



Oliver Thomas Nursery School and Children's Centre prospectus







# Hello...



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# Welcome...

## Headteacher

*"Welcome to our friendly and inclusive Nursery School situated in Mathews Avenue, East Ham. We first opened our doors back in 1978 and since that time have continued to specialise in nursery education, providing high quality provision for the children and families in our community.*

*We look forward to working in partnership with you and keeping you updated with your child's progress and achievements whilst attending Oliver Thomas."*

## Nicola Hayden





## We strive

Whether you are a returning parent or new to Oliver Thomas, this prospectus will answer many questions and provide a pictorial experience of what to expect when attending Oliver Thomas Nursery School and Children's Centre.

We have tried to cover all areas, but should you have additional concerns, your child's key person will be available to help you.



## We believe that

parents and families are a child's first and most important educators and that we need to value their knowledge and expertise.

all children are unique, with differing needs, interests and personalities.

all children have the right to play, inside and out, and learn in an emotionally and physically safe environment.

all children have the capacity to achieve within, and contribute to our nursery environment.

children learn best through play, talk and meaningful first hand experience.

education is a continuous process that starts at birth and involves the home, the community, the school and centre.

## We want

To support each child in maximising their achievements by providing a varied, stimulating and flexible curriculum.

Children to leave the nursery as confident, sociable, independent, enthusiastic and curious learners, who have the courage to take risks and make mistakes.

To find out about and build upon the knowledge, skills, experience and interests of each child.

Children to be aware of and sensitive, to the needs, feelings and beliefs of others, and to help one another.





## We're here to help...

Our Nursery School and Children's Centre supports the whole community.

Health and safety and promoting the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people and their families is central to our work at Oliver Thomas.

### Site Manager

*"I maintain a positive attitude towards Health and Safety, promoting the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people within the school."*

Nicolas Aimee



# About the Nursery School

## What time should we arrive?

Please don't arrive more than 5 minutes before the session starts. Staff will be busy setting up for the day. You can use either the Mathews Avenue or the Edwin Avenue gate. For the safety of the children, the Edwin Avenue gate will be locked at 9.00am and 1.00pm, after which time you must come to the front entrance in Mathews Avenue.

## Must we arrive on time and come every day?

Because many parents have to take older siblings to primary school, we operate a flexible opening time. We hope that most children can get to nursery within the first 15 minutes of the session, as it is important to get into the habit of being punctual and regular school attendees. However, if this is proving difficult for you, please speak to your child's key person. If you arrive after 9.00am/1.00pm you will have to enter via Mathews Avenue, as the back gate will be locked because children will be playing in the garden.

Please ensure your child makes the very best use of their nursery place and please phone us to let us know if your child is unwell. Research shows that good attendance and punctuality impacts on children's learning and progress.

Please do not keep your child off because of bad weather or to go shopping. If your child is ill they should be kept at home but most children can cope with attending if they have a minor cough or cold. As a parent you will know if they are really ill.

Please do not bring your child in if they have sickness or diarrhoea (they must remain at home for 48 hours after the last symptoms have passed).



## Nursery sessions

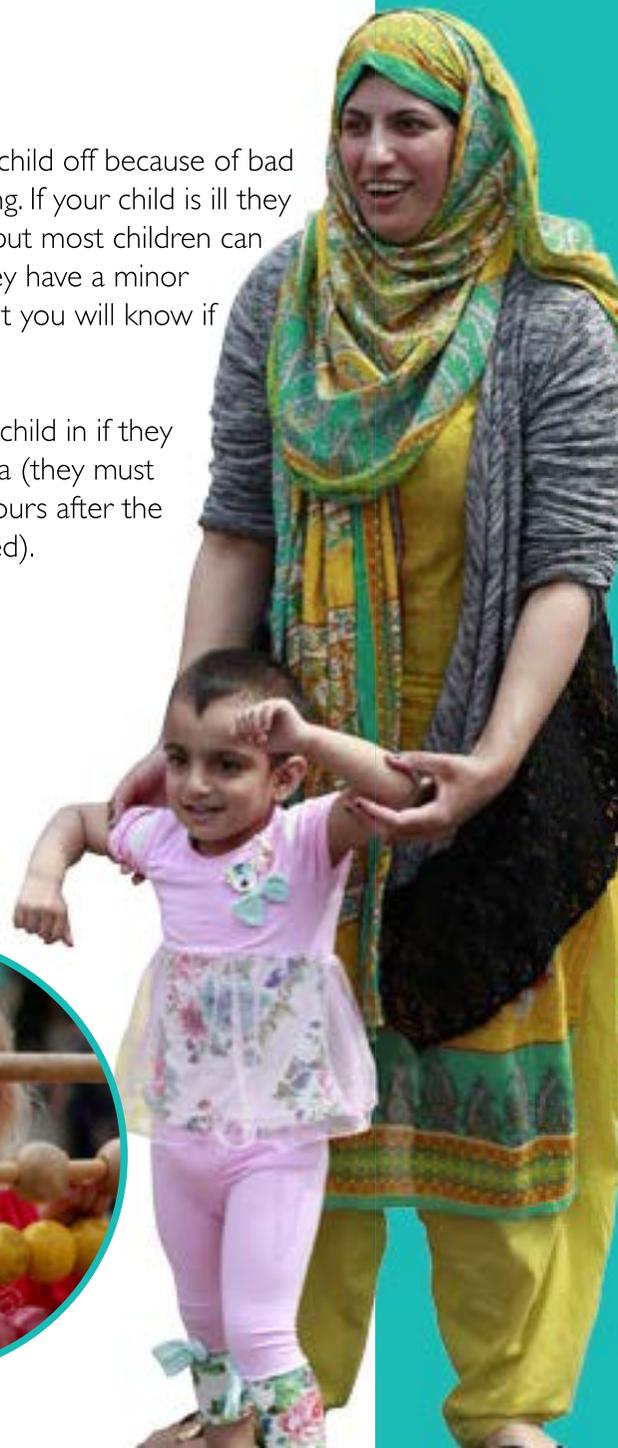
All children are entitled to 15 hours per week of free nursery education from the term after their 3rd birthday.

Many children are also entitled to 15 hours per week of free nursery education from the term after their 2nd birthday. To find out if you are eligible please contact the Learning and Achievement Team on 020 3373 0980 or email [twoyearold.childcare@newham.gov.uk](mailto:twoyearold.childcare@newham.gov.uk) with your name, your date of birth and your National Insurance number.

Most children will have a morning or afternoon place, Monday to Friday. Some children take their 15 hours over two and a half days. The individual times of these sessions will be explained to parents who chose this option.

Morning session 8:45 am - 11:45pm  
Gates open 8:40am - 9:00am and 11:40am - 12:00pm

Afternoon session 12:45pm - 3:45pm  
Gates open 12:40pm - 1:00pm and 3:40am - 4:00pm



# Ways that you can help

## Do I have to pay?

The 15 hour entitlement is free but we do ask you to contribute up to £1 each week for school fund. This money covers cooking and dough ingredients and resources bought locally.

## What should my child wear to school?

Nursery is a messy and active business! Please dress your child in clothes that are easily washable and cannot be spoilt. Clothes should be easy for your child to manage when going to the toilet. Tracksuit bottoms are ideal. Tight buttons, dungarees and belts are difficult for children.

Footwear needs to be safe for climbing and running. Wearing flip flops and open toed sandals can be very dangerous. Fastenings such as Velcro are much easier for children to manage than laces. If children wear wellington boots to school they should bring shoes to change into.

Whilst we support children in looking after their property, we cannot take responsibility if items are lost. We would advise you to put your child's name in clothes that are taken off such as coats and hats.



## How does the school celebrate birthdays?

Birthdays are very important for most children! We have a special pretend cake in school that we light candles on and sing happy birthday to the birthday girl or boy. We give a card. We ask you not to bring in anything yourself.

Not only do we want to promote healthy eating, we also need to be aware of allergies and foods that some children may not be able to have. We also feel it important that all children's birthdays are celebrated in the same way and that parents do not feel pressurised to supply party food!

## How is my child kept safe?

Children need to be kept safe both physically and emotionally and we aim to work in partnership with you to do this. You are asked to sign a number of permission slips prior to your child starting nursery covering things like emergency medical treatment. Information about allergies and illnesses are talked about during the admission interview.

## How is my child helped to feel emotionally safe?

One member of our team will be your child's key person. They will play an important part in settling in and will take a special interest in their progress.



Your child will be allocated a classroom and this is the room they come to and leave from at the beginning and end of each session. During the session children may choose to go to other rooms to join in with different activities and will play in the garden. We call this 'free flow'.

Our 2 year olds have their own base room and garden but as their security and confidence grows they are able to benefit from all the advantages of playing with, and alongside our 3 and 4 year olds.

At all times we make sure that there is the right number of adults available to look after children, according to legal requirements. All our staff have the relevant training and have undergone the necessary police and safety checks that all adults working with children have to undergo by law. We take the safety and wellbeing of each child very seriously.

## Home visits and settling in

We have procedures in place to support children when they start nursery to make it an enjoyable process. All children are offered a home visit. You will have received information about this when you were sent a letter with your home visit date.

When starting, your child's key person will explain the settling in process with you and give you some written information.

We carefully plan for children moving from our 2 year old to our 3 and 4 year old provision to ensure that each child is supported and ready to move on to the next stage of their education.

## What should I do if I am going to be late when collecting my child?

Please telephone the school so that we can explain this to your child. It is very upsetting and worrying for a child to see all their friends get collected and to be left till last. We will, of course, stay with your child until you arrive but please make every effort to be on time.

## What kinds of health and safety checks are in place?

The school has a health and safety policy that is reviewed on a regular basis and has a number of checks and systems in place. There are too many to detail here but please be aware of the following:

- Dogs are not allowed on the school premises.
- Garden gates are locked after a certain time so that children can play safely in the garden
- Fire drills are held termly
- The school is a NO SMOKING zone. Please extinguish your cigarettes before entering the school gates.
- Equipment used in school meets legal safety requirements and is regularly checked for wear and tear.
- Risk assessments are carried out for numerous events and activities





## Child Protection

Our school community has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We have a child protection policy and procedures in place and all staff and volunteers are responsible for making sure they are aware of these.

If we have any concerns we have a legal duty to report them to social services. This is not an accusation but a request for further clarification. We will always ensure that our concerns are discussed with parents and carers first, unless such a discussion would place a child at risk of significant harm.

We are also legally required to provide relevant information on children to social services as part of any investigation, and to share information at multi agency child protection case conferences, to which parents are usually invited.

In relation to child abuse, the welfare of the child and their safety and protection is the overriding consideration for schools at all times.



## What are the arrangements for first aid?

A number of staff holds relevant first aid qualifications. All accidents are treated and recorded. If a child has a minor accident, a sticker explaining what has happened is placed on their clothing. Parents are informed directly if their child has a more significant accident. We ask for you to tell us if your child has an accident at home.

## What is the policy on 'risk taking'?

Naturally we want children to be safe. However, in order for them to grow up to be able to live in the wider world, they need to be able to consider situations and take 'calculated risks.'

Whilst we make sure equipment is safe and that children will not come to significant harm, we need to encourage them to try things, to find out about their own capabilities and to learn by mistakes. As adults, we know how to run, but we learnt that by practicing it when young – and that included falling over a few times!

## Mobile phones

We respectfully ask that mobile phones are not used in the nursery. During special events we ask parents to sign a form outlining the possible dangers of posting images on social networking sites and requesting that photos taken should be for personal use only.

# How do we teach children?

We find out about children by talking with parents, watching them and joining in with their play. We plan activities to meet their interests and to help them learn new things. We provide equipment to support their play. Some of the time we encourage children to join in activities that adults lead, other times we join in with and extend play and activities that they have chosen themselves.

Different activities and equipment are available in each room and children are encouraged to move between rooms and the garden.

The curriculum we use is called the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) gives people who work with young children guidance on how we need to:

- Treat each child as an individual who has the right and ability to achieve.
- Make good relationships with the child and everybody who is important to them
- Make sure that the environment is safe and stimulating and that it provides activities suited to each child.
- Help children to learn through play, being physically active and thinking creatively.



When planning, we think about developing:

The Characteristics of Effective Learning  
Prime Areas of Learning  
The Specific Areas of Learning

## The Characteristics of Effective Learning

- **Playing and exploring** - supporting children in investigating and experiencing things and 'having a go.'
- **Active learning** - helping children to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and to enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - enabling children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between their ideas and develop strategies for doing things.



## The Prime Areas of Learning

Prime areas - These are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. They are the basis for all other learning and reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively:

- **Communication and language** - giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, be able to express themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** - providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, to develop their coordination, control and movement and to understand the importance of physical activity and healthy food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - helping children to feel good about themselves, to form positive and respectful relationships, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

## The Specific Areas of Learning

4 Specific areas: - through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- **Literacy** - encouraging children to link sounds and letters and engage in the early stages of reading and writing.
- **Mathematics** - providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, engaging in early calculating and exploring the concepts of shapes, space and measures.
- **Understanding the world** - helping children to make sense of the world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** - enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music, movement, dance, role play, design and technology.

## How does my child learn?

Children learn through play. The curriculum used in all schools and settings for children aged 0-5 is called The Early Years Foundation Stage. It says:

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. By playing, children are learning about the world around them and developing a passion for learning.

## *How can I find out about my child's progress at nursery?*

You will be able to chat to your child's key worker informally at the beginning or ends of sessions. If questions or concerns are more complex, we ask you to make an appointment as staff need to be with the children for the main part of the day. You will be invited to termly meetings to discuss your child's learning and progress.

Each child has a 'special book' into which staff and children put significant pieces of work, photographs or records of 'special' moments or things a child has said. As this is a chronological record, it is possible to see your child's progress as you read it. The special book belongs to your child and they will take it with them when they leave Oliver Thomas. You can look at this at any time and we actively encourage your contribution to this book to celebrate things that your child has done or achieved at home.

Key workers keep an electronic record of your child's progress which helps us to identify next learning steps. When your child leaves, a short report is written outlining their learning and development whilst at Oliver Thomas. You will receive a copy of this report and a copy will be sent to their primary school.



## *How can I help my child to learn at home?*

Listening to, talking with and playing with your child are the most important ways in which you can help your child. Ask them about what they did at school, play simple table top games with them, enjoy sharing a book together turn off the television and computer!

There is a school library where you can choose a book with your child each week as long as you have returned the previous week's selection.

There is no charge unless a book is lost or damaged, when the replacement value is requested.

## *Can I come and help in the nursery?*

Yes, you are welcome to come and share your skills with us once your child has settled and can cope with you being in the nursery.

There are many ways you can help including cooking, gardening, telling stories in community languages and contributing your thoughts on the things we do in nursery and the way we do them.



# How do we meet the needs of all children?

Each child is treated as an individual – and we believe that all children have the right to play and learn together. We are an inclusive school. All children and their families are welcomed here. We aim to adapt our environment and curriculum to meet the needs of each child and take physical and learning disabilities into account.

Children who have special educational needs are supported in their class by their key person and other team members. They learn to make relationships with a variety of people and the wider staff team learn how best to meet their needs. The school special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) talks with families, key people and appropriate outside specialists such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists so that everybody can share their knowledge and expertise in relation to the child.

Some children may have a Support Plan, which sets targets for the child to work towards to help progress. This is drawn up in consultation with parents.

If staff have any concerns about your child's development they will speak to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, if you have any concerns please do not hesitate to discuss them with your child's key person or the SENCO.



Special Needs Coordinator  
and Classteacher

*"Play develops creativity, intellectual competence, emotional strength and stability, and feelings of joy and pleasure, the habit of being happy"*  
Piers and Landau, 1980

*Every child has the ability to play and to learn. The rules are the same for a typically developing child and the child with special educational needs. The difference is where they are on their play journey. Every child will progress at his/her own pace and every child is unique. Quality learning experiences created through interests and everyday natural routines give children firm foundations for progress."*

Ramzana Hameed





## About the Children's Centre

Oliver Thomas Children's Centre offers services for children under five years old and their families can receive integrated services and information. We opened as a children's centre in Oct 2008.

### Children's Centre Co-ordinator

*"Research has shown that children's early experiences have a long lasting impact on their learning and development and that the quality of the support you give your child is more important for intellectual and social development than your occupation, education or income."*

*At Oliver Thomas we provide sessions, workshops and services that help to support and strengthen you in your role as parent."*

Naomi Ferron



## The Children's Centre services

- Good quality early learning provision
- Good quality teacher input to lead the development of learning within the centre
- Child and Family health services, including Nutrition, Midwifery, Speech and Language, Family therapy and Dental Health services
- Parental outreach in local venues and schools
- Family support services which include parenting classes and workshops
- A base for support to local child minders
- Support for children and parents with special needs
- Effective links to support parents and carers who wish to consider training or employment.
- Appropriate support and outreach services to parents and carers, and children who have been identified as 'In need'
- Information and advice to parents and carers on a range of subjects, including: local childcare, safety around the home, Child Health, Early Learning.
- Sessions, activities and workshops for children and carers at the centre which include baby groups, parent & toddler groups, music and movement classes, English classes, special needs groups, early learning workshops, volunteer training, parenting classes, fathers only groups and many others depending on the changing needs and requirements of our families



## We believe...

At Oliver Thomas Children's Centre that we do our best to provide sessions and activities that are supportive, fun, enjoyable and stimulating, all in an environment that promotes learning and achieving.

Please come into the centre to see what we offer and to pick up our information leaflet on activities we run during school term and holidays.

For any questions or queries please pop into the centre and talk to any member of staff. We are happy to help and support you in any way.





## What should I do if I am not happy with the school or centre?

In the first instance, speak to your child's key person, class teacher, or session leader. If you are still not happy then please arrange to meet with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or the Children's Centre Co-ordinator. If this is not sufficient, you will be given a copy of our more detailed leaflet 'Arrangements for resolving parent's complaints'.

### Deputy Headteacher

*"We need to work in close partnership with you, as you are your child's first and most important teacher. This shared approach will enable your child to make the most of the educational opportunities provided here at Oliver Thomas"*

Stella Wybron



# See

# you soon...

## *How can I find out more?*

Your child's key person and other members of staff are available to informally chat with you at the beginning and end of sessions. If you would like to have a longer discussion please book an appointment so that someone can speak to you away from the classroom so that they can give you dedicated attention.

Key policies are available from the school office and on our website. You are free to look at them at any time and to ask for personal copies if you want to take them home.

Numerous courses are run in the children's centre that offer deeper insight into children's learning and development.





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