



# GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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## 1. Policy Overview

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (effective from September 2021). This policy should be read together with the statutory framework.

The framework sets the standards for promoting the learning, development and safety of children from birth to five years in Ofsted registered settings and therefore covers all academies in Greenwood Academies Trust providing education to children under the age of five.

The Trust's policy and procedures in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are also reflected elsewhere within the Trust's general policy framework, included (but not limited to) within the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Pupil Behaviour and Exclusions Policy.

## 2. Aim

At the Academy we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the framework ***“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.”***

We adhere to the Statutory Framework and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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 learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

### 3. Overarching Principles

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum through explicit direct teaching and opportunities for consolidating application through challenging continuous provision, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning and development
- Use the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning', as described in the framework, as the vehicles for learning:
  - playing and exploring
  - active learning
  - creating and thinking critically
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by ongoing observation and informal assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, and where appropriate facilitated by the adult
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment, indoors and out

### 4. Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Practitioners plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning and development, as described in the framework, to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that young children should have gained by the end of the reception year.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

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 three areas are the **Prime Areas**:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **Specific Areas** are:

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development through 'fascination' thematic opportunities.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in nursery (F1) will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn

effectively and become ready for F2. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily systematic synthetic phonics session, including shared reading and writing, and a daily maths session, which focuses on numbers and numerical patterns. Alongside these adult directed teaching sessions, we plan for and deliver a challenging continuous provision for the children to access during their child initiated learning. Adults then facilitate the next steps of learning by extending these activities to ensure further challenge and consolidation. We ensure that enrichment opportunities are offered and that these support the children to make further meaningful connections in their learning.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Practitioners and academy leaders should strive to create and maintain strong, positive partnership with parents and carers as working together can have a significant impact on a child's learning.

Practitioners are expected to draw on links with each academy community to enrich and extend children's meaningful experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into settings.

## **5. Assessment**

As part of daily practice, children's development and learning is observed and assessed to inform future plans. Observations are recorded in a variety of ways; using annotated photos, 2Simple, Tapestry, learning stories & recording the individual child's voice. Academies will be mindful of the framework expectation that assessment 'should not entail prologued breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.' Any children who are identified as needing further support, will have appropriate interventions planned to bridge any gaps. This will usually be identified through regular Pupil Progress Meetings.

Significant observations of children's achievements should be collated, the format of which is determined by the academy.

GAT academies are expected to have an internal procedure to moderate EYFS assessments and trust-level moderation will also occur to develop practitioner confidence that assessments are robust and accurate. The trust will also collate termly information about the progress of children towards achieving a 'Good Level of Development'.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, the EYFS Profile must be completed for all children. This sets out each child's level of development against all of the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). The Profile must be shared with the Year 1 teacher and parents.

Parents will be invited to attend a parents evening during, at least, reception year. Parents should also be given the opportunity to discuss their child's Profile with a teacher in preparation for Year 1.

## **6. Safeguarding and Welfare**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. Academies should create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. As part of the Trust policy framework referenced at the beginning of this policy, we have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

Members of staff may not take photographs in EYFS using their own mobile phones or cameras.

The staff:child ratios as described in the framework must be adhered to and at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, and the following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. Children have ongoing access to drinking water throughout each day.

Practitioners and academy leaders are responsible for managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way. Practitioners must not use or threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child's well-being. This does not include where physical intervention was taken for the purposes of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if absolutely necessary. Academies must keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Working with other services and organisations is necessary in order to meet the needs of some children. At times academy leaders may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible for children's learning and development to be maximised.

## **7. Inclusion and Equality**

We value all our children as individuals. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that as many of our children as possible achieve and even exceed the early learning goals. Targetted intervention support is implemented at different times across the year to both support and extend all our learners. This will be done 1:1 or in small groups dependent on the needs of a specific cohort.

The EYFS curriculum and provision in our special schools aligns to that of the ambitions for EYFS children within our mainstream academies. Teachers use their specialist knowledge and skills to adapt the curriculum to meet the complex and diverse needs of pupils within our special academies and specialist provisions e.g DSPs.

We strongly believe that the early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with both parents and outside agencies.

## **8. Transitions**

Transitions need to be carefully planned for, and time given, to ensure continuity of learning. Effective partnerships should be developed with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child minders.

Children should be given the opportunity to attend introductory sessions before starting nursery (F1) to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In some settings, home visits will be done either in July or early September before the children start in reception (F2). This supports the class teacher with relevant information for planning the learning for each cohort. Children should have the opportunity to have several visits to the school before starting full time.

When planning the transition into reception (F2), academies should not prolong any part time learning. Whilst it is acknowledged that children need support to transition into school based settings, particularly those children that have not attended nursery, extending the period of time before they are in fulltime is not beneficial for most children, staff or families. It should also be noted that children on Free School Meals should be entitled to receive these every day from the beginning of the term in F2.

In the final term of EYFS, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the early learning goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children as they begin their transition into Key Stage 1. Reception children should have several planned visits into Y1 before starting the year.

\*A note on Foundation Stage terminology:

- Foundation Stage 2 is the first year of compulsory education for children between the ages of 4-5. It is also referred to as Reception or F2.
- Foundation Stage 1 is a non-compulsory year of education for children aged 3-4 years. It may take place within an Infant or Primary school; or a childcare environment such as a pre-school or a day-care nursery. It is referred to as F1 or nursery in GAT academies.