



THE PATHWAY ACADEMY TRUST

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EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s school readiness and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” [EYFS Statutory Framework 2017]

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework produced by the DFE and sets the standards for learning and development of children from birth to five. In schools within The Pathway Academy Trust, children enter Reception classes in the September of the academic year in which they become five.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency
- A secure foundation
- Partnership working
- Equality of opportunity

along with four guiding principles which share the Trust’s practice:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and development in different ways and at different rates.

Curriculum

The Trust’s Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. The seven areas of learning and development shape the Early Years curriculum and are all seen to be important and inter-connected.

There are three **Prime Areas**:

- **Communication and Language** –Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development**-Moving and Handling and Health and Self Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**-Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

The Pathway Academy Trust ensures that these three areas are used to *“ignite children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.”*

[EYFS Statutory Framework 2017]

There are four **Specific Areas**:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Shape, Space and Measure
- **Understanding the World** – People and Communities, The World and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and Using Media and Materials and Being Imaginative.

These specific areas, are embodied through the Prime Areas. The Trust ensures that children gain essential skills and knowledge enabling them to participate successfully in society.

When delivering this curriculum, the Trust ensures all **Characteristics of Learning** are promoted and recognised through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically in both outdoor and indoor environments.

A Unique Child

The Pathway Academy Trust recognises that every child is unique and should be given the opportunity to become a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. The Trust recognises that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates.

Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; the Trust uses praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. The Trust aims for everybody to be proud and happy to be part of school life. The Trust's school's prepare children for their future education and for their positive contribution to the wider community, enabling them to become good citizens.

All of the children in The Pathway Academy Trust matter. They are given every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their range of life experiences; encouraging them to share events and celebrations with others and valuing inclusion when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS, the Trust sets realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the children. This is achieved by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, recognising those with special educational needs or disabilities, those from all social and cultural backgrounds, as well as always challenging the more able.

By teaching children boundaries and by placing a strong emphasis on rules and boundaries, the Trust enables them to take sensible risks, by recognising and avoiding hazards and to make appropriate choices about their own safety.

"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."

[EYFS Statutory Framework 2017]

The Trust aims to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children, through valuing the children's voice and strong links with parents and families.

The Pathway Academy Trust understands that they are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. Rigorous safeguarding policy and procedures that are used to identify anyone that is at risk or of harm are followed.

When making observations, it is important to note that all staff are given a school registered iPad and iPod, which they use to take photos for an assessment app. All data taken for these assessments are stored in a secure external setting (the cloud) and do not remain on these devices. Any data stored within the system is password protected and encrypted.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from observing and developing secure relationships. The Trust aims to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

The Pathway Academy Trust acknowledges that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and value the contribution they make. The Trust recognises the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. The Trust works in partnership with our families providing a strong induction process, involving home visits and informative parent workshops.

The Trust encourages ways in which parents can contribute more to their children's learning journey, by sharing their child's experiences and achievements.

Parents are informed on a termly basis of themes covered and are offered suggestions of how to support their child at home, enabling them to become independent and resilient individuals. The Trust also ensures parents are kept up to date with their child's progress through formal consultation evenings and My Unique Story.

Transition

The Pathway Academy Trust develops strong links with our main feeder pre-school settings to improve school readiness, as well as continuing to recognise and value the many other settings through promotion of information packs and transition procedures.

The Foundation Stage staff recognise how important the transition from Reception Class to Year One is. During the Summer term, children are invited to spend time in their new class and in addition the Year One teachers have the opportunity to come into the Foundation Stage; to observe the children in an environment that they are familiar with and feel at their most confident. In each school within The Pathway Academy Trust, there is an opportunity for Reception and Year One teachers to meet and discuss the children's level of development, Early Learning Goal achievements and any other information for each individual.

Enabling Environments

The Pathway Academy Trust recognises that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Classrooms are organised with defined areas and clearly labelled resources to ensure that children can access these easily, confidently and independently. Children have opportunities to experience writing, maths, creative play, role-play, construction, small world play and reading opportunities enabling them to develop in all seven areas of learning.

The outdoor area is as important as the classroom and is something each school continues to develop, ensuring that links are made between both environments. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales from being inside. All environments allow children to explore and learn securely and safely; they can be active, messy or quiet.

In addition to the outdoor area, children are also able to access the Forest School curriculum either via on-site or local woodland areas. The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive outdoor experiences. By participating in engaging, motivating and achievable tasks and activities in a woodland environment, children have an opportunity to develop intrinsic motivation and sound emotional and social skills. These skills, through self-awareness, can be developed to reach personal potential.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The most important and productive assessment is the on-going, formative teacher assessment of learning made by staff during their daily teaching. The Trust uses the information from assessments to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Teachers assess children's learning through observations, small focus groups and challenges. This allows them to build up a picture of the child in a variety of opportunities and areas, and suggest appropriate next steps for the children to develop their learning further.

Planning within the EYFS follows each school's long term Creative Curriculum plan. Medium term plans (MTPs) are based around termly themes or topics. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for daily planning, however the teacher may alter these MTPs in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

Target Tracker is used to record judgements against the Foundation Stage Profile. This allows us to collate all of the data and measure progress, highlighting children that are achieving more than expected or less than expected and so allowing us to tailor the curriculum accordingly.

Within the final term of the EYFS, a written summary is provided to parents, reporting their child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and assessment scales. Each school ensures there are opportunities for parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

Learning and Developing

The Pathway Academy Trust recognises that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. The Trust values all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected. Each week, children's learning is extended through themed activities, focused Literacy and Maths tasks, daily fine motor activities, and rigorous daily phonic sessions.

Teaching and Learning Style

Early Years classrooms aim to be a place which thrives on excitement, curiosity and discovery. They aspire for language and communication to lay the foundations of play and adventure and endeavour to give children the opportunities to develop philosophical thinking and talking through play and storytelling.

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their

development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

[EYFS Statutory Framework 2017]

Each school within The Pathway Academy Trust plans using a range of approaches with the aim to provide first-hand experiences; giving clear explanations, making appropriate interventions and extending and developing play and talk. The timetable allows for focused, valuable teacher input taken from suggested themes and the children's own interests. This is carefully linked to teacher directed and teacher led activities to broaden and extend the learning whilst ensuring an enabled environment for the children to develop their own learning through child initiated play.

Characteristics of effective learning

Play - Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learning how to develop appropriate behaviour 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 - Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have 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 - Children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources. They discover connections and have a new and better understanding of ways to do things. Adults support this process and enhance their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Children should be given opportunities 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 skilfully asking open questions. During child initiated time, pupils have free access to a range of resources both inside and out.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers of all schools within The Pathway Academy Trust to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS at each school. This governor has opportunities to observe EYFS practice and provide feedback to the whole Local Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.