

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Wistaston Academy
Primary and Nursery School
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

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Responsible Governor's Committee	Standards
Date discussed at SLT Meeting	Summer 2017
Date discussed at Staff Consultation Committee	N/A
Date discussed at Staff Meeting / Morning Briefing	Summer 2017
Date established and approved by Governors	Summer 2017
Frequency of Review	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience
Website?	No

Introduction

Our Early Years provision is underpinned by the principles and requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is a statutory framework for all children from birth to 5 years old. At Wistaston Academy, all children in the Nursery and the Reception classes follow this curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage, first and foremost, is important in its own right but it is also important that it lays a secure foundation for future learning. Our Early Years provision prepares children for this future learning and ensures they are prepared to make a smooth transition into Key Stage 1.

Children entering our Nursery or Reception classes have already learnt a great deal and bring with them a diverse range of experiences. We base our Early Years provision upon the following principles:

- it builds upon what our children already know and can do
- it delivers personalised learning, development and care
- it promotes positive attitudes to diversity and difference
- it ensures no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- it offers stimulating opportunities both indoors and outdoors
- it values the importance of play and active learning

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Wistaston Academy

The curriculum of the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's

- personal, social and emotional well-being
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- social skills
- good behaviour and self-control
- physical development
- attention skills and persistence
- communication and language
- reading and writing
- mathematics
- knowledge of the world
- creative development

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum consists of three prime areas of learning and four specific areas. The prime areas are Personal, Social and Emotional well-being, Physical Development and Communication and Language. They begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The specific areas are Literacy, Mathematics, The World and Expressive Arts. They include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding children's activities, teachers also reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum identifies 3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning. They 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 school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. In addition, the features which apply specifically to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school from the start and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers have of how young 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 achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage through a balance of child initiated and adult led activities
- 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 stimulating, appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through systematic observations, which are regularly shared with parents
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage

Play

Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Most children play spontaneously but others need more adult support. Adults working in our EYFS support children by playing alongside them.

We provide

- well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors
- a balance of teacher led and child initiated activities appropriate to the stage of development of the children in our care

Assessment

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage needs to encompass all areas of learning. It is used to help teachers plan for personalised learning and development and observation is a major tool for assessing children's progress. Teachers and Teaching Assistants make observations of children during child initiated and teacher led activities throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. These observations inform future planning. During the first weeks of each year, while children are settling into their new classes, teachers in Nursery and Reception make assessments of children based upon both planned and spontaneous observations. After three weeks, these assessments are recorded as the baseline for each child on SIMs EY Progress Tracker. Our baseline assessments help us to identify children's interests, achievement and possible difficulties and therefore to plan effectively for personalised learning and development.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants continue to make observations of children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. These observations are recorded in each child's individual electronic (Tapestry) Learning Journey. At the end of each term, staff use this information to make a judgement about which 'stage of development' the child is working within in each aspect of learning. This judgement is then recorded on the SIMS EY Progress Tracker.

End of year assessments in Nursery provide information about each child's achievement as well as the characteristics of the cohort. They also provide the basis for liaison with Reception staff. This information helps to support the baseline assessments made in the first half term of the Reception year.

At the end of the Reception year, staff record whether each child is emerging, expected or exceeding in each of the 17 Early Learning Goals and this information is collated by SIMs for submission to the LEA. It also provides the basis for liaison with Year 1 staff and Key Stage One target setting.

Parents/carers receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress and attainment in each aspect of learning. It also describes how the child learns (characteristics of effective learning). These reports are sent to parents/carers in July each year.

The role of parents/carers

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents and carers have played and their future role as educators. We are committed to continually seek to develop our relationship with parents and carers further. We do this through:

- holding informal meetings with parents/carers about their child before their child starts our Nursery or Reception class - at this meeting we use the 'Wistaston Academy Including Me Plan' as a basis for our discussion and this record is then attached to each pupil's individual file
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk to the EYFS staff about their child's progress
- holding termly parents' evenings
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children, parents and carers to become secure, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents such as 'stay and play' sessions and parent workshops
- parents and carers are able to add their own observations of their child's learning and record comments on observations made by the EYFS staff

Inclusion

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, looked after children, gifted and talented children, 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

The Role of the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader is to:

- oversee and monitor the implementation of national initiatives and to assist the Head in the training of staff across all areas of the EYFS
- ensure progression and continuity across the EYFS
- support colleagues in their development of planning and implementation of the EYFS Statutory Requirements and Practice Guidance and in assessment and record keeping
- take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for the EYFS
- keep up-to-date with developments in the EYFS curriculum and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate

Resources

We encourage children to take responsibility for their environment both indoors and outdoors and support them in making their own selection of activities and resources. We offer a wide range of high quality resources and we expect all children and adults in the EYFS to play their part in looking after them. Resources are regularly cleaned, stored in containers which are clearly labelled and, where appropriate, are accessible to the children.

Quality Improvement

We recognise that high quality experiences in the Early Years have a significant positive impact on children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development and, therefore, we are committed to continually look for ways to improve the quality of learning, development and care we offer in the EYFS at Wistaston Academy.