



# **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

**March 2018**

**Review Date: March 2019**

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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 the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”*

**Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (DfE, 2017)**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year; it is the Key Stage before KS1 and KS2. In our academies, most children join Nursery when they are three. The majority of our children join the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. However, provision for two year olds is now in place or at the planning stage at both academies.

The EYFS is based upon four Principles and Themes:

- i. A Unique Child
- ii. Positive Relationships
- iii. Enabling Environments
- iv. Learning and Development

### **i. A UNIQUE CHILD**

Is described as ‘Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured’

Within the academies comprising Five Rivers MAT we have the philosophy that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by the relationships they form with others; their well-being and the way we support,, encourage and celebrate their progress as thinkers and learners

### **Inclusion**

The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected within our schools, with all. All children treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. In our academies 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 home culture and range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, 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 through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;

- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive enabling learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from 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 and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in our academies are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children (see the **FRMAT Safeguarding Policy**).

## **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)

Within our academies, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the **Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (Section 3)**. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children;
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs;
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that each child has an identified Key Person
- Ensure that appropriate ratios are in place at all times;
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose;
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## **ii. POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

Is described as ‘Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person’

Within the academies comprising Five Rivers MAT, we understand that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before s/he starts in our academies;
- Staff visiting children in their home setting prior to their starting nursery;
- The children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school through visits to the setting during transition week;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Inviting parents to attend workshops in both FS1 and FS2 in order that they can learn activities that they can do at home with their children;
- Inviting parents in both FS1 and FS2 to attend a Rhyme Time session once a week;
- In both year groups parents have the opportunity to use the lending library to take books home to share with their children;
- Offering parents opportunities to talk about their child's progress and targets through informal meetings with the parent, child and teacher at least once a term;
- Parents receive a report on their child's progress at the end of each school year. This includes a short report on the characteristics of learning;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, e.g. family learning courses, class assemblies, Sports Day etc.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In both Nursery and FS2 children have a 'key person'. The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. The role of the key person is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond to their feelings, talking to parents and working in partnership with them.

### **iii. ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS**

Is described as 'The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning'

In our academies, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We begin by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

#### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Planning within the EYFS follows the school's creative curriculum which is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning. However the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs, interests and achievements of the children. This will be documented on weekly planning.

Would be worth starting here with the 2yr olds and how the 2yr old progress check is undertaken and shared with parents. This will give you an initial baseline on entry to school. See <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/A-Know-How-Guide.pdf>

On entry into FS1 and FS2, children are assessed using the Early Years Profile. This is informed by learning stories, photographs and snapshot observations. Previous assessment from Nursery or other settings are also used to inform this baseline.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of formal and

informal observations. Staff use the 2 Simple software to complete 'snap shot' (short) observations and photographs to demonstrate children using skills independently in provision. iPads are also used for photographic evidence of the children completing activities. At least once every half term children are also observed using a Learning Story. These Learning Stories use photographs and record interactions with other children, and also records their dialogue. These observations are recorded in children's individual Learning Journeys.

Teachers record children's data onto an assessment tool called the Development Map. This shows the progress of children from 2 year olds through to the end of FS2. It allows SLT to monitor the children's progress and to inform whether provision is meeting their needs.

At the end of the Reception year in school, all children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals and this is recorded onto the Early Years Profile. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals and including a short report on the characteristics of learning.

### **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, or rest. The classrooms and outdoor spaces are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area. These have a very positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses, develop their language and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for the children to access both indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning and support the Characteristics of Effective Learning .

### **iv. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

In our academies, we know that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape the educational provision in Early Years Settings. These are divided into prime and specific areas. The three prime areas are important in underpinning children's development, curiosity and enthusiasm for learning:

Prime areas:

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

The other four areas are called specific areas. Through these the prime areas are strengthened further:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others – they are all connected. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities (1.8). In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

In planning and guiding children's learning and development, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three 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

## **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our academies. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- 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, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our academies and the settings that our children experience prior to joining them.

## **Play and Exploration**

*"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."*  
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE)

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

## **Active Learning**

*"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."*  
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE)

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

*“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”*

*(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE)*

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Principal/Head of School, Deputy Headteacher and Foundation Stage Leader will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.