

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 learning opportunities for the children and families in our community.

We look forward to working in partnership with you, supporting your child with their learning and development. Our wonderful garden and team of early years experts will provide excellent learning and play experiences for your child during their time at Oliver Thomas Nursery School"

*"Play is the highest level of child development. It is the spontaneous expression of thought and feeling – It promotes enjoyment, satisfaction, serenity and constitutes the source of all that can benefit the child... play is serious and deeply significant." – Fredrich Froebel*

Lorna Pryne







## 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 questions, your child's key person will be available to help you.



## We believe

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...

### Chair of Governors

On behalf of the governing body, I would like to welcome you and your child to Oliver Thomas. We are honoured to be working closely with the school and its families.

We believe that young children deserve the best possible start in life and know that if we work in partnership with parents and families that we can make a big difference. We recognise that you are your child's first educators and together we can support your child's ongoing health, wellbeing and future learning.

*"Our job is too difficult and too beautiful to do alone." Amelia Gambetti, Reggio Emilia*

Julie-Ann Nicholls



# About the Nursery School

## What time should we arrive?

Only the front gate on Mathews Avenue will be open from 8.45am and 12.45pm for the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. It will be open again from 9.30am for those children staying all day.

## 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.

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. The individual times of these sessions will be explained to parents who chose this option.

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

Afternoon session 12:45pm - 3:45pm  
Gates open 12:40pm - 12:45pm

30 Hours – children staying all day:  
9.30am – 3.45pm





# Ways that you can help

## Do I have to pay?

The 15 hour entitlement is free. If you are working, you may be entitled to 30 hours free – to check go on to [www.newham.gov.uk/30freehours](http://www.newham.gov.uk/30freehours)

## 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 while you are at nursery settling in your child.

## 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.

## 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 place and you will be invited to come and support your child to settle in. You will stay with your child in the nursery garden supporting them in getting to know the adults and learning about how to play and use the garden. This will be a time for you to get to know the team and to share important information about your child.

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. 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. 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 first aid arrangements?

A number of staff holds relevant first aid qualifications. All accidents are recorded in the accident book. On collection of your child you will be asked to sign the accident book. We ask you to do this to acknowledge that you have been made aware of the accident and the treatment your child received at nursery. We will always telephone you if your child has had a more significant accident or an head injury. Please do tell us if your child has had 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 at all in the nursery or in the presence of the children on the Oliver Thomas nursery and children's centre site. This is to keep our children safe and is a statutory safeguarding requirement. Staff also will not use their mobile phone whilst working with the children.

# 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 experiences 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 4 Specific Areas of Learning

- **Literacy** - children are encouraged to develop a love of books. They are read a broad range of children's literature and begin to learn new vocabulary linked to the stories and rhymes they have been read. Children begin to link sounds to letters and are beginning their early reading and writing learning journey.
- **Mathematics** - Children are encouraged to use numbers in their play and to become familiar with numbers to ten and beyond. They begin to use mathematical concepts to solve problems and seek to find patterns and explore concepts of shape, space and measure.
- **Understanding the world** - children begin to be aware of their community and their place in it and are encouraged to observe and find out about people, places and the natural world around them. They continue to develop language and vocabulary.
- **Expressive arts and design** - children are encouraged to explore and experiment with a wide range of materials and media to express themselves. They are given opportunities to experience music in a wide range of contexts including playing instruments and singing songs and rhymes. They are encouraged to play and pretend to support their imagination and creativity.

## How does my child learn?

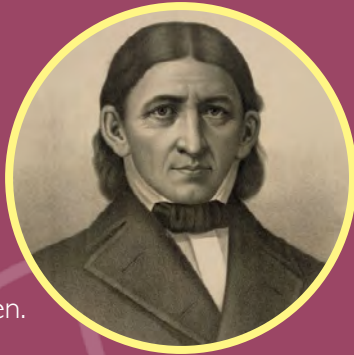
Children learn through play. The curriculum used in all schools and settings for children aged 0-5 is called The Early Years Foundation Stage. It says:

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

Here at Oliver Thomas, we provoke children's interests responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

# Fredrich Froebel, Early Years Teacher

1782 –1852



Friedrich Froebel invented the kindergarten. He believed that “play is the highest expression of human development in childhood.” According to Froebel, in play children construct their understanding of the world through direct experience with it. His ideas about learning through nature and the importance of play have spread throughout the world.

Much of our practice here at Oliver Thomas is based upon the same principles Froebel had all those years ago. The team here are learning the history of early education and understanding how children learn through being outside in nature and through independent play.

We have our wonderful new garden with a hill and the water tap. Children watch the water trickle down the spiral of pebbles. Children can walk down the wooden steps or slide down the silver slide into the sand pit below.





## *Children learn through being outside in nature and through independent play.*

This is a nature adventure for nursery children to experience. They are filled with awe and wonder and excitement, the best mindset for deep learning to take place.



# 20 Magical Things

We have created a list of twenty things that we believe are important for all children to have experienced before they are 5.

To ensure that all children are having a well-rounded, joyful childhood. Here are just a few of those valuable experiences that we will be able to offer your child during their time with us.

## Remembering your time with us

When you leave us you will be presented with a 20 things poster and achievement certificate of your child's time at Oliver Thomas.

Here are 5 of the 20 magical things:

- Hear the birds
- Jump in a puddle
- Throw a sycamore seed
- Blow a dandelion clock
- Hold a snail

[www.oliverthomas.org.uk](http://www.oliverthomas.org.uk)



# Home Learning

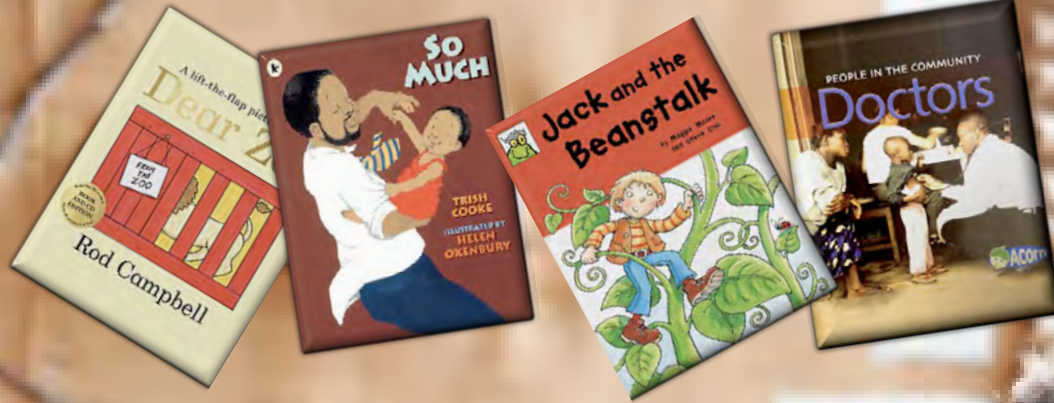
Our Literacy Book Packs are available for reading at home. They have been carefully selected by our team and features many fiction and non fiction books. The work plans associated with the books are available on our website.

We also created a selection of favourite songs and rhymes and other fun activities for you to do with your child at home, please visit our website.

Here are 5 home learning activities:

- Read the story 'So Much'
- Read all about 'Doctors'
- Sing along to 'Old McDonald had a farm'
- Watch 'How to make Gloop'
- Get active to 'Warm up movements'

[www.oliverthomas.org.uk](http://www.oliverthomas.org.uk)



Head shoulders knees and toes



A sailor went to sea



Old McDonald had a farm



1, 2 buckle my shoe





# 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.

Your child's keyperson will keep a record of your child's progress. You will be part of the discussion around your child's learning journey during the parent conferences. You will decide together what your child needs next to move forward in their learning and development. At the end of your child's time at nursery school, you will receive a school report which will be given to both you and the primary school you have chosen.

## 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. Or try visiting our website and looking at some of the home learning experiences: [www.oliverthomas.org.uk](http://www.oliverthomas.org.uk)

You might choose a book to listen to or look at one of the 20 magical things.

## 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's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCO) 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 SENDCO.



Assistant Headteacher SENDCO

*"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."*

Johanna Edwards





## 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 Manager

*"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-Barnett



## 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.







## *A place to be Happy*

We strive to ensure each child and every family are welcomed, heard, accepted and truly valued.

A place where we practice tolerance and respect creating a safe, secure and happy environment.

## *A place to be Challenged*

We believe in enabling each child to have the courage to rise to a challenge.

A place where we support effective communication and independent learning.

## *A place to be Unique*

We aspire to develop each child's sense of well-being and self-worth.

A place where we encourage the confident exploration of special interests and social connections.





Oliver Thomas Nursery School and Children's Centre  
Mathews Avenue  
East Ham  
London  
E6 6BU

Tel: 020 8552 1177  
Fax: 020 8552 1832  
E-mail: [info@oliverthomas.newham.sch.uk](mailto:info@oliverthomas.newham.sch.uk)  
[www.oliverthomas.newham.sch.uk](http://www.oliverthomas.newham.sch.uk)

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