



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### 1 Introduction

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'*

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – DFE, March 2014.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the school year in which they turn five.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. The Learning Partnership Trust greatly values the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

However, we also believe that early childhood is vital in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

### 2 Aims of the EYFS

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage One and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and working through challenges; developing the confidence and mindset to work towards personal goals.

### 3 The Curriculum

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected, these seven areas are themselves split into either two or three sections, making a total of 17 areas. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These support the children’s learning in all other areas and are known as the prime areas.

The Prime areas of learning are:

- **Communication and language** –Listening and attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical development** – Moving and handling and Health and self-care
- **Personal, social and emotional development** –Self-confidence and self-awareness, Managing feeling and behaviour and Making relationships

The following are known as the Specific areas of learning, the prime areas are strengthened and applied to greater and deeper learning within these:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Shape, space and measures
- **Understanding of the world** – People and communities, The world and Technology
- **Expressive arts and design** – Exploring and using media and materials and Being imaginative

The EYFS curriculum also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning; these are developed and encouraged through the learning opportunities provided within the classroom. They highlight the importance of key skills in the development of the child as a learner - attitude to learning, skills when playing and exploring and their ability to think critically and question things around them.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and are willing to ‘have a go’.
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically**–children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

### 4 Learning environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely across all seven learning areas of the curriculum. There are specific areas in the classroom where children can be active, quiet, creative etc. The practitioners set up resources to engage and stimulate the children's interests, as well as to support the children to apply and extend their learning and ideas. The children can also access many resources for themselves; this allows them to explore their own ideas, interests and creativity.

The EYFS has its own outdoor classroom area, being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses, and be physically exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

The children also have access to other learning environments within the school, either as a class or in an adult led group, for example the library, computers, the large school playground and its climbing apparatus; and the hall for physical development (PE lessons).

## **5 Visits and visitors**

The learning experiences and opportunities that the children are offered also extends to visits. These are carefully planned to enhance the learning going on in the classroom. Visits may be something local such as a walk to the local shops to explore the use of money or something further afield such as a visit to a theatre or farm.

Visitors also enhance the children's learning. There are many different people that may come into school to work with the children, for example a sports coach, storyteller or a policeman. We often ask parents if they are able to come into school to talk about their profession, interests or cultural celebrations and heritage.

## **6 Role of parents as partners**

We recognise that parents and carers are the children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education.

We inform parents of the topics the children will be focussing on and highlight ways in which this learning can be supported at home, for example looking for related books in the local library or practising key skills. There will also be opportunities for parents to come into school to share in activities with their child; as well as attend informal meetings about ways to help in key areas such as phonics or maths.

We encourage parents to promote a wide range of activities and interests with their children, during weekends and after school. This could be a walk in the park to observe and talk about seasonal changes, a trip to the shops to spend some coins or joining a new club. Experiences such as these will enhance children's learning as the more they do and experience, the more they have to share and discuss at school. The more experiences they can bring to reading will help the words to make sense and provide the children with more to write about as they begin to learn to do this for themselves. Conversely, if a child has few experiences they would be unlikely to have the foundation language skills, vocabulary, knowledge or skills to contribute to share, discuss and build upon.

The EYFS children are given home learning tasks which may be a picture to draw and colour, a book to share, or words, sounds and number based skills to learn. Children at this age and stage of development learn best when revisiting knowledge and skills on a frequent basis. Therefore, it is vital that the parents and carers engage with the child's learning as frequently as possible. This also helps to form good routines, attitudes and organisation towards home learning which will help the children as they grow older.

We operate an open door policy for parents and carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if the EYFS teacher has concerns about any aspect of a child's development they will approach parents and carers to discuss them.

## **7 Attendance**

Good and punctual attendance is highly valued. It provides greater opportunities to learn, to enjoy being part of a class, to develop confidence and to form and nurture strong social and emotional bonds with their friends and teachers.

## **8 Assessment and planning**

When children start school they already have a wealth of experiences, learning and interests from home and their preschool settings. Therefore, wherever possible we liaise with the child's parents, carers and preschool settings to seek information about the child, their needs and achievements.

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of all children. It helps to monitor progress, highlight achievements and the required next steps in learning. Assessment in EYFS takes the form of both formal and spontaneous observations. This may include photographs, the children's own chosen additions to their Learning Journals and planned activities. Parents also contribute to this process through parent-teacher conversations or by recording their child's significant moments on 'Wow slips' or parent feedback questionnaires.

Practitioners use assessments as the basis for planning. The adults are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements and interests. Observations, notes and interactions with children help to inform assessments, guide planning and inform what the next step in the learning journey should be. Planning is delivered using topics as a vehicle for the next steps in learning. Topics are often inspired by the children and their interests; with phonics, maths and literacy directed teaching. Importantly the topics and activities are as engaging as possible to ignite the children's imaginations. We recognise that children learn best when their learning is relevant, memorable and allows them to both apply and challenge their knowledge and ideas.

As well as play-based child initiated learning, 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 learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through their play that we see how much of this learning the children have understood and taken on.

At the end of EYFS the children are assessed by the class teacher, taking into account the learning they have shown across the whole school year. The end of year assessments are made against the 17 Early Learning Goals which measure a child's attainment for each area as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is communicated to parents and carers in the child's end of year report. Each child's report also contains a commentary on how they demonstrate the three Characteristics of Effective Learning (see page 2).

## **9 Transitions**

Starting school can seem like a very big step to both children and their families. We aim to develop caring, respectful, relationships with the children and their families. To make the transition into school as smooth as possible, and so that all parties are informed we will:

- Arrange, where possible, visits by the school staff to all children in their home setting and/or preschool provision
- Provide families with a handbook of information about starting school
- Outline the school's expectations and commitments in the welcome booklet
- Invite children the opportunity to spend some time in the EYFS class prior to starting school
- Provide an induction meeting for families to see the EYFS classroom and tour the rest of the school before meeting with school staff to discuss routines, expectations, and answer any questions parents or carers may have. During this visit we will also discuss how home and school can work together effectively to help each child reach their potential
- Hold a parent consultation with each family early in the academic year to share how their child is settling into the school environment.

At the end of the EYFS the children move into Key Stage 1. By the summer term in EYFS the children will experience many more adult-directed tasks as they prepare for their transition into Year 1. Throughout the EYFS year each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; the teaching and support staff in Year 1 are likely to already be familiar to them. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their next class during the summer term. Wherever possible the Year 1 members of staff spend some time in the EYFS classroom in the summer term to get to know the children and help support the transition process.

Profile data, compiled at the end of EYFS is discussed between Year 1 and EYFS colleagues as part of a professional dialogue around the children prior to them starting Key Stage 1. This discussion and the profile data is used by the Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum combining it with the age related requirements of the National Curriculum for Year 1. Therefore, the children's learning in Year 1 picks up where they finished in EYFS, ensuring all the children's needs are catered for, regardless of ability, and enabling a seamless transition into the next Key Stage.

## **10 Safeguarding and welfare**

*'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'*

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – DFE, March 2014.

All settings caring for EYFS children are legally required to comply with safeguarding and welfare requirements to keep children safe and promote their welfare, as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

We are committed to ensuring all staff have a high awareness of safeguarding issues and are appropriately and regularly trained on the safeguarding procedures and systems adopted in school. The school has a Child Protection Policy in place that provides additional detail and should be referred to for the full procedure and requirements.

It is important that children are supported to take an increasing responsibility for their safety and actions. Children should be provided the opportunity to manage risks themselves from an early age. Unless they see and learn this for themselves they will always be in need of adult support and could be at risk as soon as an adult was not watching over them. Understanding and learning to manage risks at an early age is something that children can take through life and will help to keep them safer.

In terms of health and welfare, there may be times when intimate care will need to be provided. In most cases such care will involve procedures to do with personal hygiene and the cleaning of associated equipment as part of the staff member's duty of care. A separate policy, Intimate Care, should be referred to for the additional details of the procedure in this regard.

An essential aspect of collecting evidence of achievement in Early Years is taking photographs and digital images. They provide a visual record and context of learning. Images are stored appropriately on school equipment only and in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones. A separate policy (Staff Code of Conduct) and staff handbook cover this aspect. In addition, the expectations of the school in the use of photographs at events, e.g. Christmas concert, website use, is included in the admission registration booklet, as well as being communicated verbally to all parents at events to which they are invited.

**Policy date: July 2017**

**Approved by the Board of Directors: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Review date: Summer term 2018**

**Signed: Diane Hancock, Chair of Directors**

*Linked policies and documents (TLPT):*

***Intimate Care policy***

***Safeguarding/ Child Protection policy***

***Staff Code of Conduct***

***Photographic expectations- see admission registration booklet***

Copies of the above are available upon request.