



Community First Academy Trust

Early Years Policy

Community First Academy Trust
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ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY BOARD

CHAIR OF BOARD: Mr M Farrell

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Early Years Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Early Years refer to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Children enter our Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday). Many of our children begin their early year's education at 2 or 3 years of age in our Nursery.
- 1.2 The Early Years is important in its own right, and also in laying the foundations for future learning and preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Reception year.
- 1.3 The majority of our children in our Reception class make the seamless transition from our fully integrated nursery setting. However, a small minority attend other education settings that exist in our community.
- 1.4 The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:
 - It builds on what our children already know and can do;
 - It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
 - It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
 - It provides a rich and stimulating environment, indoors and outdoors.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The Early Years curriculum underpins all future learning by promoting and developing these 7 areas:
 - Personal, social and emotional well-being;
 - Language and communication;
 - Reading and writing;
 - Mathematics;
 - Knowledge of the world;
 - Physical development;
 - Expressive arts and design.
- 2.2 The more general features of good practice in our setting that relate to Early Years are:
 - The partnership between the child's individual key person and parents/carers. This helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
 - The understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
 - The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop children's play, talk or other means of communication;
 - The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception;
 - The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
 - The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning developing their vocabulary, and to develop high levels of independence, self-management and respect;
 - The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors;

- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers;
- The good relationships between our setting, Starwell Centre, and other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our setting;
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- The regular identification of training and development needs for all adults working in Early Years.

3. Teaching

- 3.1 The features of effective teaching and learning in our setting are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in Early Years just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.
- 3.2 We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day.
- 3.3 Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, explain, demonstrate encourage and reshape what the child is doing through sensitive questioning and conversation.
- 3.4 We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to develop specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and can apply.
- 3.5 Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the 2 Year Old Room, Nursery and Reception classes. In Nursery and Reception we set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught through differentiated inputs. In these slots we focus on our maths, literacy, and phonics. These sessions help to develop good attitude towards learning and encourage children to: learning as part a group, listen to the teacher, take turns and enable teachers to support and challenge children to achieve their next steps. We aspire to develop confident readers, writers and mathematicians who have a love of learning.
- 3.6 Throughout the Reception year the children will experience an increasing number of adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.
- 3.7 Teaching in Early Years is consistently of a very high quality, inspirational and worthy of dissemination to others. Practitioners use their expert knowledge of the areas of learning and deep understanding of how children learn to provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences that enthuse, excite, engage and motivate children to learn.
- 3.8 Provision across all areas of learning is planned meticulously and based on regular and precise assessments of children's interests and achievement so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities.

4 Play in the Early Years

- 4.1 Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations. Through continuous provision children are given support to consolidate and extend learning through child initiated play and also through planned teacher led focussed activities.

5 Characteristics of Effective Learning

- 5.1 The Early Years curriculum also includes the characteristics of effective learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers and practitioners plan activities within their classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. At Platt Bridge Community School we understand that all children learn differently through play. To ensure that all practitioners are aware of this we keep the characteristics of learning at the core of our planning, teaching and assessment.
- 5.2 The three characteristics are;
- Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
 - Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
 - Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

6 Inclusion in Early Years

- 6.1 We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning (see our policy on Inclusion).
- 6.2 In Early Years, we set realistic and challenging expectation based on the needs of our children, so that the majority of children make good progress based on their starting points on entry to the setting. Many children achieve a good level of development by the end of the key stage. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, those who are more able, or with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- 6.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:
- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
 - Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
 - Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them learn effectively;
 - Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
 - Employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
 - Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
 - Monitoring children's progress through observations, to support early identification and interventions that may require liaisons with other agencies.

7 The Early Years Curriculum

- 7.1 Our Early Years curriculum provides no limits or barriers to the children's achievements and reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. The learning experiences we provide enables children to develop competency and skills all areas of learning and is designed to help children remember long term what they have been taught, supporting them to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts.
- 7.2 The Early Learning Goals form part of the statutory framework for Early Years. An emphasis is placed on all prime areas and specific areas of literacy and maths due to identified needs on entry. In Nursery and Reception classes phonics is taught through Read Write Inc.

- 7.3 The Early Learning Goals and 'development matters' provide the basis for planning throughout Early Years. Our evaluations inform our medium-term planning and identify children's interests and development stage. It is completed termly, and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. Teachers plan for identified gaps in each individual child's learning.
- 7.4 The school makes full use of the outdoor environment. Children wear suitable clothing and access it at all times. High quality continuous provision is offered alongside planned enhancements and focus activities.

8 Assessment

- 8.1 We use in-house profile to record and summarise pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals across all seven areas of learning. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in Early Years takes the form of observation, and this involves both the practitioners, parents and other adults, as appropriate.
- 8.2 We use Tapestry (online journals) to gather observations on the go. Parents can access these observations immediately from their own app and can comment and submit their own observations. Learning Journeys contain photographs and descriptions of the children's learning are also completed and sent home termly.
- 8.3 Practitioners use on entry information to understand each child's prior knowledge and stage of development. The progress of the cohort is regularly monitored. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the information gathered at our parental consultation meetings.
- 8.4 Profiles are completed regularly and assessment data is submitted to the LA termly. In Nursery we complete transition records for the children transferring to other schools. At the end of the Reception year results are submitted to the LA in line with statutory requirement. Detailed data analysis and comparison with local and national data informs our development plan for the following year.
- 8.5 Parents and carers receive an annual report that provides information on their child's attainment and progress and the characteristics of effective learning they display
- 8.6 Transition from Early Years to Key Stage 1 is planned and prepared to ensure children are ready to access their next stage in education. In the summer term children will take part in transition weeks where they spend time in their new year groups, prior to this staff will discuss children's individual needs and next steps.
- 8.7 Between the ages two and three all our children undergo the statutory 2 Year Old Progress Check. This is an assessment where the practitioners review children's progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners will develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and involve parents and/or carers and other professionals (SENCO or health professionals).

9. The Role of Parents and Carers

- 9.1 We believe that all parents and carers have a crucial role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating children. We do this through:
- Home visits;
 - Talking to parents and carers about their child and their next steps;
 - Completion of on entry documents to allow us to gather as much information as we can about their child;

- Sharing Tapestry observations
- Planned Inspire sessions;
- Inviting parents and carers to an induction meeting before their child starts;
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- Having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- We operate an open door policy;
- Offering a range of activities, workshops and events throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;

9.2 There is a formal meeting for parents and carers twice a year, at which the parents/carers discuss the child's progress with the Key Person. All nursery parents are invited to an initial meeting 4 weeks following their child's start date. This enables the key person to discuss how the children have settled, parents are able to ask further questions and the ASQ assessment is discussed for identified children.

10. Resources

10.1 We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage independent access to resources and carefully select resources that promote children's focus, curiosity, concentration and enjoyment.

11. Early Years Welfare Requirements

11.1 All early years providers must meet the Early Years welfare requirements. All policies relating to these welfare requirements are located on the school website or as a footnote in the relevant school policy. These policies are reviewed and updated regularly. The policies comply with all legal requirements and have regard for all statutory guidance.

12. Monitoring and Review

12.1 This policy is monitored by the Local Governing Body, and will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.

Signed:

Date: