



Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

“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 children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
Department for Education 2014

Aim

Our aim in the Foundation Stage is to provide a progressive and stimulating curriculum that will encourage each child to develop the skills, understanding and attitudes to work and play that will allow them to develop to their full potential.

To help children achieve their potential we, as an academy will:

- Give each child a happy, positive and magical start to their academy life;
- Offer a wide range of new and exciting experiences for the children to explore, test and consolidate;
- Provide an engaging, stimulating environment to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally;
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere;
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- Help children recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework which stipulates what we teach. The curriculum requires the children to access learning both indoors and outdoors.

The framework includes seven areas of learning and development. The first three areas are important to allow the children to show curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, develop further self-esteem and form relationships that will allow them to thrive. These areas are called ‘Prime areas’.

Prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking;

- **Physical Development** – Moving and Handling and Self Care;
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

The other four areas of learning are referred to as ‘Specific areas’. These areas help to develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. Specific areas are:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing;
- **Mathematics** – Number 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.

Each area of learning is implemented through carefully planned, purposeful play in which practitioners have considered the individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child.

In planning and guiding the children’s activities all practitioners observe and reflect on the **different ways** that the children learn.

These are formally known as the characteristics of effective learning and are described using the following three key characteristics:

- **Playing and exploring** – how the child investigates and experiences things, or their ‘have a go’ attitude;
- **Active learning** – how the child concentrates and can keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their own achievements;
- **Creating and thinking critically** – how the child develops their own ideas, makes links between their ideas, and develops strategies for doing things.

Assessment

Every child, on entry to the foundation stage, will be assessed across all areas of the EYFS framework, to form a baseline assessment of the children. This assessment will allow practitioners to plan according to the children’s next steps, from the start of their induction to the Academy. Children’s learning will also be assessed continually to ensure that future planning reflects the needs of all learners.

Each child has a profile which the practitioners continually gather evidence towards to assess where the children are and their next steps discussed. This evidence is gathered through observations, photographs, and videos as well as the work the children produce (both independently in the continuous provision and through adult led activity) and discussions with each child and their parents.

Assessment and next steps for children will be shared with parents at parent's evenings. At the end of the year, a written report will be sent home with each child to celebrate their achievements and identify their next steps. We encourage parents to sign up for 'Parent Share', so that assessment/observations can be shared with parents electronically throughout the year. This enables parents to provide valuable information from home, which can be fed into their child's assessment.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. The practitioners and the academy's SENDco will provide additional information and advice to parents and arrange external intervention and support as necessary. (See separate SEND policy).

In line with the academy's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of academy life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual.

The Induction Process

For children due to join Foundation Stage 1 (Nursery class) the induction process begins the term of their third birthday, with a view to them starting in the Nursery the term after they turn three years old. Our main induction for Nursery children is in September however the academies also induct children in January and April, spaces dependant. Our induction process is as follows:

- Foundation practitioners visit children and families in their home setting;
- Foundation practitioners meet with and/or contact pre-school practitioners (if applicable);
- Parents and children receive an invitation to a parent's meeting;
- Parents and children receive an invitation to a 'Stay and Play' session(s).

When children join the academy, a graduated programme will be used to allow children to adjust to their new surroundings and feel confident to leave their parents. This will be shared with parents at the home visits and during other transition events at the academy. Every child's induction will be individualised to meet their needs. (See separate Induction Programme leaflet).

The children moving from Foundation Stage 1 to 2 (Nursery to Reception) will spend transition sessions familiarising themselves with the practitioners and their new environment before the end of the summer term.

For children due to join Foundation Stage 2 (Reception class) in September the child's induction process will be as follows:

- Foundation practitioners visit children and families in their home setting;
- Foundation practitioners meet with and/or contact pre-school practitioners (if applicable);

- Parents and children receive an invitation to a parent's meeting.

Every child's induction will be individualised to meet their needs. (See separate Induction Programme leaflet).

Attendance

ESPRIT Multi-Academy Trust regularly liaises with the local authority in relation to attendance within our early years' provision. Evidence shows that attending high quality early education has a lasting impact on social and behavioural outcomes and regular attendance within the foundation stage can set good practice for statutory school.

At ESPRIT Multi-Academy Trust, all Nursery aged children are eligible for a 15 hour Nursery placement, but, we are committed to funding 30 hours of provision for all pupils. This will be funded by the school where parents are not eligible to claim 30 hours of education. However, where a child's attendance does not meet the requirements in the academy's attendance policy (such as reoccurring unauthorised absence and lengthy absences), the local authority may remove funding for this place, and the academy will remove your child's place and allocate it to another child on the waiting list. Therefore, it is important that your child's attendance remains above 96%.

Home and Academy Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the academy, parents and carers to work closely during the Foundation Stage years. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development, but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We develop this working relationship between the academy and parents and carers as follows:

- We outline the academy's expectations in a home-academy agreement;
- We hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling in;
- We operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner;
- If practitioners have concerns about the progress of a child, they will approach parents and carers to discuss them;
- Parents are able to contribute to their child's profile with observations from home;
- We conduct a further parent consultation late in the spring term to inform parents and carers formally of a child's progress and to discuss next steps;
- We encourage parent volunteers to help develop early reading in the academy.