

The Priory Primary Academy Trust

Early Years Foundation (EYFS) Policy



January 2012
Reviewed annually by the governing body

Introduction

"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." *The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, p.7, 2008*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us, part time, at the beginning of the School year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- a unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments
- learning and development

A unique child

At The Priory Primary Academy Trust we recognise 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 feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as good work award assemblies. We have a house point rewards system to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning and an annual prize giving ceremony.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the School and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at the Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school 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 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 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 the Academy 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 well being of all children (see 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." *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, p.19, 2008*

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2007 and 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 the premises, furniture and equipment is 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

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 their child joins the Academy
- children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting during two taster mornings
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts
- providing parents with a weekly newsletter outlining special events and outlining what the children will be learning each week
- offering parents regular 'drop-in' sessions so that they have an opportunity to talk about their child's progress and to visit the reception classroom
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- inviting parents to two formal meetings per year for the teacher and the parent to discuss the child's progress and providing a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: school plays, Sports Day, children's tea parties for parents
- encouraging parents to complete and send into school 'WOWS' outlining their children's achievements.

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. The EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by a teaching assistant. We have good links with many pre-schools and visits are undertaken by the EYFS teacher, teaching assistant and Head Teacher. The EYFS teacher meets with staff to discuss new intake children.

Enabling environments

At the Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins 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 Schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTPs), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTPs in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

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 observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

We use the eProfile to record judgments against the EYFS profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against thirteen assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs and assessment scales. We provide opportunities for the parents to discuss these judgments with the EYFS teacher.

If appropriate, after seeking parental permission, the School will also carry out a SIDNEY test (Screening and Intervention for Dyslexia, Notably in the Early Years) in the Summer Term. This test ascertains the likelihood of a child having dyslexic tendencies.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has it own enclosed outdoor area. This has a 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 to explore use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all six areas of learning.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

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 EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. 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 well-being 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 ELG 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 school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

Play

"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." *Commitment 4.1, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2008*

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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

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." *Commitment 4.2, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2008*

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." *Commitment 4.3, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2008*

Children should be given 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.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development.

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

Monitoring and review

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

The Head Teacher and subject coordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.