

ACORN MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Mrs Ethelston's Primary Academy School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safeguarding Policy ● SEND Policy ● Equality Policy 		
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V2	30/09/23	Ursula Powell	Updates – Statutory Framework for EYFS 2023

“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 2023)

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to five years of age. At Mrs Ethelston’s C E Primary Academy this policy refers to children between the ages of 4 and 5 years.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust we aim to:

- deliver the standards for the learning, development and care of young children as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- support the development of active and inquisitive learners, encouraging children to be imaginative, creative, curious and critical thinkers
- ensure teaching nurtures, engages and motivates children
- ensure the provision offers rich, varied and imaginative learning experiences
- ensure a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.

- ensure that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- be fully inclusive and provide for equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- work in partnership with parents and / or carers and professionals, to promote learning and development of all children in our care, to ensure they are ready for Year One.

The early year’s experiences we offer our children are based on the following four guiding principles:

- Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- Learning and Development

Unique Child

“Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023).

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust we encourage a positive attitude to learning by ensuring our planning begins by observing the children in order to consider their current interests, developmental stage and learning style. We plan to build on what the children know, understand and can do.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- providing a safe, secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued
- ensure all staff have the necessary skills and understanding of child development
- using observational assessment to plan opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests
- planning opportunities to develop their well-being, self-esteem and confidence to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- providing a welcoming environment where all children and their families feel valued and respected
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination or stereotyping
- using age appropriate ways to seek the views of all children through observing, listening and sensitive discussion
- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support when identified
- seeking advice from external agencies where appropriate.

Positive Relationships

“Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.”
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023)

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust we believe that strong, warm and positive relationships are the key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents/carers, and families.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- ensuring parents/carers are aware of who their child's teacher is prior to the child starting at our school
- working with parents/carers right from the start to find about their child's needs, feelings and interests
- ensuring effective induction and transition processes to support the child and their family
- developing effective partnerships with families by offering regular opportunities for them to talk about their child's learning and development and the progress they make both at school and at home
- providing an environment that is supportive, sensitive and responsive to each child

- supporting children to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want.
- providing supported interactions with other children, to enable them to learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably.
- setting clear processes for age appropriate behaviour management

Enabling Environment

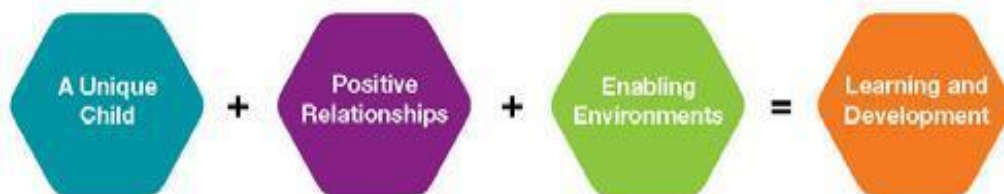
“Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and / or carers.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023).

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust our environment is carefully planned to provide stimulating experiences both indoors and outdoors. Children are provided with opportunities which challenge, respond to their interests and meet their needs.

We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- providing an environment that is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning
- developing children’s independence and decision making by providing an environment where children can freely access resources and select from the experiences on offer
- using the outdoor environment on a daily basis to enhance learning and development.
- ensuring that every child is included and supported
- using materials and equipment that reflects both the community that the children come from and the wider world
- analysing children’s responses to different situations and identifying their future learning needs
- including experiences that provide risk and challenge
- encouraging children to communicate and talk about their experiences



The result of these three guiding principles interacting together shapes the child’s learning and development within Early Years.

Learning and Development

“Children develop and learn at different rates.”

“There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023).

The seven areas of learning and development are made up of three Prime areas and four Specific areas:

Prime areas

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

“The three prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023).

The four specific areas of learning “are strengthened and applied through the three prime areas.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023).

In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners must also consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. These characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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’.

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust we ensure that the requirements of the EYFS are met through the Prime and Specific areas, underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning in order for children to make progress towards the early learning goals, which are the expected outcome for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We also recognise that play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, think about problems, and relate to others. Children are given opportunities to learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by practitioners.

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 2023).

The Safeguarding policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Mrs Ethelston's CofE Primary Academy. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team comprising of the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Katy Lyons and Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Jory Kellaway and Mrs Natalie Dare. Each DSL has a given responsibility and meet regularly to ensure consistency of approach. The school uses the recognised tool CPOM's to record safeguarding concerns.

At Acorn Multi-Academy Trust, we aim to:

- create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.
- be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

Roles and Responsibilities

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust we have a Trust Early Years Lead, Ursula Powell who works in collaboration with each Head of School to monitor, evaluate and strengthen the quality of EYFS provision. In Mrs Ethelston's CofE Primary Academy the Reception Lead teacher is Mrs Kaye Storer.

Assessment and Recording

At Acorn Multi Academy Trust we recognise that on-going assessment is an integral part in helping practitioners and parents / carers to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, interests and plan activities to extend, challenge and support.

Tapestry

The Interactive Early Years Online Learning Journal is used to capture children's experiences, as well as monitor learning and development more effectively. Acorn Tapestry 'Flags' are used when completing observations on Tapestry, in line with the seven Areas of Learning within the EYFS Statutory Framework 2023 to help track progress over time. This journal is shared online with parents and / or carers, and it enables us to record, track and celebrate children's progress immediately, allowing parents and / or carers to engage directly with their child's learning too.

Progress Check at Age Two

When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners review their progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short, written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. This progress check identifies the child's strengths, 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 at Acorn Multi Academy Trust develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals (for example, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or health professionals, as appropriate.

Practitioners encourage parents and/or carers to share information from the progress check with other relevant professionals, including their health visitor and the staff of any new provision the child may transfer to. Where possible, the progress check and the Healthy Child Programme health and development review at age two (when health visitors gather information on a child's health and development) should inform each other and support integrated working. This will allow health and education professionals to identify strengths as well as any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child/family might benefit. We, at Acorn Multi Academy Trust seek the consent of parents and/or carers to share information directly with other relevant professionals.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short task-based assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. The RBA is an assessment of a child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school. It is statutory for all schools.

Assessing Speech and Language

“Language is the foundation of children's thinking and learning,” (Development Matters, 2023).

Within Little Acorns each child's speech and language is assessed on entry using the Teddy Talk Test. This simple, playful, age appropriate speech and language assessment is suitable for children who are 5 years and under. It enables practitioners to identify a child's speech and language development relative to their chronological age, and supports practitioners in understanding how best to support a child's speech, language and communication skills, and whether a referral to Speech and Language Therapy is appropriate.

In Reception all children complete a Speech and Language online assessment, 1:1, using 'Speech Link'. Interventions are then incorporated into the school day for children who are identified as requiring further individual or small group support in speech and / or language.

Within EYFS children who are identified as having a significant language delay also participate in an additional quality small group story time daily. Targeted speech and / or language interventions are delivered with the aim of improving children's outcomes in language and early literacy.

Tracking Progress

“The observation checkpoints can help to notice whether a child is at risk of falling behind. You can make all the difference by acting quickly. By monitoring a child's progress closely, you can make the right decisions about what sort of extra help is

needed. Through sensitive dialogue with parents (and / or carers), you can understand the child better and offer helpful suggestions to support learning at home within the family”, Development Matters 2023.

Within the EYFS at the Acorn Academy Trust, children’s progress is summarised within a progress tracker at specific points in a school year for all seven areas of learning. Children are identified as being ‘on track’, ‘on track +’ or ‘Notice and Focus’. For children identified as ‘Notice and Focus’, additional support is put in place quickly to help support the child to ‘keep up not catch up’. Staff refer to the Developmental Journal to demonstrate more specifically the approximate age and stage that the child is currently within, to help set small, measurable, achievable steps of progress.

“Children learn and develop more from birth to five years than at any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them to catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support”, Development Matters 2023

Assessment at the end of the EYFS – The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five the EYFS profile is completed for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- meeting expected levels of development
- not yet meeting expected levels (emerging)

The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. The Profile must reflect practitioners’ own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. The profile is moderated internally (with reference to the latest EYFS Profile Handbook) and in partnership with other schools within our Multi Academy Trust, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Continuing Professional Development

In order to keep up to date, broaden our understanding and learn new skills, all practitioners at Acorn Multi Academy Trust receive regular training. The identification of training needs of all adults is part of an on-going process. Mrs Ethelston’s CofE Primary Academy supports a wide portfolio of CPD approaches identified according to best value principles and performance reviews.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to understand and adhere to the principles stated in this policy. The Head of School and Early Years lead for the Academy will monitor implementation of this policy as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This Governor will meet with the EYFS teacher / leader on a regular basis to discuss practice in the EYFS and feedback to the Governing Body.

Footnote:

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is mandatory for all early years' providers in England from 4th September 2023.

- The learning and development requirements are given legal force by an Order² made under section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations³ made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.