



**WAYCROFT MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**

## **Policy for Early Years 2023**

Signed (Chair): 		Name: Andrew Bowden	Date: 24/05/2023
Signed (Executive Head): 		Name: Tracy French	Date: 24/05/2023
Ratified by: FBD Board of Directors on:			Next Review: May 2024
Update			
Date	Update		
May 2023	Change of name – Nursery Nurse to support staff. Removed ILD replaced with Target Tracker.		

Our Early Years policy describes the framework upon which the beliefs and practice of this school are based. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning policy, Assessment policy, SEND policy, Health and Safety policy and our Equality policy.

### **Introduction**

At Waycroft Multi Academy Trust we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and we strive to support them to reach their full potential, and build solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning. We recognise that each child is unique, learning in different ways and at different rates, and our aim is to provide a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities based around the needs of each individual child.

### **Aims**

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and stimulating environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of all our children.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide a high-quality curriculum in line with EYFS Development matters.
- For the children to become aware of moral and social values.
- To encourage active learning through first hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.

- To value the cultural diversity within our school and community.
- To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

### **The Curriculum**

Our Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which clearly defines what we teach. This policy details the specifics for our setting.

The four **guiding principles** that shape our practice are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children develop and learn well in **enabling environments**, where their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents / carers.
- Children's **learning and development** occurs in different ways and at different rates.

### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS framework sets out seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected.

### **Prime Areas of Learning**

The prime areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They build children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, and consequently are our main focus in our nursery settings.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – *Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and self-awareness*
- Physical Development – *Moving and handling and Self care*
- Communication and Language – *Listening and attention, Understanding and Speaking*

### **Specific Areas of Learning**

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. As children move into our reception classes there is a more balanced focus on all areas of learning, including the specific areas.

- Literacy – *Reading and Writing*
- Mathematics – *Numbers and Space, shape and measures*
- Understanding the world – *People and communities, The world and Technology*
- Expressive Arts and Design – *Exploring and using media and materials and Being imaginative*

These areas are delivered through a balance of adult led, adult framed and child initiated activities.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective learning, which highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. These characteristics lay the foundations for future learning enabling children to talk about their learning and recognise the skills that enable them to learn.

The characteristics 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 Strategies**

In our academies, we ensure that we provide a balance between adult led and child initiated activities throughout each day. In our nursery classes more focus is given to child initiated activities, and this balance changes as children move through reception in preparation for their transition into Year 1. Through quality interactions with adults children are able to build and develop their understanding, and adults can guide new learning.

### **Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years. Children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them, and we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences through which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. Play enables children to think creatively and critically with others, as well as on their own. Skills can be explored and practised, and prior learning can be revisited at their own level and pace. Play gives children the opportunity to follow and explore their own interests, and inspire those around them. Through play, they learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Adults take an active role during play, through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play. Focusing on the principles of growth mindset, we encourage children to embrace challenge, learn from setbacks and adopt a 'have a go' attitude.

### **Resources and Budget**

It is the responsibility of the Phase leaders to ensure that the budget for Early Years is spent effectively. Spending must have a direct impact on children's learning, resourcing activities and areas, or providing specific resources for individual children. All petty cash receipts and purchase order forms are to be signed by one of the team leaders in early years.

### **Teaching**

In our academies, we include direct, well planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These enable children to learn specific skills and knowledge.

Each year group in the Early Years have timetables which ensure that time is set aside daily for children to come together to be taught in the more traditional sense. These sessions focus on our topic work, mathematics, literacy, phonics, and stories. These more formal sessions help children to develop vital skills for future learning: learning as a group, listening to adults or other children, taking turns to answer questions, sitting still, etc. As children move through the nursery into reception the balance between adult directed whole class and group activities, and child-initiated play shifts, preparing children for more formal teaching when they enter Year 1.

### **Planning and Inclusion**

All children have an equal entitlement to a good Early Years Curriculum regardless of gender, race, culture, religion, disability and special or medical needs. Through our planning we endeavour to provide every opportunity for them to achieve their best.

Our Long- and Medium-Term Plans set out the topics covered and ensure that all areas of learning are covered throughout the year. Detailed short term plans are written on a weekly basis, using daily notes, observations, and interactions to inform planning and identify next steps.

In Nursery, planning is flexible to enable adults to adapt and follow the interests and fascinations of the children. There are early phonic and mathematics activities each week.

In Reception, daily literacy, phonic and mathematics sessions are planned, supporting children in working towards the early learning goals. These formal sessions take place in the morning, enabling children to follow their own ideas during the afternoon.

Where a specific need is suspected we liaise with our SEND leader and seek advice from outside agencies, including speech and language, the educational psychologist, and other services specific to early years. Early intervention is key to supporting our youngest children effectively to ensure a positive outcome in terms of their developmental needs. We adhere to the SEND, Inclusion and Equality Policies of the school to ensure this.

We endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents/carers of the opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. This funding is used to provide extra support in the identified areas where the child needs to progress. Rigorous tracking of groups of children by our Senior Leaders monitors to ensure that good progress is made by these identified children.

### **Classroom Organisation**

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas, with clear labelling to enable children to access them independently. A range of different activities and opportunities are planned and available for each area throughout the week, whilst also enabling children to make their own choices about their learning by selecting resources themselves. The outdoor area is a vital part of our learning environment, providing

space for a wide range of activities to take place reflecting the different curriculum areas. These include quiet spaces, covered areas, areas to develop gross motor skills including ball skills and using wheeled toys, grassy areas where children can explore the natural environment and build dens, and messy spaces to be creative. The outside area also provides opportunities for our 3- and 4-year-olds to develop friendships with our Reception children and interact with other adults within the setting. This helps to develop positive relationships in preparation for transition. The wider school grounds also provide us with a space to take part in Forest School activities throughout the year.

### **Assessment / Observations and Learning Journeys**

Throughout nursery and reception, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the 'Development Matters in the EYFS' document.

On entry to nursery or Reception, children are assessed to create a baseline. This is completed by the end of Term 1. We include observations of the children during play, information from adult led activities, information shared by parents and carers and through talking to the children and engaging with them. This baseline enables adults to understand children's levels of achievement, their interests and learning styles, and to plan learning experiences for each child that reflect these observations.

Parents' evenings are held twice a year, in terms 2 and 4, where progress and achievements can be shared with parents/carers. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity to share information, and we recognise the importance of developing a positive relationship with them to ensure working collaboratively together in the future for the benefit of their child.

Throughout the year, children are tracked using Target Tracker to ensure that progress is being made against the statements in the document 'Development Matters in the EYFS'. Our Senior Leadership Team analyse data to ensure pupils are identified who are not making the progress expected. Targets are set for these children, and monitored to ensure that any interventions are appropriately matched to the children, and that they are having an impact on their progress and development.

In the Early Years, the progress of all children is evidenced using a range of strategies. These help to create their secure online portfolios, which comprise of collections of children's work, photographs and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Parents/carers also contribute to these, using their mobile device and online login to Google Classroom to document memorable occasions and milestones reached during their time at home.

At the end of Reception teachers assess the children against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG's), identifying if their development is emerging, expected, or exceeding each goal. This information is shared with the Local Authority and is reported to parents and carers at the end of the academic year. It is also used by Year 1 teachers, supporting their planning as children move on in their education.

At the end of each year, a detailed report is given to parents for all Nursery and Reception children. This identifies children's strengths and interests, their achievements, as well as their next steps in learning. We provide an opportunity for parents to meet with the teachers to discuss these if they wish to.

## **Transition**

We recognise that starting school or nursery and moving on to other classes can be a stressful time for both children and parents/carers. Our Woodlands Nursery welcomes new children throughout the year, Waycroft welcomes children in the September of the year of their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Their induction is individually tailored to meet the needs of each child. Induction evenings for prospective Nursery and Reception children's parents/carers in the summer term, and visits to classes in small groups help children to develop relationships with adults and familiarise themselves with their new environment. In September our 3- and 4-year-olds start nursery in small groups, whilst Reception children remain on part time hours for the first week. At the end of the Summer our Reception parents are invited to a Year 1 induction evening. The children can visit their new classes before September.

## **Role of Staff and Key Worker**

All adults within the Early Years setting seek to build positive relationships with the children in their care. This formation of healthy relationships is essential in enabling children's well-being and their future successes.

In nursery key workers are identified for individual children once a baseline has been completed. It is the responsibility of the teacher to write the final report at the end of the academic year, using information from data analysis, and evidence in learning journeys to ensure an accurate picture is given to parents. In Reception the class teacher is the key worker for the children in their class, who meets with parents, and completes the final assessment against the Early Learning Goals. Reporting is the responsibility of the class teacher.

## **Health and Safety and Safeguarding**

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2017) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

Within each classroom members of staff use mobile devices to record evidence to support recording observations and assessments for learning journeys. These photographs are used in children's learning journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to complete a permission slip to identify their wishes regarding photographs, which is included in their initial induction pack.

Please note that **NO** mobile phones are to be used when entering school or classrooms.

We are a healthy school, and our children under 5 receive free milk as well as having access to fresh drinking water. Fruit is also available daily from a Government scheme. For those children in Reception a hot free school meal is available, or children can choose to bring a healthy packed lunch.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but we will support children struggling with this. An intimate care policy must be signed before children start in our setting if they are still in nappies when they start, and will require changing.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection.