progress from their individual starting points.

Our aim is not simply to give children more work, but to provide richer, deeper and more meaningful learning opportunities.

Development Matters

The nursery uses Development Matters as a non-statutory curriculum guidance document alongside the statutory EYFS framework.

Development Matters emphasises that children develop at different rates and that practitioners should use their knowledge of children's development to provide an appropriate curriculum and learning experiences.

Staff will therefore use Development Matters to support professional judgement rather than as a checklist or fixed set of expectations.

Where a child demonstrates development beyond the typical range described within the guidance, practitioners will consider:

- what the child already knows and understands;
- what the child can already do independently;
- how the child applies their knowledge;
- whether the child can transfer their learning to a new situation;
- what interests and motivates the child;
- how the child approaches challenge;
- what further learning would be meaningful; and
- whether the child requires greater depth, complexity or independence rather than simply moving on to the next developmental stage.

The current Development Matters guidance emphasises that practitioners should provide an ambitious curriculum which supports children to develop through interactions, experiences and opportunities that build on what they already know and can do. (gov.uk)

Identifying Strengths and Advanced Development

Children may demonstrate advanced development through everyday play, interactions and experiences rather than through formal testing.

Staff will use their professional knowledge and observation to identify children who consistently demonstrate particular strengths.

Indicators may include a child who:

- demonstrates knowledge beyond what would normally be expected for their age;
- makes sophisticated connections between ideas;
- uses advanced vocabulary or complex sentence structures;
- independently solves problems using increasingly complex strategies;
- demonstrates strong mathematical reasoning;
- remembers and applies information;
- creates increasingly complex narratives or imaginative play;
- shows sustained concentration on areas of interest;
- demonstrates exceptional creativity;
- develops highly advanced physical or coordination skills;
- shows a strong musical ear, rhythm or awareness;
- demonstrates a particular talent or aptitude; or
- independently seeks increasingly challenging experiences.

These are possible indicators rather than criteria or checklists.

Staff will consider the whole child and will not make judgements based on a single observation or isolated achievement.

Communication and Language

Children who demonstrate advanced communication and language skills may:

- use an extensive vocabulary;
- use complex sentence structures;
- explain ideas clearly;
- engage in sustained conversations;
- ask increasingly sophisticated questions;

- make connections between ideas;
- explain their reasoning;
- use language creatively;
- retell or adapt stories in detail;
- demonstrate understanding of increasingly complex concepts; or
- communicate effectively with adults and other children.

Staff will provide opportunities for these children to:

- engage in extended conversations;
- discuss ideas and concepts;
- explain their thinking;
- listen to different viewpoints;
- develop increasingly precise vocabulary;
- tell and create stories;
- explore books and non-fiction;
- engage in sustained shared thinking; and
- communicate with a wide range of people.

Challenge may be provided through questioning, discussion, storytelling, problem-solving and opportunities to explain and justify ideas rather than simply introducing more advanced written work.

Literacy

Children who demonstrate advanced literacy development may:

- show a strong interest in books and print;
- recognise a wide range of letters or words;
- demonstrate strong phonological awareness;
- independently apply phonics knowledge;
- retell and adapt stories;
- recognise features of different types of text;
- demonstrate advanced comprehension;
- write independently for meaningful purposes; or
- use increasingly complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

Staff will provide opportunities for children to:

- explore a wide range of high-quality books;
- develop comprehension and inference;
- discuss characters, events and ideas;
- experiment with writing for different purposes;
- develop vocabulary;
- apply phonics knowledge;
- create their own stories and texts;
- explore non-fiction; and
- develop a genuine love of reading and writing.

Children will not be pushed into formal reading or writing solely because they demonstrate an advanced ability. Learning will remain developmentally appropriate and purposeful.

Mathematics

Children who demonstrate advanced mathematical development may:

- recognise and use numbers confidently;
- identify patterns and relationships;
- compare quantities;
- solve problems independently;
- develop their own mathematical strategies;
- explain mathematical thinking;
- make connections between mathematical concepts;
- demonstrate strong spatial reasoning;
- use mathematical language accurately; or
- apply mathematical knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

Staff will provide opportunities for children to:

- solve increasingly complex problems;
- explain and compare strategies;
- explore patterns and relationships;
- investigate number and quantity;
- develop spatial reasoning;
- explore measurement;
- use mathematical language;
- predict, test and evaluate ideas; and
- apply mathematical thinking through play and real-life situations.

Challenge will focus on reasoning, problem-solving and depth of understanding, rather than simply moving children onto formal calculations intended for older children.

Physical Development

Children may demonstrate particular strengths in areas such as:

- gross motor coordination;
- balance;
- agility;
- strength;
- fine motor control;
- hand-eye coordination;
- construction;
- mark-making; or
- particular sporting or movement skills.

Staff will provide opportunities for children to develop these skills through:

- physical play;
- outdoor learning;
- climbing and balancing;
- ball skills;
- dance and movement;
- music and rhythm;

- construction;
- creative activities; and
- opportunities to practise and refine skills.

Children will be encouraged to challenge themselves safely and develop resilience and perseverance.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children may demonstrate particular strengths in:

- music;
- singing;
- rhythm;
- dance;
- drawing;
- painting;
- modelling;
- construction;
- imaginative play;
- storytelling;
- drama; or
- creative problem-solving.

Staff will provide open-ended resources and experiences which allow children to develop their ideas rather than requiring them to reproduce a predetermined outcome.

Children will be encouraged to:

- experiment;
- create;
- perform;
- compose;
- represent their ideas;
- explore different materials;
- develop their own artistic style; and
- explain their creative choices.

Understanding the World

Children may demonstrate advanced knowledge or particular interests in areas such as:

- nature and the environment;
- science;
- technology;
- animals;
- geography;
- history;
- cultures and communities;
- space;
- engineering; or
- how things work.

Staff will use these interests to create opportunities for children to:

- investigate;
- predict;
- experiment;
- research;
- ask questions;
- find things out;
- compare and classify;
- observe change over time;
- develop subject-specific vocabulary; and
- apply knowledge in new situations.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Advanced cognitive development does not necessarily mean that a child's social, emotional or physical development will be equally advanced.

Staff will therefore consider the whole child.

A child who demonstrates advanced academic or creative skills will continue to receive appropriate support to develop:

- emotional regulation;
- relationships;
- communication;
- confidence;
- resilience;
- independence;
- self-care;
- cooperation;
- empathy; and
- understanding of boundaries.

Children will not be expected to behave emotionally or socially beyond their developmental stage because they demonstrate advanced skills in another area.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Staff will use the characteristics of effective teaching and learning to understand how children approach learning and challenge.

These include:

Playing and Exploring

Children will have opportunities to:

- investigate;
- explore;
- make choices;
- initiate their own learning;
- try new experiences; and
- develop their own ideas.

Active Learning

Children will be supported to:

- concentrate;
- persevere;
- practise skills;
- overcome difficulties;
- take appropriate risks;
- develop resilience; and
- experience the satisfaction of achieving something challenging.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children will be encouraged to:

- develop their own ideas;
- make connections;
- predict;
- solve problems;
- test theories;
- develop strategies;
- explain their thinking; and
- reflect on their learning.

For children demonstrating advanced development, staff will particularly consider how they can provide opportunities for greater depth, complexity, creativity and independent thinking.

Planning and Providing Appropriate Challenge

Planning will be responsive to individual children rather than based solely on age-related expectations.

Staff will consider:

What does the child already know?

What can the child already do independently?

How deeply do they understand it?

Can they apply it in another context?

What would provide meaningful challenge?

Challenge may include:

- asking children to explain their reasoning;
- introducing new vocabulary;
- presenting a problem with more than one possible solution;
- encouraging children to predict and test ideas;
- providing open-ended resources;
- allowing children to lead an investigation;
- encouraging children to find their own solutions;

- encouraging children to teach or explain ideas to others;
- introducing new experiences;
- encouraging children to make connections;
- providing opportunities for sustained shared thinking; and
- allowing children time to develop and revisit ideas.

Staff should avoid simply giving children additional worksheets, repetitive tasks or work intended for older children.

Observation and Assessment

Assessment will be based on practitioners' knowledge of the child and their ongoing observations of children's learning.

We will not use formal testing as a routine method of identifying more able children.

Staff will consider:

- what children know;
- what children understand;
- what children can do;
- how independently they can do it;
- how they apply their learning;
- whether they can transfer knowledge;
- how they respond to challenge;
- their interests;
- their interactions with others; and
- their progress from their individual starting points.

Observations will be purposeful and used to inform teaching and provision.

The nursery will avoid unnecessary recording and will not create excessive paperwork solely to evidence that a child is receiving additional challenge.

Individual Learning Opportunities

Where a child demonstrates a particular strength or advanced development, their key person will work with the child and wider staff team to identify appropriate opportunities.

These may include:

- targeted experiences;
- enhanced continuous provision;
- additional resources;
- adult-led investigations;
- opportunities to work with peers;
- specialist experiences;
- opportunities to revisit and deepen learning;
- opportunities to apply skills in different contexts; and
- child-led projects based on their interests.

Where appropriate, these opportunities will be reflected in the child's individual planning and assessment records.

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are an important source of information about children's interests, strengths, experiences and development.

We will:

- discuss children's strengths and interests with parents;
- share observations and examples of learning;
- invite parents to share information about interests and achievements outside nursery;
- work together to identify appropriate opportunities for further development; and
- ensure parents understand that children may demonstrate strengths in different ways.

We will avoid labelling children in ways that create pressure or unrealistic expectations.

Inclusion and SEND

Being advanced in one area does not mean that a child cannot have special educational needs or disabilities.

Similarly, a child with SEND may demonstrate exceptional strengths or talents.

The nursery will therefore consider each child's needs individually and will not allow an area of advanced development to mask another area where the child requires support.

Where appropriate, the nursery SENCO will work with the key person, parents and other professionals to ensure that the child's strengths and needs are fully understood.

The nursery will provide an inclusive curriculum which recognises and values different abilities, interests, backgrounds and ways of learning.

Equality and Inclusion

All children will have equal opportunities to demonstrate and develop their strengths.

We will not make assumptions about children's abilities based on:

- gender;
- race or ethnicity;
- language;
- disability;
- SEND;
- socioeconomic background;
- family circumstances; or
- cultural background.

Staff will be alert to the possibility that advanced development may present differently in different children and will use professional observation rather than stereotypes or preconceived expectations.

Transition

Where a child is moving to another early years setting or school, we will share relevant information, with appropriate parental consent and in accordance with data protection requirements.

Information shared may include:

- the child's strengths;
- interests;
- current learning;
- successful teaching strategies;
- areas requiring continued challenge;
- relevant individual needs; and
- information that will support continuity of learning.

We will not label a child as “gifted”, “more able” or “talented” without careful consideration of whether such terminology is appropriate and useful for the receiving setting.

Leadership and Management

Management will ensure that:

- staff understand that all children should experience ambitious learning opportunities;
- staff know children's starting points and individual needs;
- practitioners understand how to provide appropriate challenge;
- planning reflects children's interests and development;
- staff receive appropriate training and professional development;
- children's progress is monitored;
- provision is evaluated;
- concerns about a child's development are identified and acted upon;
- strengths are recognised alongside areas requiring support; and
- the curriculum remains ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate.

Leaders will monitor whether children are making progress from their individual starting points and whether teaching and provision are enabling children to develop increasing knowledge, skills, independence and understanding.

Ofsted and Quality Assurance

The nursery recognises that Ofsted considers the quality of education in terms of the curriculum, teaching, interactions, children's learning and the impact of provision.

We will therefore ensure that children demonstrating advanced development are not simply provided with additional activities, but are supported through high-quality interactions and an ambitious curriculum that builds on what they already know and can do.

Staff will be able to explain:

- what they know about the child;
- the child's strengths and interests;
- what the child already knows and can do;
- how they identify appropriate challenge;
- how they adapt teaching;
- how they support the child to think deeply;
- how they know the child is making progress; and

- how they work with parents and other professionals.

The nursery will use professional dialogue, observations, supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that appropriate challenge is provided consistently.

Ofsted's early years inspection approach considers the quality of education, including how leaders and practitioners develop an ambitious curriculum, how teaching builds on children's knowledge and understanding, and how well children learn and develop. (gov.uk)

Monitoring Children's Progress

Management will monitor children's progress across the nursery, including children who demonstrate advanced development or particular strengths.

Monitoring will consider:

- individual starting points;
- progress over time;
- depth of understanding;
- development across all seven areas of learning;
- children's engagement;
- independence;
- communication;
- characteristics of effective teaching and learning;
- the quality of adult interactions;
- whether challenge is appropriate; and
- whether any child is being overlooked because their strengths are masking another area of need.

The purpose of monitoring is not to rank children against one another, but to ensure that every child receives the teaching and experiences they need to make progress.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there are changes to:

- the EYFS statutory framework;
- Development Matters;
- Ofsted inspection arrangements;
- safeguarding requirements;
- research or recognised good practice; or
- the nursery's curriculum and assessment approach.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>11/08/2026</i>	F.Joyce	<i>December 2026</i>