



ACET

Early Years Policy

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Business Lead	Principal/ACET EYFS Lead	Author	Rachel Bolton
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V1	Nov 2021	First issued	
V2	Sept 2023	Revised statutory framework effective Sept 2023 has been referenced.	



Striving for excellence

Empowering achievement

1. AIMS

This policy aims to ensure:

- That all children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. LEGISLATION

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This document also complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE EYFS

Information on the structure of the EYFS, including cohort size and the application process can be found on the academy website.

4. CURRICULUM

Intent

The Early Years curriculum has been designed to ensure every child has the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to reach their full potential.



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Our creative and bespoke curriculum reflects our children and community and provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need at each stage of the Early Years. It is an ambitious plan of everything they need to learn to be prepared for the next step of their school journey.

We acknowledge that children learn at different rates and that each child is unique. Our curriculum supports this ethos and is flexible. We follow the children's interests, alongside introducing them to new and engaging experiences.

Communication and language is at the heart of our curriculum and underpins all areas of learning. High quality conversations and vocabulary development occur daily through play based learning and continuous provision.

We believe all children in the Early Years should have access to a broad curriculum that includes a wide variety of challenging and enjoyable activities.

Our curriculum incorporates the requirements of the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, the 7 Key Features of Effective Practice and the Key Drivers for our academy. It is shaped by the Four Overarching Principles; A Unique Child, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development and Positive Relationships.

The academy's key drivers were chosen for our children and our community and ensure our EYFS curriculum supports their needs. More information can be found on the website and in the EYFS prospectus.

Implementation

A Unique Child

Staff take into account individual needs, reflecting on the different ways that children learn, their interests, and the stage of development of each child in their care. They use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experiences.

When children join Foundations, a welcome pack is sent to parents/carers. This includes activities for parents and their children to enjoy together. The completed packs provide staff with information about each child including their likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests. As part of the transition process from home to nursery or school, a baseline assessment is completed. This shows practitioners each child's current stage of development.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Enabling Environments

We understand that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. Enabling environments encourage children to play because they feel relaxed, comfortable and 'at home' in them. When children feel emotionally safe and secure they are able to explore and find out about the place they are in and the things they can see, touch, manoeuvre or manipulate. The F@W EYFS environment is described in terms of three aspects:

The emotional environment - provides a safe and secure environment where children can express their feelings safely, knowing staff are nearby to help them if they feel overwhelmed by these.

Practitioners teach children ways to talk about and express their feelings through circle times, role play and stories.

The outdoor environment - The children in the EYFS have access to outdoor space on a daily basis. Being outside allows them to move around freely, use their senses, explore tasks on a big scale and complete problem-solving creative challenges. Physical activities are enhanced and calculated risk can be taken.

The indoor environment – The EYFS classrooms are welcoming, interesting and engaging. They are divided into learning zones including role-play, investigation, construction, finger gym, small world, sand and water. Each zone allows the children to explore and be creative as well as including a challenge for them to complete. The learning zones support the children to become independent and respectful learners.

Learning and Development

The academy EYFS curriculum supports children's development in all 7 areas of learning. Each area of learning includes 'Curriculum Goals' for the children to achieve each term.

The 3 prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The 4 specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design



Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and group and whole class activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

In Foundation Stage 0 and 1, most learning is child initiated with adults intervening to initiate discussion or extend learning through questioning. Practitioners ensure a strong foundation in the prime areas of learning and that specific areas are used to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

As children progress to Foundation Stage 2 with increased confidence and independence, learning objectives are introduced through with a particular focus on early maths and literacy and the introduction of formal phonics lessons (see Phonics & Early Reading Policy).

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers and our curriculum supports this.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with what their child is learning through parents' evenings, social media and the IConnect App (in most ACET Academies).

Each child in any stage of EYFS will be assigned a key worker. Their role will to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. They will help each child become familiar with the setting and build a relationship with each child's parents or carers.

Key workers will host regular meetings with parents to discuss their child's achievements at home and school and agree the next steps.

4.1 PLANNING

The EYFS curriculum is flexible and can be adapted to respond to the children's needs. Provision is planned in short topics or themes based on the children's interests and includes activities and experiences that support pupils to develop and learn effectively. Practitioners decide what the children need to learn and choose the most effective method to teach it. Leaders map out a Medium Tern Plan for each half term that will enable all children to achieve the 'Curriculum Goals'.

The Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 staff work alongside each other to guarantee a consistent approach. They have joint planning meetings to ensure all staff have a secure knowledge of both the EYFS and National curriculum and that the progression between them is clear across all planning and activities.

4.2 PHONICS and EARLY READING

Across ACET academies, FS0 & FS1 children complete phase 1 Phonics. Practitioners focus on developing the pupil's speaking and listening skills. They complete activities that involve listening to the sounds around them, experimenting with instruments and using rhyme and alliteration. They also begin building their segmenting and blending skills.

Formal Phonics is taught from FS2 through to Year 2 and we teach using a systematic synthetic phonics approach. We follow the Letters and Sounds publication which has been adapted to ensure the teaching sequence allows confident acquisition of phonemes, develops fluency and is matched to our reading scheme.

Discrete phonics lessons take place daily across EYFS and Key Stage 1. They follow the structure of 'Review, Teach, Practise, Apply' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context. During lessons there are opportunities for discussing new vocabulary and ensuring letter formation is correct.

Reading books are banded to match the phonic phases and ensure that children are only reading books that contain the phonemes they have been taught. This will enable the children to read a book fluently with 100% accuracy.

A love of reading will be embedded across the curriculum from FS0 onwards through story time, drama sessions, assemblies, whole school events such as world book day, authors visiting school and home learning challenges.

(see Phonics and Early Reading Policy)

4.3 LANGUAGE and VOCABULARY

Communication and language is at the heart of our curriculum and underpins all areas of learning. High quality conversations occur daily through play based learning and continuous provision.

New vocabulary is introduced at the beginning of each topic and developed throughout the following weeks. Key words and phrases are displayed in learning zones and modelled by practitioners.

Story times are planned carefully to ensure they support children's communication and language. Books have been selected in themes to encourage; new vocabulary, sentence development, conversational skills, understanding and questioning.



5. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is based primarily on practitioners' knowledge of the children. This knowledge is gained predominantly from observation and interaction in a range of daily activities and events. Embedded learning is identified by assessing what a child can do consistently and independently in a range of everyday situations. We understand effective assessment presents a holistic view of a child's learning and development and therefore staff take account of contributions from a range of perspectives including the child, their parents and other relevant adults when completing these.

At the end of each term staff use their knowledge to judge if the children have achieved the curriculum goals for that term. Outcomes are analysed to ensure all groups of learners are making good or better progress.

Any children who are not working at the expected level are supported through the use of ACET Early Intervention Plans.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, practitioners review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development, or
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

6. SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE PROCEDURES

Premises and equipment are organised in a way that meets the needs of all children. All areas are checked each morning and afternoon using the EYFS daily checklists and issues will be noted down and resolved. Any unsafe or broken equipment will be removed immediately. All equipment out for the children to use will be age appropriate, clean and in line with Health and Safety regulations.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the academy Safeguarding Policy.

7. TRANSITION TO KEY STAGE 1

Across all ACET academies, we will ensure all children are prepared for the transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and that they are ready to begin the National Curriculum.

Regular meetings between the FS and Year 1 teachers will take place to discuss the achievements of all children and their next steps.

The structure of the FS2 day will become more formal in the Summer Term and continuous provision will remain in Y1 for at least the Autumn Term to ensure consistency. The Y1 teacher/s will visit the Foundation Stage throughout the Summer Term to begin to form relationships with pupils.

Parents and carers will be included in each step of the transition process to ensure they are confident their children are prepared for their future challenges and successes.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Foundation Stage Lead Learner every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the Local Governing Body.