



ALSTON MOOR FEDERATION

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Aim

At Alston Moor Federation 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 learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

Objectives

At Alston Moor Federation we adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

Curriculum

According to the 'Good Practice in Early Education' Research Report, January 2017, good practice in relation to curriculum planning includes approaches that are:

- tailored to individual needs
- capitalised on children's interests in order to achieve learning outcomes
- flexible and responsive so that plans could be changed or adapted to follow the interests of the children and respond to external events
- informed by on-going assessment;
- grounded in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. The EYFS framework includes

seven areas of learning and development. Three of the areas are seen as particularly important and are therefore called the 'prime areas'.

Prime Areas:

O Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, nonfiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

O Physical development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

O Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Specific Areas:

○ Literacy:

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

○ Mathematics:

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

○ Understanding the World:

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

○ Expressive Arts and Design:

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their

experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Continuous Provision

At Alston Moor Federation, we aim to ensure:

- a clearly defined learning environment designed to allow and encourage children to extend and deepen their understanding of the EY curriculum.
- an environment that facilitates independence, curiosity and hands on play-based learning.
- that Continuous Provision enables children to explore recent learning, practice new skills and follow their own interests.
- staff enhance Continuous Provision through careful intervention and based on children's interests.
- carefully chosen and organised high-quality resources and experiences that are constantly available for children to access independently across every area of their learning.

Outdoor Learning

The environment, both indoors and outdoors, plays a key role in enabling and extending children's learning and development.

Children are encouraged to find and use equipment and resources independently and these are organised to allow all children including those with a disability and/or SEND to explore and learn in a secure and safe space for most of the day. Children are able to free flow between indoor and outdoor areas whilst remaining in ratio following statutory guidance for the EYFS.

When planning for outdoor learning we will be carefully considering:

- Children wearing suitable clothing, including waterproofs.
- Free flow arrangements so children are encouraged to follow their own interests.
- Extending the learning in the classroom – so that all curriculum areas are covered.
- Health and wellbeing understanding nature and growing opportunities.
- Opportunities for all.
- Utilising programmes such as Forest School and our own local environment.

All children have opportunities to explore the outdoor learning environment through free flow. They have the same opportunities to access the curriculum outdoors and indoors. Focused teaching occurs outdoors and indoors where children have opportunities to interact with all members of staff.

Welfare & 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 EYFS Statutory Guidance (2021)

- Children enjoy daily fruit and are encouraged to drink milk or water throughout the day
- Free school lunch is available to children
- Risk assessments are carried out when children go on a school visit in line with our Educational Visits Policy
- Transition is carefully planned for the children from Pre-School to Reception and Reception to Year 1
- Home visits are conducted at the end of the Summer term in order for us to gather and exchange important information that will help children settle well into Reception.
- A reception risk assessment is in place to review the health and safety arrangements on a regular basis.

Transition

• From Nursery/Pre-School – Reception

Our aim is to ensure children have a smooth transition from Nursery/Preschool to Reception. Home and Nursery/Pre-school visits support with this transition. Important induction information is shared with families, and staff find out about the needs and interests of the children that will help them to settle well into our Reception class.

As well as home visits, we offer transition days on the approach to starting school. Children have their home visit and are welcomed into the Reception class during the second half of the Summer Term. During this time activities are focused on getting to know each other, learning names, class rules and adapting to new routines.

• Reception – Year 1

We work very hard to prepare our children for Year 1 at the end of Reception, this begins in Summer Term. Time will be allocated to prepare the children for the more formal approach in year 1, where there is less free flow and individual choice of activities. The activities are still very practical and play based and will be adjusted to the needs and interests of the children. The outdoor space is still very much used during the transition period and follows the 'group learning' system.

Assessment

For every child starting Reception, our practitioners will complete a baseline assessment in their first 4 weeks of school. Children will also complete a Statutory Baseline Assessment which provides the Department of Education an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.

The 8 skills which we feel are vital for all children to succeed in Reception class and will enable their continued progression during their time at Alston Moor Federation.

Communicate - To be a good listener and a confident talker/communicator.

Care - To care for their and others physical and mental health.

Move - To move their bodies with control and balance.

Read - To read aloud and show understanding of simple sentences and share books they love.

Write - To write simple sentences and read aloud to adults.

Count - To be able to count, compare, recognise, combine and write numerals to 10.

Create - To share or perform a creation of theirs to others.

Explore - To explore, investigate and ask questions about the world around us, near and far. (Including Religious Education)

At the end of Reception, we use the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) to judge whether a child has reached expected levels of development.

“Tapestry”

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children’s development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways and everyone in class is encouraged to contribute. Observations of children’s achievements are collated in their own personal online ‘Tapestry’ Learning Journal. Parents/carers receive a notification when an observation has been added to their child’s Learning Journal and they can then view this observation and any related photographs/videos and assessments.

Parents/carers are encouraged to add their own comments and also to upload their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home and provide a holistic view of their child’s development.

DOJO and Seesaw

ClassDojo (APS) and Seesaw (NPS) brings each school community together, with one place for teachers and families to connect, communicate, and share learning experiences. These platforms are used daily to share fun and engaging activities completed in school, positive points awarded to children, home-work and home learning activities.

Aim

- To gather information that informs our understanding of a child's development and next steps.
- To ensure that our children have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- To develop children's awareness of the learning process and to involve them in and be part of their own self-assessment.
- To involve all significant people in a child's life.
- To monitor the development and progress of every child.
- To assist in the monitoring, evaluation and planning of the curriculum.
- To share information with staff, parents/carers and other agencies.
- To produce written information that will be forwarded to the child's Year 1 teacher.

Organisation of Activities

- **Child led:** The classroom and outdoor area in EYFS is set up in a way for children to carry out meaningful experiences to support their learning. Children are encouraged to seek resources to support them to be independent learners. This may be through using the displays in the classroom such as phonic sounds or selecting their own resources such as Numicon to support their number development. Adults in the room interact with children during these 'child led' moments to extend and develop their learning.
- **Adult led:** These activities cover a range of the curriculum subjects throughout the day. During the morning, activities with a Literacy and mathematic focus take place both indoors and outdoors. These activities lead on from the whole class input and support this teaching. In the afternoon the adult led activities range from the other areas of the curriculum.

At the end of Early Years Foundation Stage

The national expectation is for children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). At the end of EYFS, GLD is when a child achieves 'expected'; within all strands within the prime areas of learning as well as all strands within literacy and maths'. However, every child is unique with some who will still be working towards it.

Our aim is for all children to progress to their full potential (and at least make good progress from their relative starting points).

Useful documents linking to this policy include:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage April 2021.
- Reception timetable
- Reception Class Topic Web (half termly)
- Home School Agreement
- Induction Pack for new parents.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Governing Board.

Version Control	
Owned by:	EYFS Lead
Reviewed by:	Academic, pastoral and curriculum sub committee
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