



Teaching & Learning Policy

Statement of Intent

The Oak Montessori is committed to offering pupils a high quality nursery education. Our curriculum follows the guidelines and foundation set out by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Rooted in the Montessori teaching philosophy, we also integrate a Forest School curriculum, maximising indoor and outdoor learning opportunities in our local Wimbledon Park environment.

We design planned activities to promote holistic child development, nurturing academic growth alongside personal, social, and emotional wellbeing. Our goal is to help children become positive, responsible individuals who collaborate effectively with others while developing the knowledge and skills they need to reach their full potential. By offering a broad, balanced curriculum that supports creative, independent learning, we prepare children not only for school but for life beyond.

Our Montessori Approach

In our classrooms, you will find dedicated Montessori shelved areas featuring practical life, sensorial, numeracy, literacy, science, and cultural resources. These materials and activities align with the seven areas of learning within the EYFS framework:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We cater for each child's individual interests and development needs. Montessori children use hands-on learning materials that make abstract concepts clear and concrete. This approach to learning offers a clear and logical strategy that helps your child to develop a sound foundation, working towards the Early Years Outcomes and Early Learning Goals. Every day your child will work in small groups and have the opportunity for individual 1:1 time with their key worker. Our teachers will spend quality time working on literacy and numeracy activities, scaffolding their



learning. This enables each child to solve problems, carry out tasks and achieve goals which challenge them, just beyond their abilities.

Our Classroom Groups

At The Oak Montessori, we have two indoor classroom groups—The Squirrels and The Robins—as well as an outdoor Forest School classroom.

The Robins' Toddler Classroom

The Robins' Classroom, led by Miss Anna and Miss Abi and supported by Miss Sue and Miss Tracey, serves toddlers aged 2-3 years, with a 4:1 child-to-teacher ratio and an average classroom size of 12 children. The environment is carefully prepared to safely support your child's drive to do things alone, developing confidence and a sense of competence. In this setting, the teachers, children, and the environment form a learning triangle. The classroom encourages freedom within limits, independence, and a sense of order, allowing children to choose activities that meet their developmental needs while receiving guidance from teachers as needed.

Here you will see an environment which is language-rich, where your little ones are exposed to a broad vocabulary, which in turn develops their own broad use of vocabulary. Our 'reading area' offers a range of books to allow your child to explore on their own or read aloud with an adult. Our teachers will also support the children in communicating with each other and our library books will be used at a number of points during the stages of each day, with a large focus on the love of books.

In the Robins' learning environment, children are encouraged to work independently, observe others, explore freely, and express their curiosity and creativity. A self-care area supports toilet training and personal hygiene, such as learning to wash hands and wipe noses independently. During nap time, children prepare their own sleeping areas with floor mats and individual blankets, fostering autonomy and enabling them to get up independently when rested.

What Will Your Child Learn?

During the first three years of life, children experience rapid development, absorbing information from their environment through observation and experiences. These foundational years are critical for laying the groundwork for later learning. At The Oak Montessori, our curriculum



emerges from each child's unique skills and interests. Based on daily observations, teachers introduce materials and activities that spark curiosity and stimulate learning.

Learning objectives for children at this stage include developing skills in language, concentration, problem-solving, visual discrimination, and physical coordination. The routines of everyday living form the foundation of all activities, promoting independence, order, coordination, and concentration while supporting social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Key Learning Activities

- Self-care: Washing, dressing, toileting, and eating, tailored to each child's abilities
- Care of the environment: Cleaning, food preparation, serving meals, and caring for plants and animals
- Gross-motor activities (indoors and outdoors): Walking, climbing, running, jumping, balancing, and climbing steps
- Fine-motor skills: Reaching, grasping, transferring objects, using tools and utensils, and creating art
- Language development: Naming objects, describing actions and intentions, discussing pictures, engaging in conversations, and participating in music and singing
- Social skills: Developing manners through peer interactions, teacher guidance, and adult-led small group games

The Squirrels 3+ Preschool Classroom

"From the age of three till six, being able to now to tackle his environment deliberately and consciously, he begins a period of real constructiveness."

Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

Once your child is round about the age of 3 years old, toilet independent, and no longer taking an afternoon nap, they will transition into The Squirrels Classroom.

The Squirrels classroom is guided by Miss Anna R, Miss Olivia, and Miss Bryony, all of whom hold strong Montessori accreditations. The class maintains an 8:1 child-to-adult ratio, with an average of 18 children in the indoor classroom and approximately 10 children at Forest School.



The Squirrels thrive through engaging in real-life activities that foster independence and self-efficacy. These activities involve:

- Manipulating objects for concrete sensorial experiences.
- Open-ended exploration to refine movements, sensory perceptions, and language.
- Developing intellectual skills through curiosity-driven learning.

Children are encouraged to follow their own interests, freely choosing activities that help them:

- Build concentration.
- Engage their reasoning, imagination, and social skills at their own pace.

Materials and activities in The Squirrels Classroom are carefully designed to support self-directed discovery and learning, perfectly complementing this developmental stage and serving as a natural progression from The Robins group.

What Are the 3 Main Differences Between the Robins and the Squirrels Group?

Control of Movement and Free Choice of Lessons

In the Squirrels group, children learn about self-discipline by respecting the structured order of lessons. They begin to understand that lessons require proper introductions before they can be used independently.

A Greater Focus on Literacy and Numeracy

Lessons in the Squirrels group place more emphasis on literacy and numeracy, introducing concepts in a more structured and detailed way.

Increased Complexity in Lessons

Activities are more challenging and often involve multiple steps. For example, a lesson like washing a table includes:

- Step 1: Take the tray from the shelf.
- Step 2: Fill the jug with water.
- Step 3: Scrub the table using soap and water.
- Step 4: Remove the soap with a sponge.
- Step 5: Dry the table with a towel.
- Step 6: Place the towel in the laundry basket.
- Step 7: Pour the dirty water into the bucket.
- Step 8: Replace the items on the tray with clean materials.



- Step 9: Return the tray to the shelf.

What is the Montessori Work Cycle?

The Montessori work cycle is a key component of Montessori education and The Oak Montessori's daily structure. This is an uninterrupted block of time for children to pursue learning independently. During this period of time your child is free to explore, select and work with any materials in their prepared classroom of which they have already been introduced to. The time is meant to give them opportunities to enjoy the work they love, while also cultivating basic life skills.

Some of the benefits of the Montessori work cycle include:

- promotes independent learning.
- lets children pursue the activities/topics that they're most interested in.
- gives children practice setting up an activity and cleaning it up, which encourages an organised mind.
- allows children to gain all they need from a learning experience without interruptions or ending too soon.
- allows children to learn at their own pace.
- gives children practice with prolonged focused attention.
- allows children to select increasingly challenging activities during the course of a work cycle, which pushes them out of their comfort zone on their own terms.

The Montessori Classroom

Materials and Activities are carefully organised around Practical Life activities that develop both independence and social skills. This includes Sensorial activities that refine sensory perception, the development of Spoken Language, Writing and Reading skill, and Mathematical activities that develop fundamental mathematical concepts, as well as activities that reflect upon our human understanding of geography, history, biology, science, music, and the arts. Our Teachers and Assistants guide your child along this journey, ready to take a positive, pro-social place in their world.

- In the **Practical Life** area you will find objects and materials that are normally encountered in the everyday living experiences. These activities work on each child's



grace and courtesy, care of self, control of movement and care of the environment. They help to develop self-confidence, control and concentration, essential for mastery of the other more advanced areas of a Montessori classroom.

- The **Sensorial** materials support each child's awareness of detail. Each of the activities can isolate a defining quality, such as colour, weight, shape, texture, size, sound and smell. It is in this area that mathematical concepts are first introduced and internalised. These materials will provide each child with the skills needed for a solid foundation in mathematics. It is here that each child will first explore and learn to identify shapes; by pairing sound cylinders, sorting natural materials (such as acorns and conkers) according to size, weight or texture. They develop grading skills when using activities like the colour tablets and they are introduced to 1:1 correspondence when matching cylinders with appropriate sockets in the cylinder block to explore length, weight and size through their play.
- In the **Numeracy** area children will work at their own pace from the concrete to abstract. They will be introduced to counting with the help of number rods and sandpaper numerals. They will move on to learn about both cardinal and ordinal numbers, exploring their relationships with the written symbol. The carefully structured sequence of Montessori materials means each child will first work with quantities, focusing on sequence, as well as patterns of numbers such as odd and even, moving onto the names of the symbols. At all times each child will have objects to manipulate and organise to enhance their own mathematical understanding. Our mathematics activities are organised into five groups: introduction to numbers, introduction to the decimal system, introduction to tens, teens and counting, arithmetic tables, and abstraction.
- The **Literacy** area is supported by a number of activities that stimulate communication skills and vocabulary development. Here you will find a broad range of materials for reading readiness, phonetic analysis as well as fine motor control. Materials such as our sandpaper letters and large moveable alphabet help to prepare each child for writing first, before they learn to read. Maria Montessori believed this approach to be organic, as children are able to put the letters for the sounds they know together into a word before they are ready to interpret and string together the sounds of a word on a page. Children take pride in their learning development and will often come back the following day to learn the next stage of the process.
- Our **Science & Cultural** areas, in addition to the **outdoor learning experiences** on offer, provide the opportunity for each child to gain a lifelong interest in observing nature



and discovering more about the world in which we live. It is here that they come across activities of magnetism, weights, growing plants and the classification of plants and animals. Each child will learn about Geography, Zoology, Botany, Science, Art, Music & Languages. These resources will provide them with the opportunity to indulge their curiosity of different and worldly ideas. We will look at the world, study land and water forms, continents, world maps, customs and rituals; looking at our own cultures and many others.

Eg 1. Within the study of Botany, a child will learn about plants, from what they look like to how to take care of them, how they grow and how they may appreciate nature in a more organic way. We will go out into the park and have first-hand experiences which become a fundamental part of their learning development.

Eg 2. Within the study of Zoology, a child will look at different animals from all around the world - where they live, their unique ecosystems, what they eat and how they grow.

- In our classroom **Library, Art, Roleplay & Music** areas are also important. These allow each child a unique opportunity to express themselves. Children have an expressive and uninhibited experience of moving, dancing and singing among their school peers. These areas allow children to gain a literary understanding of language and develop their cognitive and emotional skills in a constructive way.
- We support the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of each child, through both our British Values teaching and across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Forest School

Our Forest School sessions are taught by Miss Claudi, Miss Sam and Miss Martha and make up a significant part of our curriculum at The Oak Montessori. Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, which offers opportunities for holistic growth; supporting play, exploration and supported risk taking. Through learner-inspired, hands-on experiences in our wonderful natural setting of Wimbledon Park your little one will continue to develop confidence and self-esteem.

During these sessions your child will have plenty of opportunity for personal discovery. Through our Project Approach, where projects are planned alongside your children, and evolve in a direction that is determined by their emerging questions and interests. Our teacher's job is not to control the project. Instead, they take a supportive role by providing any resources and



guidance that the children need in their investigations, as well as planning supporting activities that help extend their understanding. Children learn to think and find out for themselves instead of simply receiving information from others. Here, your child will have the freedom to express their imagination using a variety of engineering materials such as ramps, pathways, and other loose parts, learning to create collaborative projects and really live and breathe nature.

Each year we watch our pre-school children thrive in their final year, having gained so much confidence, knowledge and curiosity in the world around them. Our Montessori ethos at The Oak Montessori which includes Community, Nature, Sustainability and Collaboration have all played an important part of their journey, alongside their learning each day. They have made wonderful relationships along the way and they are happy, confident, inquisitive children who are ready to start big school at a variety of schools.

Time Allocation for Montessori Classroom and Forest School

At The Oak Montessori, we aim to provide a balanced curriculum that combines the enriching Montessori classroom experience with the valuable outdoor learning opportunities offered by Forest School. Below is the structure for time spent in each setting:

Robins (2-3 Years Old)

All children in the Robins class will participate in one Forest School session per week, regardless of how many days they attend nursery. Forest School is an integral part of their development, building up a love for nature and outdoor exploration.

Squirrels (3+ Years Old)

The Forest School allocation for Squirrels is as follows:

3 full-day attendees: 1 Forest School day per week.

4 or 5 full-day attendees: 2 Forest School days per week.

This structure ensures that all children receive a well-rounded experience while allowing us to manage ratios effectively.

Our Curriculum Values

We believe that the following areas allow for a child to thrive and learn with ease and joy. They underpin the dynamic thinking of our learners, cultivating independent, confident thinkers who have a voice and know how to use it.



1. **The Unique Child:** We offer an inclusive, child-centred approach to learning which allows for every child to advance at their own pace, developing their individual potential fully. We are focused on unearthing and supporting the inner wisdom of each child.
2. **The Prepared Environment:** Our learning environment is specifically prepared with Montessori materials to support all seven areas of the Early Years Foundation stage, cultivating 'hands on' experience and allowing for movement where children can progress. All areas of learning support each other seamlessly and our teachers act as guides when needed.
3. **Independence:** We encourage freedom of choice and movement between activities, allowing for each learner to develop independently at their own pace from the simple to the complex, challenging them to take risks with independent investigation and multi-sensory learning.
4. **Empowerment:** We have a Montessori mixed-age classroom structure called Vertical Grouping, designed for children to interact and engage with all ages. Older children act as role models, giving them a sense of empowerment, whilst younger children gain self-confidence and inquisitiveness.
5. **Respect:** We have a culture of respect; for our teacher-child relationships, our families, our local communities, our natural environment and our global communities. A child's personal dignity lies at the centre of our culture, dictating how we interact with each other through opportunities and challenges.
6. **Wellbeing:** We support the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of each child. We offer a positive learning journey with a focus on cultural, social, moral and spiritual development, fostering emotional intelligence and empathy. A focus on the understanding of self and others acts as a strong foundation for us all

Curriculum Aims & Objectives

The aims of The Oak Montessori curriculum are:

- to enable all children to learn, and develop their skills, to the best of their ability
- to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to nursery, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;
- to teach children the basic skills of literacy and numeracy;
- to enable children to be innovative, to use 'thinking' and problem-solving skills;
- to develop children's skills of teamwork and collaboration with others;



- to enable children to understand and appreciate the arts, giving them opportunities to develop their own artistic and creative abilities;
- to teach children about the developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- to help children understand Britain's cultural heritage and British values;
- to enable children to appreciate and understand the importance of scientific and technological discoveries and development;
- to give children an awareness of and experience of speaking and understanding other languages than English;
- to teach children ICT skills and to apply these skills across the curriculum to support their learning;
- to appreciate and value the contribution made by all ethnic groups in our multi-cultural society;
- to enable children to be positive citizens, contributing to the society in which they live;
- to fulfil all the requirements of the EYFS National Curriculum;
- to teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to distinguish right from wrong;
- to help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- to enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to live and work cooperatively with others

Differentiation

We recognise that children learn at different rates with differing learning needs. These are supported each day as we work with our children.

English as a Foreign Language

If you have a concern that you would like to raise with regards to a child's level of English, please direct it in the first instance to Miss Natasha.

Our EAL Aims & Objectives

- to ensure the correct pronunciation and spelling of the child's name
- to get to know the child as an individual: their background, experiences, interests, skills, approaches to learning
- to create an environment where each child feels valued and safe
- to give clear learning objectives in lessons and use appropriate materials to support the child's participation



- to actively model and encourage an atmosphere of risk taking in an environment where errors are seen as a natural and important part of learning
- to consciously interact with children, supporting them to make connections to and build on previous learning and experiences
- to encourage and seek opportunities to use first language at appropriate stages of learning
- to strategically use a variety of grouping techniques
- to provide extended waiting time to allow children time to process the question and their response
- to monitor each child's understanding, providing opportunity for individual explanations and support where needed
- to build up shared 'class' experiences to draw upon
- to clarify key words, rephrase key content in a variety of ways
- to offer additional visual support eg. posters, pictures, photographs, objects, use of gesture
- to offer additional verbal support eg. repetition, modelling, peer support
- to use scaffolding for language and learning
- to assess EAL learners against the same criteria as their monolingual peers, enabling accurate comparison of their relative progress and attainment with ongoing assessment throughout the EYFS

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Assistance for Children with SEN

The Oak Montessori aims to provide a setting which, to the best of its ability, meets the needs of children with SEN including:

- ensuring that each child with identified SEN receives a tailored, Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which is drawn up by the SENCO, in collaboration with their key worker and parents.
- providing individualised learning support and one-on-one time, where appropriate, and working with external agencies for support

Our Aims and Objectives

- to create a learning environment that meets the special educational needs of each child;
- to ensure that the special educational needs of children are identified, assessed and provided for from the earliest possible age;










- to ensure that all partners in the process of meeting a child's individual needs understand and fulfil their responsibilities;
- to ensure, in particular, that all nursery staff understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities in providing for children's special educational needs;
- to have the highest expectations of the progress in learning which can be achieved by all individual pupils, regardless of their individual needs;
- to enable all children, including those with SEN, to maximise their learning and achievement;
- to ensure that parents or carers are able to play their part in supporting their child's education;
- to ensure that our children have a voice in deciding how their individual needs might best be met;
- to ensure that all necessary resources are made available to meet each child's individual needs.

Rewards

We do not explicitly use a daily reward system, but rather adopt a culture of positive daily reinforcement and recognition of the processes and activities completed by your child. They will receive verbal praise for answers, questions, helpfulness, good manners, initiative and any other actions encouraged within the nursery environment. At certain times during the year a child's work will be displayed and we may highlight particular achievements to parents on an adhoc basis to ensure we are working together as a team.

Curriculum & Timetable

	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM Sessions	9:00 AM	<div></div> <div>Montessori Workcycle & Forest School</div> <div>Free Flow snacks</div>				
	10:00 AM					
	11:00 AM					
	11:40 - 12:00	Storytelling: children being picked up at lunchtime will get ready and join us for circle time.				
<div></div> <div>Lunch Time & Nap</div>	12:00 - 1:00	Children staying for the day will actively participate in laying the tables and making sure everything is ready for them to eat their healthy packed lunch together. Afternoon children will join at 12pm.				
PM Sessions	1:00 PM	Montessori Workcycle				
	1:30 PM	<div></div> <div>Dance</div>	<div></div> <div>Languages</div>	<div></div> <div>Music & Drama</div>	<div></div> <div>Sport</div>	<div></div> <div>Yoga & Meditation</div>
	2:00 PM	Montessori Workcycle & Outdoor play Free Flow snacks				
	2:40 - 3:00	Storytelling: all children will get ready for pick up and join us for circle time.				

Specialist Teachers

If parents choose to pay additional charges to the 3 year old 15hr funding, pupils are taught by specialist teachers across Forest School, Dance, Sport, Languages, Music & Drama and Yoga.

Reading

Reading and story-telling is a focal point of nursery life every day and we promote a culture of reading at home as well as school. We will share our story-telling journey each term and if you ever need inspiration do not hesitate to speak with Miss Natasha or Miss Charlotte.

Next Steps



Parents are encouraged to speak to Miss Charlotte & Natasha about next steps for their child, whether they are interested in public or independent schools.

Assessment & Reporting

We will invite parents for a 10-minute meeting to discuss the development of their child. We strive to work together as a team throughout the year, to ensure that all children are well-supported, happy, learning and growing every day.

Policy Written in July 2019:
Charlotte Wheeler

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Natasha Rawdon-Rego