

EYFS Policy



#Discover YOUR Incredible

Adopted	March 2020
Lead	LT & TS
Reviewed	



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Introduction

This policy outlines the provision that Cottons Farm Primary Academy offers to all its pupils aged between 3-5 years. Children within this age range are taught within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS has its own framework and is treated as a separate Key Stage. Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) refers to 3 and 4 year olds and Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) refers to 4 and 5 year olds. Early childhood education is valued in itself and should not be seen merely as a preparation for the next stage in learning. This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

We believe that children in our Foundation Stage are entitled to learning experiences which are enjoyable and memorable. We aim to give each child the best start during their time in the EYFS, to enable them to meet their full potential. We will do this by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Teaching children to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting a culture that learns through mistakes.
- Providing learning experiences which reflect the children's interests and motivations, while meeting the needs of their different learning styles.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and safe.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective quality learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.
- Understanding that development in the Prime Areas of Learning (Communication & Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development) are at the heart of our curriculum and daily practice.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in our EYFS is in line with the Government's Statutory Framework- 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2014). It is based on four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development'.

As stated in the Framework (2014, 1.3, p7), *"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 interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive."*

These are the three Prime Areas of Learning:

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

There are also four Specific Areas of Learning through which the Prime Areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

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

Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning process. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Learning Through Play

We believe that children learn best through play and it is this play which builds knowledge. Children play in order to make sense of the world they experience. For them there is no distinction between learning and play. To support this we promote a balance of the following through the day:

- **Child initiated activities**- Children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/ her outcome for learning. They are supported in this by practitioners facilitating by observing the learning and moving it forward **where appropriate**. We recognise that sometimes just observing the children in their self-initiated activities is best practise to detail their learning choices and decide where provision needs to be altered in the future to target gaps in learning.
- **Adult initiated activities**- Practitioners provide the resources and provocations to stimulate and consolidate learning in the learning environment. The focus and design of these activities is based on observations and assessments of previous learning.
- **Adult directed activities**- Children engage in planned activities, sometimes whole class, sometimes in targeted groups to meet specific learning outcomes.

In order to promote the learning culture of the EYFS environment, we think carefully about the continuous provision and how this promotes learning in the absence of direct practitioner input. We

believe that children should be able to access a wide range of resources which promote thinking skills and opportunities for children to progress rapidly. Skills are taught alongside the provision. Language development sits at the heart of all our activities. The layout is designed to encourage children to challenge themselves by providing opportunities to develop their thinking and personal developmental needs using a wide range of equipment accessible 'continuously' throughout the EYFS. Enhancements add interest and challenge and allow for targeted differentiation.

The children's learning styles are also taken into account when planning provision. Enhancements to continuous provision may be used to encourage children to consider particular themes or intentions although children are expected to take the lead, think for themselves and build on what they currently know with adult support and encouragement as necessary. We recognise that some children prefer being outdoors and for these children the outdoor environment needs to give them opportunities to make progress across all seven areas of learning. Skilled practitioners facilitate high standards of outdoor learning. Language development remains at the heart.

Planning

Teachers and Teaching Assistants consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and will use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child. When working with the youngest children, and as part of our introduction to school, teachers focus strongly on children's development in the prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other specific areas.

The EYFS Profile and Development Matters provide the **long term plans** which ensure a good coverage of the skills needed to achieve the Early Learning Goals and make progress towards them. The **medium term plan** is mapped out over the half term to ensure that children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress. It also takes into account the children's learning and development needs. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on **weekly planning**. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. Weekly plans are progressive, consider the children's interests and also address any identified needs for maximum progress. Plans ensure there is good coverage of the areas of learning while focusing on children's interests and key skills needed to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of FS2. Planning includes a variety of whole class, group and individual activities, which are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum.

There is a separate half termly continuous provision plan that focuses on each area of learning in provision, including the outdoors, which develop the areas of learning and maintain the equal importance of all EYFS areas. Child Initiated Activities (CIA) are planned to take place as part of every session. Practitioners use CIA to carefully support children's knowledge and understanding and assess children through observation

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Observations take place on a daily basis both formally and informally. Those which are more formal are recorded either as snapshot observations which may or may not contain excerpts of the child's speech during the observation. These are recorded electronically with the use of tablets and the app "2Simple" or handwritten and added to the child's Learning Journey. Observations are referenced to learning and the Development Matters document to allow attainment and progress to be shown. Practitioners use observations and work samples to support their developing knowledge of children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, schemas and learning styles. They are then evaluated and used to identify the children's next steps and progress. Learning Journeys record the children's progress over their time in the EYFS. They are always available to parents and carers, who are encouraged to comment and contribute with information from home as much as possible. Parents events and evenings are held throughout the child's time in EYFS. During FS1 and FS2 the children's learning is referenced to the statements in Development Matters. On Entry, Autumn 2, Spring 2 and Summer 2. The children are assessed as being Emerging, Developing or Secure at the relevant Age and Stage for each area of learning. These are used to assess attainment and also progress. At the end of FS2 (Summer 2) the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is used alongside Development Matters and the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning as being Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. Those children achieving at least the expected level in the three Prime Areas and also Literacy and Mathematics (from the Specific Areas) achieve a Good Level of Development.

Admission Arrangements

Children enter Foundation Stage 1 the term after their third birthday, subject to availability. Children enter the Foundation Stage 2 classes in September of the school year in which they are five. Places in Foundation Stage 1 are offered in accordance with the academies admissions policy and Foundation Stage 2 classes are offered in accordance with Derby City Council admissions policy.

Before starting Nursery, all children and families are offered a home visit and a visit to the Nursery for a 'come and join in' session. The purpose of these sessions is to get to know the children better and also for the children to become more comfortable in the Nursery setting and get to know the practitioners better. We build strong and effective relationships with our parents and this helps children make the rapid progress needed in our academy from entry baselines.

Before starting Reception class, in the September of the academic year they turn five, the children undertake a comprehensive induction if they have not been to Cottons Farm nursery. In the Summer term, visits are made by school colleagues to the children's previous settings to meet the child and to develop the practitioner's knowledge and understanding of the children and their strengths and interests. The children are invited to visit the academy where they get to see their new classroom and meet their new teacher/s. Parents and carers are invited to a transition meeting where they are able to meet colleagues, find out more information about starting full time school and are given the Admission Form and other important paperwork. For the children who have been in Cottons Farm Nursery the induction process is slightly different. Regular visits are made to the Nursery by the Reception teachers and other practitioners. The children also have regular opportunities to visit the Reception classrooms. However, parents and carers have the same Transition Meeting.

At the end of the foundation stage the children also undertake a thorough transition to Year One. There are regular visits to the Year One classrooms and the Year One teachers visit the Reception classes. While completing the Early Years Profile the Reception and Year One teachers work together to moderate the judgements and to develop the Year One teacher's knowledge and understanding of the children. Children are prepared for entry to Y1 and colleagues are aware of the expectations of children in KS1. They provide a good foundation on which the children can build successfully in subsequent years. Children leave EYFS with rapidly improved language skills, confidence and social skills. The phonic knowledge of the majority of the children will have been secured and children will tackle early reading with greater fluency and confidence.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Cottons Farm Academy are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our academy 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 range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage 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 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.

If, as part of our ongoing assessment process, a child is identified as having a difficulty or not making their expected progress this will be discussed with parents and a Cause for Concern will be passed to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Parents will be fully involved in the process and there will be conversations with them about their views. The SEND process will be followed with support from the SENCO. Other agencies will be involved and worked with as appropriate. Some children may have a higher level of need which means they will progress to a My Plan/ EHCP depending on the level of need.

Safeguarding

The academy takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. We have a dedicated safeguarding officer. All concerns for a child's safety and well-being are dealt with in line with policy and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy will be informed. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in the academy for parents to read.

Pupil Premium

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding for Early Years settings to support the education of disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds including those adopted from care and Pupil Premium is for children in Reception class. The 'Pupil Premium' grant is funding provided to help schools support specific groups of children who may be in danger of making less progress than others. Its aim is to 'close the gap' between how well children from low-income and other disadvantaged families do compared to their peers. How much pupil premium funding a school receives is determined by the number of children:

- Eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Parents who serve in the armed forces In local authority care.