

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE PARENT HANDBOOK

Academic Year 2021-2022

www.oryxschool.qa



مدرسة أوريكس الدولية



ORyx

International School, Doha

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Welcome

Welcome to Oryx International School Foundation Stage.

The purpose of this handbook is to help parents of Foundation Stage children understand how Early Years works and what to expect. It will also include key information about procedures and policies as well as information on how to help your child at home.

At Oryx International School, we believe the first step in your child's education is the most important one. It has been scientifically proven that the preschool years are the most important, as children develop more rapidly during the first five years of their lives than at any other time.

We pride ourselves on providing a unique, learning-enriched environment accompanied by high-quality and experienced Early Years Practitioners for children aged between 3 and 5 years old.

We believe that every child is unique and special and it is our job to provide them with the appropriate attention, care, support and encouragement required to bring out his or her own talents and strengths.

It is at this stage that we lay down the foundation for children's success, both academically and personally throughout life.



Our Mission

Our mission at Oryx is to deliver an engaging, value rich, broad and balanced 'British International Education Programme' to the children of the employees of Qatar Airways by highly qualified and experienced UK curriculum teachers.

Our Vision

Our vision is to ensure that students leave Oryx International School enabled, confident and ready to face the challenges that their next stage of life will bring. They will have developed effective behaviours that will enable them to thrive and succeed as global citizens of the 21st century.

Our Aim

We aim to provide a happy, secure and caring environment in which the pupils feel safe and nurtured. This, combined with educationally stimulating surroundings and activities, encourages our students to develop their inquisitive nature and learn at their own pace.

Our Team

Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two year groups which include Foundation Stage 1 (3-4 year olds) and Foundation Stage 2 (4-5 year olds).

Each class will have one class Teacher and one class Teaching Assistant and will be overseen by the Foundations Stage Leaders and our Vice Principal, Mrs. Andrea Smith.

Year Group	Teacher	Class Name
Foundation Stage 1 Leader Foundation Stage 1	Mrs Franklin	Kuwait
Foundation Stage 1	Miss McClintock	Lebanon
Foundation Stage 1	Mrs Khatan	Syria
Foundation Stage 1	Mrs. Mistry	Jordan
Foundation Stage 2 Leader Foundation Stage 2	Miss McConville	India
Foundation Stage 2	Miss Shields	Bangladesh
Foundation Stage 2	Ms Edwards	Pakistan
Foundation Stage 2	Miss Woolley	Sri Lanka
Foundation Stage 2	TBC	Myanmar
Foundation Stage 2	Miss Marley	Yemen
Foundation Stage 2	Miss Small	Nepal

Settling in Period and Preparation for Starting School

Starting school is an exciting time for young children and their parents. It can be a daunting time too. But with a little preparation and encouragement, most children will settle in easily.

Don't worry... Your child doesn't need to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school! Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher are highly skilled at helping children progress at their own level. What's most important is that you and your child have fun together in those preschool months and years - sharing stories, singing songs, playing games and talking about anything and everything.

Some tips to prepare...

- Chat with your child about starting school. What do they think it will be like? What are they most looking forward to? Is there anything they're unsure or worried about?
- Look at Facebook, Instagram or the school website together and talk about the pictures, look how happy the children at Oryx are and how much fun they are having.
- Find photos of you and other family members at school, and chat about happy memories from your own school days. You could even set up a play date with children who already attend Oryx.
- Read books together about starting school. Examples include; 'I am too Absolutely Small for School' (Charlie and Lola) by Lauren Child, 'Starting School' by Janet and Allen Ahlberg, 'Topsy and Tim Start School' by Jean and Gareth Adamson, 'Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School' by Ian Whybrow.
- If your child seems anxious about school, try focusing on the things they'll like best-maybe the sandpit, playhouse or new friends.
- Practise the school morning routine, including getting dressed and eating breakfast in time to leave.
- Practise the school run so that you're both prepared for the school morning journey. It is important that your child arrives to school promptly to begin their school day. This will give them time to settle and warm up.



What to Expect...

During our initial settling in period in the first few weeks of school your child may experience separation anxiety. This is perfectly normal behaviour, especially for a child who is starting school for the first time. It can sometimes last for a few days, but in some cases it can last for longer periods of time depending on the individual child. This is something we can work on together to help your child feel safe and secure in their new environment.

- Let your child know you are leaving and encourage them to have a fun day. If you look worried or anxious this will transfer onto your child and make the situation worse. Be positive and reassuring and let them know you will be back.
- Playing with other children whether friends or family members, or other children at the park or playgroups is all good practise for forming friendships at school. Teach your child to ask; "Can I join in?" or "Shall we share?"
- Try to get into the school routine so your child gets used to getting up, going to bed and having meals and snack times that they will get on school days.

- Bath times and stories instead of TV and iPad will help children wind down before bedtime. Also, make time in the evening to chat about your day.
- Nutritious meals and plenty of sleep will help your child concentrate, learn and thrive at school.
- If your child has naps, it would be wise to try phasing this out. This should be more manageable when they have a good bedtime routine.
- It is quite common for children's behaviour at home to change when they first start school. Don't be surprised if your little one become clingier, argumentative, lethargic, excitable or prone to tantrums for a while.
- Let your child get used to school life before introducing after school activities. It is also a good idea to keep the first few weekends quiet too, as they will likely need time to recharge, just as us adults do after beginning a new job or project.

Before starting Foundation Stage 1 your child should be able to...

- Sit and listen for a short time.
- Enjoy being with other children.
- Use the toilet, clean themselves and wash their hands (Accidents can happen from time to time, it is advisable to keep some spare clothes in your child's locker). - **Early Years Practitioners do not toilet train your children.**
- Recognise their own name when heard.
- Take off their cardigan and put shoes and socks on.
- Hold a book and talk about pictures.
- Share toys with friends.
- Help to tidy up their toys and resources.
- Sit at a table and feed themselves at snack/lunch times.
- Use a tissue to blow/clean their nose.

Key Personnel

Mr. Derek Laidlaw	Executive Principal	exec.pa@oryxschool.qa	+974 4036 0063
Mrs. Andrea Smith	Vice Principal Head of Primary	hop@oryxschool.qa	+974 4036 0063
Mrs. Simone Franklin	Foundation Stage 1 Leader	simone.franklin@oryxschool.qa	+974 4036 0063
Miss Catherine McConville	Foundation Stage 2 Leader	catherine.mcconville@oryxschool.qa	+974 4036 0063
Mrs. Julie Gano	School Nurse	nurse@oryxschool.qa	+974 3091 6800
Mrs. Devika Chada	Admissions Manager	admissions@oryxschool.qa	+974 4036 0085

Drop Off and Pick Up

Foundation Stage 1		Foundation Stage 2	
School Starts	TBC	School Starts	TBC
School Ends	TBC	School Ends	TBC

- Children in Foundation 1 can be collected after lunch. Parents must complete the early collection form and hand it back to reception for authorisation.
- Children should be dropped off and picked up by a Parent or Adult who has been registered by the school. **We will not allow any child to be picked up without permission and the required ID.**
- If you are late in dropping your child at school please report to the Reception to register your child.
- If your child is sick please report/email this to Reception by emailing reception@oryxschool.qa AND the Class Teacher.
- Your child should arrive to school with their school bag, a healthy snack and a healthy lunch, a water bottle, wearing sun cream, a hat and in full school uniform.
- Please **label ALL of your child's belongings!**
- It is advisable that children do not bring personal belongings, toys or valuable items into school unless requested by the Teacher. Staff will not be held responsible for lost/damaged items.
- Foundation Stage 2 children who are attending after school care will be accompanied by a member of staff
- Parents should always wait in the designated area. The class teacher will release your child to you. **Please do not enter the classroom without permission.**

Transport

Please contact the bus company directly if you need to arrange for your child to use the Oryx School bus service. Their details can be found on our school website.

Sun Protection

Please ensure that you have applied sun screen on your child before arriving at school each day during the summer months. It is advisable to purchase a longer lasting sun cream so that it will last the entire day.

Children are also required to wear hats outside during outdoor play. You may keep hats in your child's locker for them to access when required.

EYFS Curriculum

At Oryx we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework along with Development Matters in order to provide the best possible care and learning for your child.

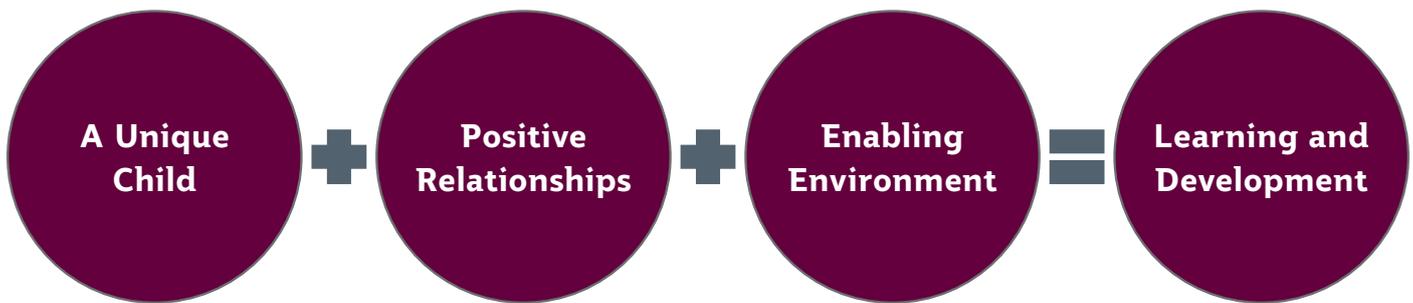
'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and care. It gives all professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare experiences to all children.'

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early year's settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practise, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Four guiding principles should shape practise in Early Years settings. These are;

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents.
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.



EYFS Assessment

Your child will be assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG'S) and three characteristics of effective learning. Children should most develop the 3 prime areas first. These include;

1. Communication and Language (C&L)	2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)	3. Physical Development (PD)
Listening, Attention and Understanding	Self-Regulation	Gross Motor Skills
Speaking	Managing Self	Fine Motor Skills
	Building Relationships	

These prime areas are the most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them develop skills in the specific areas. These include;

4. Literacy	5. Mathematics	6. Understanding the World	7. Expressive Arts and Design
Comprehension	Number	Past and Present	Creating with Materials
Word Reading	Numerical Patterns	People, Culture and Communities	Being Imaginative and Expressive
Writing		The Natural World	

These 17 areas are what we use to plan your child's learning and activities. The class Teacher and Teaching Assistant will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. We will consider your child's individual needs, interests, and development. We use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outdoors.



EYFS Assessment

Areas of Learning		Explained
Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding	The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.
	Speaking	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation	Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive 9 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.
	Managing Self	
	Building Relationships	
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives ⁷ . Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.
	Fine Motor Skills	
Literacy	Comprehension	It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
	Word Reading	
	Writing	
Mathematics	Number	Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.
	Numerical Patterns	
Understanding the World	Past and Present	Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.
	People, Culture and Communities	
	The Natural World	
Creative Development	Creating with Materials	The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.
	Being Imaginative and Expressive	

EYFS Assessment

In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) our assessments are ongoing throughout the year. At the end of each term you will be updated on your child's progress. It is important to know that all children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. The development statements and their order should not be taken as necessary steps for individual children. They should not be used as checklists. The age/stage bands overlap because these are not fixed age boundaries but suggest a typical range of development.

- In EYFS we use an app called 2Simple to record and collect evidence of your child's learning on a daily basis. This can be in the form of a picture, notes or a video. This is collated and will give the Teacher a good idea of how your child is developing. You will receive a copy of this electronically at the end of each term.
- Your child's written work will also be documented in their learning journey, as well as display throughout the class.
- Parents play a vital role in their child's learning journey at EYFS. We want to encourage parents to take part in their child's assessment and learning and development as much as possible. Parents are especially vital when it comes to assessing children whose first language is not English.



- All of the information and evidence is used by the Class Teacher to then make an accurate summative assessment by the end of the year.
- You will also be able to share evidence and add to your child's learning journey on 2Simple- the Class Teacher will help you with the set-up of this.



Home Learning

Learning takes place at home as well as in school. All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development and have a really long-lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas.

If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a younger learner.

It is also good to speak with your child and share books in your Home Language as well as in English.

Communication & Language	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Simon says. • Ask questions about their day, interests, experiences. • Talk about what they have done, what are going to do and talk about things happening in the future e.g. Holidays. • Join in with role play activities. • Act out their favourite fairytale. • Help them to make up their own stories. • Spend quality time talking e.g. over dinner, away from noise and distractions. • Talk about your day. Did anything funny happen? • What was the best thing about your day? • Talk about tomorrow or the rest of the week. Is anything exciting or interesting going to happen? • Talk whilst out and about-things you can see, places things come from how things have changed over time, notices and pictures on walls, look at magazines and talk about the pictures, look at toys and talk about how they work, where you are going, what you expect to see, how you are feeling, things that have happened in the news. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage friendships with other children. • Have friends round to play. • Help your child to learn how to share and take turns. • Play board games. • Help develop your child's interests and skills. • Provide opportunities for them to do things on their own. • Encourage independence. • Encourage your child to get dressed independently. • Talk about your feelings and how your child feels. • Be consistent in your approach to rules at home. • Make time for one to one interaction with your child. • Talk to them about their day. • Try new activities.
Physical Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging your child to get themselves dressed and undressed independently- using buttons, zipping up their own coat. • Writing their name and making marks in large gross motor movements e.g. with chalk, large paint brushes and rollers. • Practise cutting skills with scissors- allow them to make snips in paper and then try to follow straight lines, then zig-zag lines. 	

Home Learning

Mathematics	Expressive Arts & Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baking-weighing ingredients. • Finding numbers of everyday life. • Sharing sweets. • Play shop at home. • Use a calendar-what day is it today? • What date? • Bing-you can cover all areas of Maths through this game. • Card games- snap, pairs and matching games. • Identify shapes in everyday life. • Computers- brain training/big brain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to paint/draw by providing them with different materials indoors and outdoors e.g. paper, pencils, chalk, paints, old sheets, wall paper, different sized brushes. • Play lots of different types of music to your child. • Dance to different styles of music. • Sing with your child. • Make dens outside and inside. • Encourage all ideas of creative thinking. • Provide materials for weaving- ribbon, wool, string. • Let child mix their own paints. • Make and play with play-dough. • Let them help you with painting. • Baking. • Use puppets to act out fairy tales such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears.' • Experiment with different ways of making things such as using card, paper, cardboard-which works best? • Let your child design what they are going to make. • Sing nursery rhymes.
Understanding the World	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect natural objects e.g. acorns, shells at the beach. • Bring in photographs from holidays or trips to share with the class. • Go on nature walks. • Bake and talk about the changes in ingredients. • Use the computer/iPad/electronic toys. • Use the telephone. • Use the television remote control to change channels. • Talk about different environments. • Talk about the weather and the changes in the seasons. • Discuss and find out about different animals, insects, dinosaurs, birds, people etc. • Involve your child when out shopping-encourage them to find items. • Encourage your child to ask questions about the world around them. • Ask them questions about the world around them. • Ask them questions about their experiences. • Talk about different cultures. • Talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others. • Talk about your experiences both past and present. 	
Literacy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise mark making- ask them what it is they have drawn or written and then model writing it for them. • Visit our local library. • Read/share picture books. Ask your child questions about the story, the pictures, what they think might happen. • Play "I spy" looking for things beginning with sounds. • Sing songs and nursery rhymes. • Discuss words that rhyme. Play rhyming soup. • Encourage your child to practise writing their name. • Encourage your child to write the sound they learned in school today. 	

We do not wish to send home heaps of worksheets in Foundation Stage. We would rather you focused on the ideas above and spending quality family time together.

Towards the end of Foundation Stage 2 the children will begin to receive more written homework as they make their transition into Year 1.

More Fun Ideas for Learning at Home

Pinterest is a fantastic way of finding amazing ideas for learning at home - you can focus on the areas your child struggles with.

Reading and Phonics

Of course, a super important area we want parents to focus on at home is **READING!** Read, read, and read again to your child and listen to your children read as much as you can. Model good reading to your child and make it a pleasurable and fun experience. Encourage a love of reading and reading for pleasure, rather than making reading 'a chore'. Purchasing a new book for your child as a reward or treat is also advisable rather than rewarding them with sweet treats.

In FS2 your child's Class Teacher will send you home a reading book each week at their reading level. They will also read 1:1 with your child each week. This will include fiction, non-fiction and poetry books.

When your child begins our Read, Write Inc. Phonics program during the first term of FS2, the Class Teacher will also send you home a sound mat and the sounds that we have been learning each day.

FS1 will focus on stories, nursery rhymes, poems and songs before moving onto the Read, Write Inc. Phonics program.

When ready Foundation Stage will begin to learn their set 1 RWI sounds and will then begin to practise segmenting and blending to read words and then sentences.



Physical Development and Handwriting

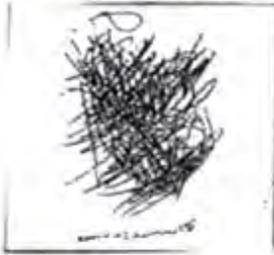
Children begin to form letters when they are ready. There are many stages of writing in EYFS. (See below)

To be able to write children need to have a good pencil grip and good control. We need to follow the physical guidelines to get children ready for writing.

Lots of fine and gross motor skills are needed to build up the strength in their fingers. In foundation stage we will provide lots of resources and complete lots of activities linked to physical development to help with both fine and gross motor.

The Stages of Emergent Writing

Drawing :
children draw/scribble pictures



Random scribbling :
children scribble and can say what their marks mean.



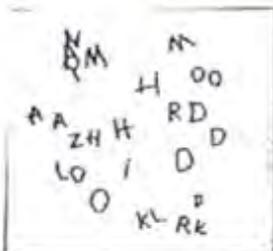
Controlled scribbling:
Children scribble in rows across the page left to right and top to bottom and give meaning to lines of their writing.



Letter like forms :
Children use unconventional letter forms and familiar symbols such as circles but still give meaning to their writing.



Random letters :
Children begin to use random letter shapes to convey meaning.



Patterned letters :
Children begin to use strings of unrelated letters, sometimes the letters from their name appear.



Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor should come before fine motor. Those big muscles help the little muscles!

What are gross motor skills?

Gross motor (physical) skills are those which require whole body movement and which involve the large (core stabilising) muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing, walking, running, and sitting upright. It also includes eye-hand coordination skills such as ball skills (throwing, catching, kicking).

Why are gross motor skills important?

Gross motor skills are important to enable children to perform everyday functions, such as walking, running, skipping, as well as playground skills (e.g. climbing) and sporting skills (e.g. catching, throwing and hitting a ball with a bat). These are crucial for everyday self-care skills like dressing (where you need to be able to stand on one leg to put your leg into a pant leg without falling over).

Gross motor abilities also have an influence on other everyday functions.

For example, a child's ability to maintain table top posture (upper body support) will affect their ability to participate in fine motor skills (e.g. writing, drawing and cutting) and sitting upright to attend to class instruction, which then impacts on their academic learning. Gross motor skills impact on your endurance to cope with a full day of school (sitting upright at a desk, moving between classrooms, carrying your heavy school bag).

How can you tell if my child has problems with gross motor skills?

If a child has difficulties with gross motor skills they might:

- Be late in reaching developmental milestones (i.e. sit, crawl, walk, run and hop).
- Move stiffly and lacks fluid body movement or alternatively looks awkward and appears clumsy.
- Avoid physical activity.
- Participate in physical activity for only short periods (have low endurance).
- Cannot maintain an upright posture when sitting on a mat or at a table top.
- Be unable to perform the same skills as their peers (e.g. catch, kick, hop and jump).
- Appear less skillful than their peers in sports.
- Be unable to follow multiple step instructions to complete a physical task (e.g. obstacle course).
- Be unable to plan and correctly sequence events or steps in a process (e.g. step forward before throwing).
- Fail to perform movements safely (e.g. climbing).
- Need to put in more effort than their peers to complete a task.
- Tire frequently with physical activity.
- Lose previously mastered skill if they do not keep practicing them.
- Be unable to 'generalise' or transfer a skill (use the same skill in a different setting/way) (e.g. can easily change between throwing a big/heavy ball to a light/small ball).

What other problems can occur when a child has gross motor difficulties?

If a child has gross motor difficulties, they might also have difficulties with:

- Drawing and pencil skills lacking in a skillful outcome.
- Writing and drawing for long periods of time.
- Activities of Daily Living (dressing independently, holding and using cutlery).
- Maintaining posture while sitting on the floor or at a table.
- Low energy levels.
- Seem tired or lethargic and take longer to respond to stimuli around them.
- Sensory processing (responding appropriately to the environment).
- Chewing and swallowing food.
- Dribbling inappropriately.
- Demonstrate poor articulation of sounds.
- Difficulties with manipulation of small toys and utensils.

Gross Motor Skills

What activities can help improve gross motor skills?

- Hop Scotch for hopping, or other games that encourage direct task/skill practice.
- Simon Says for body awareness and movement planning (praxis).
- Wheelbarrow walking races for upper body strength and postural or trunk control.
- Unstable surfaces: Walking/climbing over unstable surfaces (e.g. large pillows) as it requires a lot of effort and increases overall body strength.
- Catching and balancing: Standing with one foot on a ball while catching another ball (encourages balance while practicing catching and throwing).
- Large balls: Begin catching with a large ball/balloon and only after the skill is mastered, move to a smaller sized ball.
- Obstacle courses: to combine lots of gross motor skills together into one practice.
- Playground climbing and swinging.
- **Swimming.**

Why should I seek therapy if I notice difficulties with gross motor skills in my child?

Therapeutic intervention to help a child with gross motor difficulties is important to:

- Increase your child's confidence in gross motor activities (e.g. playing on the playground, running, jumping).
- Enhance their self-esteem (so they aren't ostracized or picked last for sports teams due to their physical ability skill challenges).
- Increase sporting ability and confidence to engage in sports. Participating in sport enables a child to enrich their lives with positive people and develop strong friendships.
- Help your child develop the strength and endurance to manage the physical needs of a full school day.
- Provide your child with a strong base of support so that they are better able to use their arms and hands for fine motor skills (such as manipulating small objects, such as pencils, scissors, keys, buttons and zips).

If left untreated what can difficulties with gross motor skills lead to?

When children have difficulties with gross motor skills, they might also have difficulties with:

- Managing a full school day due to poor strength and endurance.
- Participating in sporting activities.
- Performing age appropriate self-care skills independently.
- Poor self-esteem when they realise their skills do not match their peers.
- Bullying when others become more aware of a child's difficulties.
- Poor fine motor skills (e.g. writing, drawing and cutting) due to poor core stability, meaning they do not have a strong base to support the use of their arms and hands.

What type of therapy is recommended for gross motor skill difficulties?

If your child has difficulties with gross motor skills, it is recommended they consult an Occupational Therapist.

It may also be appropriate to consult a Physiotherapy for gross motor skills.

It is important to acknowledge however that in many (but not all) paediatric cases, there is a large overlap in the skills addressed by Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills are those that involve a refined use of the small muscles which control the hand, fingers and thumb. With the development of these skills, a child is able to complete important tasks such as writing, feeding oneself, buttoning and zipping.

What can you do?

- Play games with children like Operation and Jigsaw puzzles that require pinching.
- Hide beads or other objects in putty or play dough and have the child pick the “dough” apart using a pincer grasp.
- “Chopsticks for Dummies” make picking up and releasing objects fun while building strength for writing – they are also fun to eat with! Try having many fun bits and pieces children can gather (pom-poms, cotton balls, quarter sized rocks, bottle caps, chalk, and pieces of broken crayons).
- Have children use short thin writing implements. Golf pencils, broken pieces of chalk, and short, thin short paint brushes to paint with work best because those materials reinforce a pincer grasp.

Play Dough

The children will be supplied with endless amounts of play dough at school as this is a fantastic way to develop their gross, fine motor skills and creativity. They will even get the opportunity to make their own.

Recipe

You will need:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 2 cups of water
- 2 tbsp oil
- Food colouring of your choice

Be creative and make it scented by adding different spices or jazz it up with some glitter.

When children have developed gross and motor skills they will begin to learn to form letters and words. Below show the stages of emergent writing that you may recognise.

Many children who do not have strong small motor skills become more easily frustrated while doing tasks that require writing which can lead to poor self-esteem, anxiety and stress.

- Allow children to use markers such as Crayola Pip Squeaks; they are short and encourage a proper grasp.
- Invite children to help with meal preparations and/or serving. Have children cut vegetables using a plastic knife. The cutting process also encourages the use of bi-lateral skills (using two hands in unison while doing a task).
- Kneading dough and rolling/cutting out cookies are also a great strength building and sensory activity.
- Play dough is our best friend when it comes to fine and gross motor skills (See recipe below).

We will practise lots of dough disco and dough gym in FS1 and in the first term of FS2 to develop these skills.

We definitely encourage you to try this at home. Add in some maths skills by getting your child to help you weigh the ingredients and communicate what you are doing.

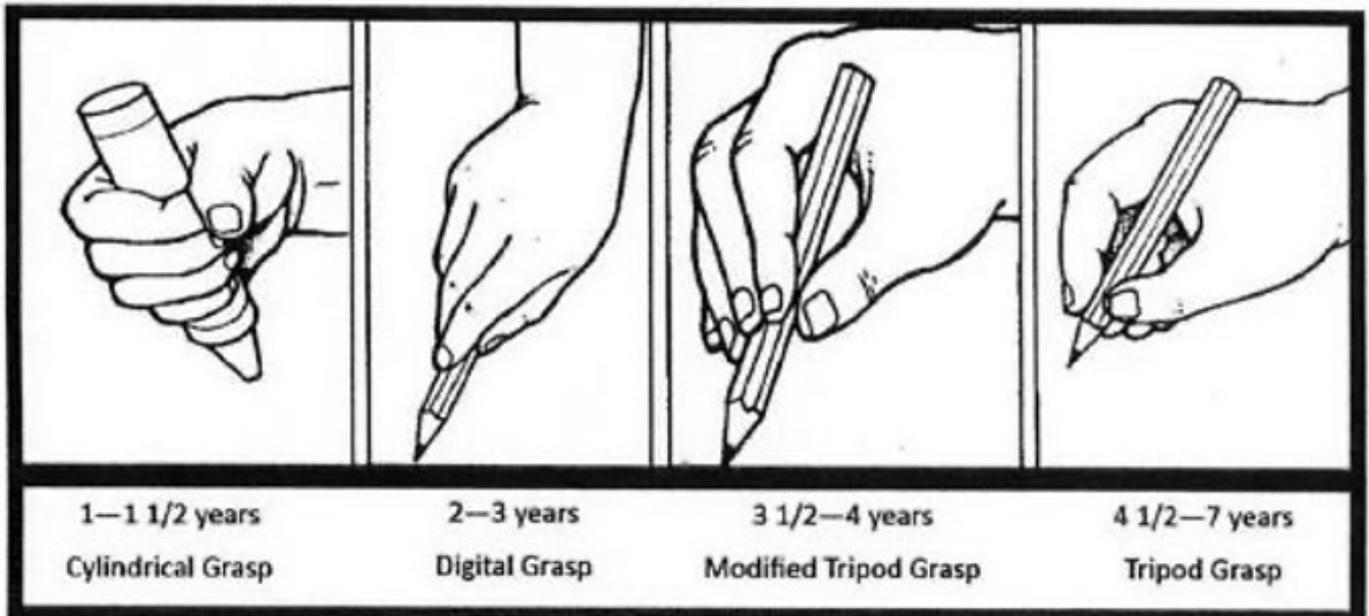


Fine Motor Skills

Pencil Grip

Your child will also go through various stages of pencil grip. See below for the various stages and where your child should get to. It is very important to address a poor pencil grip early, especially if the child is left handed.

If it is not corrected, it can affect speed and fluency and impact on academic achievement, as well as put undue stress on developing joints causing pain when writing later. The pencil is held between the thumb and index finger, with the pencil resting on the middle finger.



Fine Motor Skills

Letter Formation

Foundation Stage will practise printed letter shapes before moving on to cursive handwriting in the last term of FS2 or when ready. Cursive handwriting is shown to improve brain development in the areas of thinking, language and working memory.

As we begin learning to form letters we will use the rhymes from our phonics program Read Write Inc. (RWI)

Rhymes for letter formation - taken from Read Write Inc.

a 	b 	c 	d 	e 	f 
Around the apple and down the leaf.	Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	Curly around the caterpillar.	Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g 	h 	i 	j 	k 	l 
Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	Down the body and dot for the head.	Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	Down the long leg.
m 	n 	o 	p 	qu 	r 
Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	Down Nobby and over his net.	All around the orange.	Down the pirates plait and around his face.	Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.	Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
s 	t 	u 	v 	w 	x 
Slither down the snake.	Down the tower, across the tower.	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	Down a wing, up a wing.	Down, up, down, up.	Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y 	z 				
Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	Zig-zag-zig.				

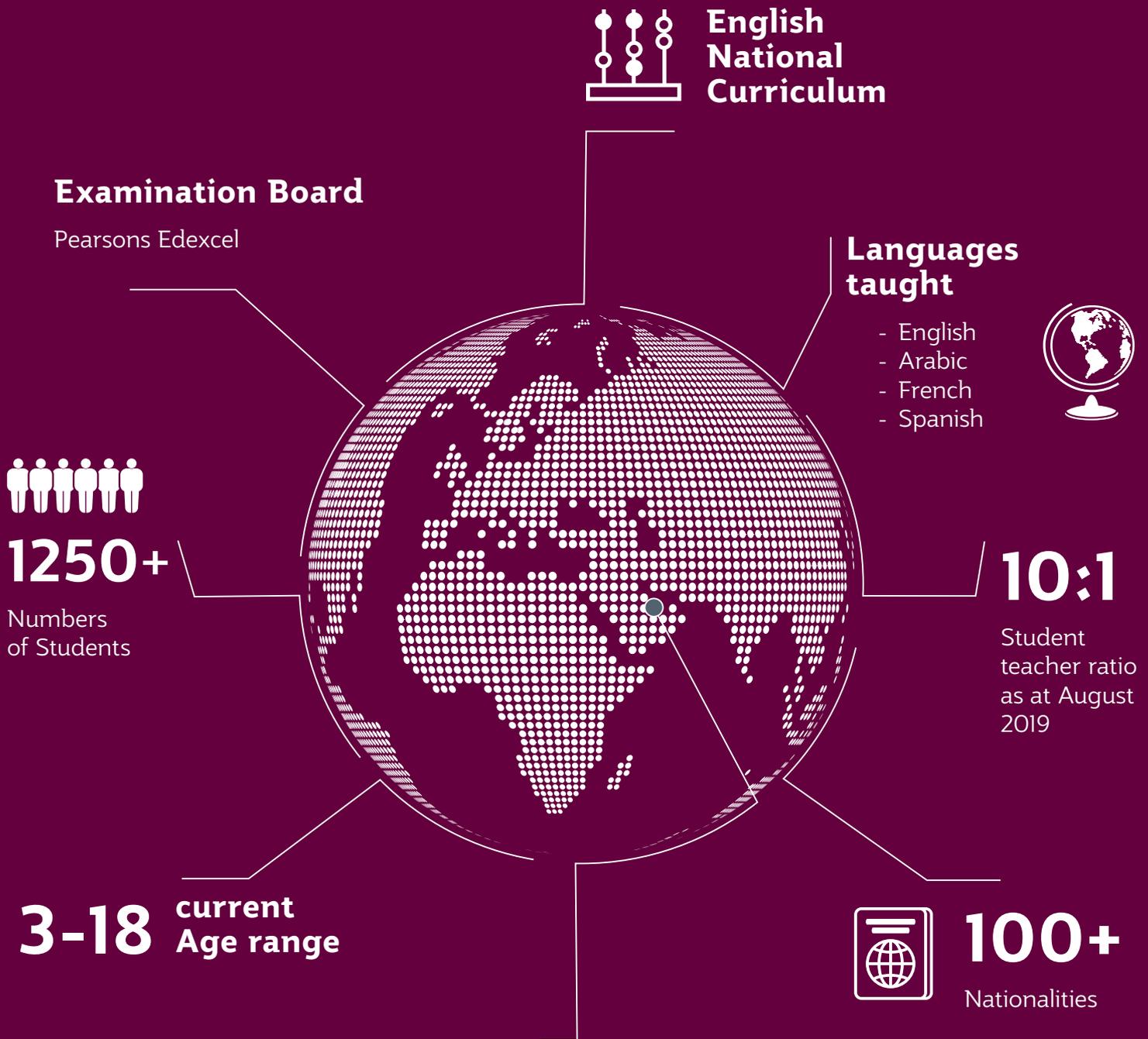




Useful Links

- <https://www.activelearnprimary.co.uk/login?c=0> (Your child's Class Teacher will give you the log in details for this programme)
- <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/> Reading Scheme with lots of lovely activities and games
- <https://www.mrthornenetwork.com/book> Mr. Thorne and Geraldine Giraffe help the children with their phonic sounds and blending words. The children LOVE Geraldine!
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZGOrkhPkeY> Dough Disco for fine motor
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSqGCY_L6CY Number blocks
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nKZIDPdVfA> Number Jacks
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fu5fzbxOG4U> Alpha blocks
- <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/> Phonics Play- great for interactive phonics games
- <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf>

Our school at a glance



Contact us to
arrange a visit

British education for
children aged 3-18 years

www.oryxschool.qa