

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2019

This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust with an Early Years Foundation Stage.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know that provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to five years of age. At the Link Academy Trust, we operate a Foundation Stage Unit, made up of two key groups: Preschool (Bearnas, Hennock and Harbertonford) and Reception. At Bearnas these children share a setting five days a week, at Hennock the pre-school integrate with the reception pupils from Willows class (FS2-Yr2) on the three days of operation and in Harbertonford, the preschool operates 4 days a week from an adjacent classroom to Reception with their own outdoor space. Children are admitted to the pre-school from the term in which they are three, once toilet trained, and can apply for a place in Reception through Devon Admissions.

The Foundation Stage staff work as a team, the children have opportunities to work together during free-flow sessions, accessing continuous provision. Early Years staff plan and work together to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related activities to suit all our children. Children are also taught within their own key groups.

The Early Years experiences we offer our children are based on the following principles:

- Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

In the Link Academy Trust, we aim to achieve these outcomes by:

- setting the standards for the learning, development and care of young children
- providing for equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- creating the framework for partnership by working with parents/carers, professionals

- and all settings that the child attends
- ensuring that learning and development is planned around the individual needs and interests of the child and informed by the use of on-going observational assessment.

Play

In the Link Academy Trust we recognise that play underpins all learning and development for young children. Most children play spontaneously although some may need adult support. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Unique Child

“A Unique Child recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

In the Link Academy Trust we give every child the opportunity to achieve their best. We have realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with disabilities, children with additional educational needs, children with medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests
- planning opportunities to develop their well-being, self-esteem and confidence, including experiences that provide risk and challenge
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination or stereotyping
- planning challenging and appropriate experiences for higher achieving children
- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support when identified
- using age appropriate ways to seek the views of all children through observing, listening and sensitive discussion
- seeking advice from specialist agencies where appropriate.

Positive Relationships

“Positive Relationships describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and / or a key person.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

In the Link Academy Trust we believe that the positive relationships we build are the key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents, carers and families. Each child has a key person, i.e. the person with whom they form a special attachment. The key person is

responsible for ensuring that the child feels safe and cared for, in order to develop a positive sense of well-being and achievement. The Early Years is led by a qualified teacher.

We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- working with parents / carers right from the start to find out about their child's needs, feelings and interests
- developing effective partnerships with families throughout the year by offering regular opportunities for them to talk about their child's progress
- encouraging families to talk to their child's key person, as well as other staff members to foster two way communication with parents / carers and families.
- encouraging parents to settle their child during the first half term by coming in to the classroom at the start of the day. Those children and parents who have not been through the preschool have many opportunities prior to their September start to integrate with peers and staff through home visits, stay and play sessions and welcome meetings.
- helping parents to support children's learning and development.
- recognising that friendships and relationships are an important part of a child's development from birth.

Enabling Environment

"Enabling Environments explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

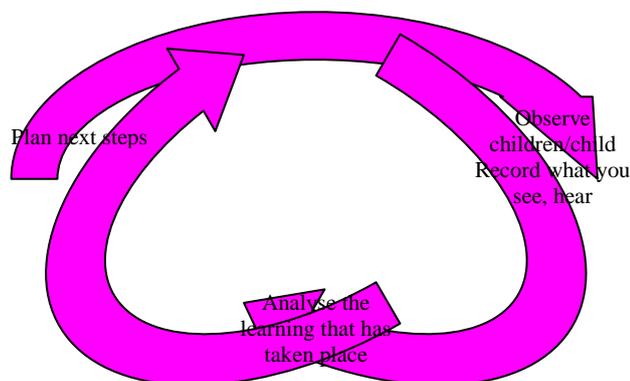
In the Link Academy Trust we aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's online learning journals using Tapestry. These are always available for parents/carers to look at and our Tapestry Policy can be referred to for further detail. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- encouraging children to communicate and talk about their experiences
- 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 regular / daily basis to enhance learning and development.
- analysing children's responses to different situations and identifying their future learning needs
- using materials and equipment that reflects both the community that the children come from and the wider world

- encouraging 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.



Our Foundation Stage is made up of the EYFS Leader/teacher and pre-school leader. They discuss observations and plan together on a weekly basis. We discuss observations and recordings made over the previous week. These observations may take the form of typed notes on Tapestry, information from parents or others, photographs and videos or annotated work. We use these observations to plan appropriate differentiated provision for the following week.

As children move from the Foundation Stage One (preschool) to Foundation Stage Two (Reception), the Pre-school (Foundation Stage 1) leader, in discussion with parents/carers, children and the EYFS Leader, completes a Transition Document, summing up judgements of the child's attainment at that moment in time. This document, along with information from parents/carers, the child, and the EYFS Teacher's own observations, as well as those of other adults, is explicitly used to inform the teacher's planning and form the basis of the child's 'on entry' attainment on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). It is also shared with parents/carers and the child.

Assessment

Knowledge of the children in our setting is gained through observation, discussion and interaction during different activities and experiences with a range of adults involved with each individual child. Assessment should be based upon children's ability to demonstrate learning, knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts when they are not reliant on adult support.

Some observations are planned and others are spontaneous, they all help to capture valuable information which builds up our picture of each child.

At the end of the child's time in the Early Years Foundation Stage the children's progress is charted against the Early Learning Goals, and culminates in the EYFSP, with judgements of "emerging," "expected" and "exceeding," made by the EYFS Teacher. In addition, the Teacher makes comments on the Characteristics of Effective Learning: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

In the Link Academy Trust, we work in partnership with parents / carers, other settings, other professionals and with individuals and groups in the community to support children's learning and development.

The Early Years Teacher will, in consultation with the parents/carers arrange a Home Visit, ideally before the child has started school. This is a social visit, usually lasting around half an hour, during which the Teacher and Child can get to know each other better, in a safe and supportive, familiar environment. The form of this visit might include meeting parents/carers, siblings and other members of the family. Children might show some favourite toys or books, or other special belongings. Parents/Carers can also take this time to discuss any matters which they would like to raise and share relevant information about their child. For those children who do not attend our pre-school setting we will invite them in for some 'stay and play' sessions in the term before they begin in Reception.

Learning and Development

"Learning and Development recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

The EYFS is made up of three Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

And four Specific Areas:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design.

All of the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led (child working with the adult) and child-initiated (child chosen) activities, both indoors and outdoors.

In the Link Academy Trust, we ensure that the requirements of the EYFS are met through all seven areas of learning and development, in order for children to make progress towards the early learning goals, which are the established expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Children are provided with experiences and support to help them develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. Children's emotional well-being is supported to help them to know themselves and what they can do. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- forming warm, caring attachments
- establishing constructive relationships with parents/carers, with everyone in the setting/school and with professionals from other agencies
- acting as positive role models and taking account of different needs and expectations

- building children's confidence to take manageable risks in their play providing support and planning experiences that offer challenges
- giving encouragement and appropriate praise
- planning opportunities for children to play by themselves, in pairs and groups and support the development of independence skills and a positive attitude to learning
- providing time and space for children to concentrate on experiences and to develop their own interests
- establishing opportunities for play and learning, acknowledging children's particular religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds
- providing positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, additional educational needs and disability.

Communication and Language

Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, being read to and beginning to read and write is supported and extended. Children are provided with opportunities and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes, and are supported to develop the confidence and disposition to do so. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- supporting children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and building relationships with adults and each other
- identifying and responding to particular difficulties in children's language development at an early stage
- talking with and listening to children to engage them in conversation
- linking language with physical movement in action songs, rhymes, role play and practical experiences, for example, cooking and gardening
- providing time and relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between adults and children, both in one to one and in small groups and between children themselves.

Physical Development (PD)

The physical development of young children is encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. They are encouraged and supported to use all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. Children are supported to develop an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food and lifestyle. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- valuing children's natural and spontaneous movements, through which they are finding out about their bodies and motivating them to be active
- providing a range of equipment and resources that are challenging and interesting and can be used in a variety of ways to support the development of specific skills
- introducing vocabulary to children alongside their actions
- supporting children to understand about good health, for example, use of sunscreens, sleeping, hygiene, eating and exercise
- providing space and time for children to engage in energetic play, to set their own challenges, persist and practise
- providing opportunities to take controlled risks, e.g climbing higher than they have previously in order to develop their physical skills

Specific Areas:

Literacy

- providing daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, rhymes, music, songs, stories and poetry
- providing positive role models by reading and writing and showing children what can be written and read
- planning an environment that is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words, rhymes, books and pictures that takes into account children's different interests, understandings, home backgrounds and cultures
- Daily phonics teaching, at an appropriate phase
- showing awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of children learning English as an additional language, using their home language, where possible

Mathematics

Children are supported to develop their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. They are provided with opportunities to practise and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- developing mathematical understanding through all children's early experiences including songs, stories, games and imaginative play
- encouraging and valuing children's exploration of real life problems
- using mathematics as an integral part of daily experiences, modelling and encouraging child participation
- providing time, space, resources and encouragement to discover new words and mathematical ideas.

Understanding the World

Children are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. Their learning is supported by offering opportunities to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertaking practical "experiments"; and work with a range of materials. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- creating a stimulating environment that offers a range of experiences to encourage children's curiosity and interest
- making effective use of outdoors, including the local neighbourhood
- inviting families and carers to share their experiences of the wider world
- using correct terms / vocabulary and asking open ended questions
- planned opportunities are based on first hand experiences that encourage exploration, experimentation, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision making and discussion
- encouraging children to talk about and reflect upon their experiences
- supporting children's use of ICT.

Expressive Art and Design

Children's creativity is extended with practitioner support to develop their curiosity, exploration and play. Children are provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play experiences, mathematics and design and technology. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- valuing what children can do and children's own ideas
- providing a stimulating environment where creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued
- allowing time for children to explore and express their ideas in a variety of ways

Roles and Responsibilities

Staffing:

The overall running of the Foundation Stage Unit is undertaken by the Academy Heads and CEO.

All documentation, policies and procedures are maintained by the office and are available there; parents and staff are aware of this.

The daily running of the Early Years Foundation Stage is overseen by the Early Years Leader, who has responsibility for this provision; they liaise with the Pre-school leader on a daily basis. It is their responsibility to monitor the daily running of these FSU's and to review staff performance in that respect.

The Foundation Stage Leader is responsible for the planning and delivery of the sessions, including the direction of support staff and informing the administration of any changes, information related to children and parents/carers attending and any other issues around the building and site, especially with regard to health and safety.

Inclusion

"Special educational needs and disability (SEND) includes physical, emotional, sensory and learning needs.

Settings will develop additional relationships with other professionals when working with children with SEND. It is vital that communication between all professionals and the child's parent/carer is strong so that practitioners can get a clear picture of the child's learning and development." Page 18 of the EYFS handbook 2018.

All children and their families are valued in the Link Academy Trust. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's SENDCO is called upon for further information and advice.

Staff Qualifications, Training, support and skills.

All staff receive regular training to ensure they are able to offer a quality learning experience for children that continually improves and increases the potential of all children within the setting.

We ensure that all staff employed in the Link Academy Trust Early Years looking after children, are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. There are effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children are suitable.

We obtain enhanced DBS checks in respect of every person aged 16 and over who:

- works directly with children;
- lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided; and/or
- works on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present).

All staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, the provider's equality policy, and health and safety issues.

Staffing ratios

We ensure that children are adequately supervised and deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met. Children are usually within sight *and* hearing of staff and always within sight *or* hearing.

For children aged two: there must be at least one member of staff for every four children; at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

For children aged three and over: In registered early years provision where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children: there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children; **and** at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

For children aged four and over: In foundation and infant classes where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children: There must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children; **and** at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

All Link Academy Trust Policies are applicable to the Foundation Stage Unit- *in particular:*

- Health and Safety and all policies applying to Health & Safety-including
- Administration of Medicines, Security, and those linked with the Premises
- Safeguarding
- Healthy Eating
- Behaviour Management
- Educational Visits
- Equal Opportunities
- Information and data
- Complaints

A comprehensive list and hard copy of all policies are held in the main office at Landscope School House and the policies are available on request.

Monitoring and Review (Schools)

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

This Policy will be reviewed by the Local Boards on a 2 year cycle and must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Approved by the Board of Directors: 11 February 2019