Keelby Primary Academy

Belief

Respect

Empowerment

Built on botheredness . . .

the enquire learning trust

Early Years Policy

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Version History

Approved by:	Trustees
Last reviewed:	July 2026
Next review due by:	July 2027

Date	Author	Version	Comment
August 23	Delyth Linacre	1	NEW POLICY
August 24	Delyth Linacre	2	Reviewed
August 25	Delyth Linacre	3	Updated in line with EYFS Statutory Framework 2025
July 26	Delyth Linacre	4	Added paragraph about Strong Foundations and links to other EY welfare and care policies.

1. Aims

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Trust Academy Improvement Policy** – its values and aspirations, keystones, curriculum and assessment.

Our vision is to provide the very best learning environment for every child for them to reach their full potential. This includes children reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the reception year and therefore providing a solid foundation to build upon, for the start of Year 1. We recognise that within the Trust we have high levels of disadvantage and actively seek to diminish gaps through our provision and day-to-day practice.

The early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do.
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- it lays solid foundations for literacy and numeracy learning.
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- it encourages children to play and explore.
- it promotes active learning.
- it offers rich cultural capital to help diminish the disadvantage gap.
- it fosters creative and critical thinkers.

Our Early Years settings, including those with high levels of disadvantage, equip all our children with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding for future learning, but also for them to leave Early Years as empowered, independent and resilient individuals that have the confidence and ability to **communicate effectively, problem solve, develop ideas** and **think creatively.**

Our settings have a commitment to close partnership working with parents and carers to ensure an active and flourishing learning community.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the **statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (Sept 2025).**

3. Structure of Early Years

Across our academies our Early Years settings support children from 2 – 5 years old.

All our academies provide provision for 4 – 5-year-olds, the majority also provide nursery provision, and a growing number also provide 2-year-old provision.

Individual settings set and organise their hours for two-year-old and nursery provision. All provide 15 hours, and many, 30 hours. Some settings have flexibility as to how these hours are taken over the week.

4. Early Years Curriculum

All development and learning are guided by the **EYFS Statutory Framework**; our settings and provision reflect the four themes:

- ✓ **Unique Child**
- ✓ **Positive Relationships**
- ✓ **Enabling Environments**
- ✓ **Learning and Development**

Early Years staff plan together to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced across the following **areas of learning**:

- ✓ Communication and Language
- ✓ Physical Development
- ✓ Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Understanding of the World
- ✓ Expressive Arts and Design

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** are evident throughout all activities.

Play and Exploring = Engagement
Active Learning = Motivation
Creative and Thinking Critically = Thinking

Each of our Early Years settings have their own **unique curriculum** which draws on several influences and educational theory.

What and how we teach is in direct response to the needs of the children.

Learning is planned and built on the familiar. What the child can do is the starting point of their education.

Practitioners establish a clear understanding of children's **strengths**, **interests** and **learning styles** so that they can respond accordingly, delivering a curriculum that builds sensitively and effectively upon starting points.

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. Our Early Years settings help our youngest children to continue to do this by providing a wide range of experiences that are **appropriate for their age and stage of development**.

Practitioners understand that each age phase has special qualities, strengths and needs, and their reflective practice supports these.

Practitioners plan all learning through **active**, **first-hand experiences** where time is given for **sustained play** to **explore**, **experiment** and **discover** within a social environment which emphasises what the child thinks and enjoys.

Practitioners offer each child the opportunity to learn indoors and outdoors by planning the most appropriate curriculum for their stage of development.

For our youngest children, practitioners focus strongly on the **three prime areas** – communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional development, and gradually shift towards a more equal focus on all areas, as children grow and develop.

Curriculums are relevant to local surroundings and draw upon the resources available in the community to **strengthen cultural capital** and help **diminish any disadvantage gap**.

In the **reception year**, children have **daily direct teaching of mathematics**, **literacy** and **phonics.** There is a strong emphasis on **laying the foundations of literacy and numeracy**.

Building Strong Foundations in Early Years

We recognise that the Early Years is a critical period for **building the foundations** on which all future learning is based. Our provision prioritises the **development of secure communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development**, as these prime areas underpin children's capacity to access the wider curriculum. Through carefully **structured play, high-quality interact**ions and **well-sequenced experiences**, we support children to develop **strong schemas, working memory and self-regulation.**

Practitioners are highly attuned to **children's starting points** and ensure that learning is carefully layered and revisited, enabling children to embed key knowledge and skills over time. This approach ensures children develop the confidence, independence and resilience needed to engage successfully with more formal learning as they move into Key Stage 1.

5. Teaching and Learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through **planned**, **purposeful play**, and through a **mix of adult-led** and **child-initiated activities**. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Features of good Early Years practice in our academies include:

- 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 achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 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, extending their vocabulary.
- 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 regularly shared with parents.
- the **clear aims for our work**, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.
- the **regular identification of training needs** of all adults working within the EYFS.

Children learn best through the use of **effective pedagogy** – a mix of different approaches. Our practitioners understand that children learn through **play**, by **adults modelling**, by **observing each other**, and through **guided learning** and **direct teaching**.

Practitioners carefully organise **enabling environments** for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.

Children also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning. We recognise that older children need more guided learning.

A **well-planned learning environment**, **indoors** and **outside**, is an important aspect of our pedagogy.

Highly skilled adults support, extend and challenge learning, and develop knowledge through the **provision of continuous** and **enhanced play**, and by offering **new experiences**.

Where a child may have a **special educational need** or **disability**, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

6. Play

Play is important because it is the elemental learning process by which humankind has developed. Children have an instinctive desire to play whatever culture they are born into.

Play encompasses children's behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development. Physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills, all of which underpin academic development, are all developed through play. It also allows the beneficial exposure of children to some levels of risk and challenge, giving them the chance to learn about the real consequences of risk taking. Play provides the opportunities for children to apply skills taught formally into real life situations.

In our Early Years settings, we do not see teaching as separate from play or infer teaching to mean one fixed view of how things should be done. We see teaching as the many ways in which adults, consciously or otherwise, help children to learn. Our Early Years seek every opportunity to support play and create an environment that fosters it.

7. Enabling Environments

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin everything that we do in our EYFS environments. They are rooted in the science of how children learn and therefore guide and support the ways in which we create our learning spaces.

Our Early Years settings:

- Foster environments that actively encourage children to play and explore. Not only to play freely, but support children's learning through implicit and explicit challenge.
- Have lots of elements of 'ambiguity' and 'open-endedness' where resources are open to interpretation and exploration depending on who is holding them.

- Present interesting and relevant learning opportunities within the environment in order to support children to be 'active learners', demonstrating engagement, concentration and resilience when attempting a task. This includes creating environments led by children's interests.
- Enable children to think, puzzle and work things out on their own and with others.
- Are great thinking environments! Where adults and children are developing and applying thinking strategies, accepting differences, hypothesising and extending thinking using ever-expanding vocabularies.
- Encompass both indoors and outside. Outdoor provision is such a crucial part of the EYFS curriculum and receives equal weighting in terms of planning and resourcing as indoors.

8. Assessment

In our academies', ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Our academies carry out all **statutory assessments** as outlined below:

When a child is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools and academies within the Trust, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.

EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

9. Role of Parents/Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

10. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We recognise that 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 safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory **staff:child ratios** are maintained in our settings to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children.
- For children aged 3 and over:
    - Where there is a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, an instructor or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher:
        - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children.
        - For all other classes, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
    - Where a person with the above qualifications has oversight of the children but is not always directly working with them, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children.

All our early years practitioners have a paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Our academies promote good oral health, as well as good health in general by talking to the children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Some of our academies have introduced supervised tooth brushing. Here we follow the Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in:

- Safeguarding policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Safe Sleeping Policy

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Delyth Linacre (Director) annually.

At every review, the policy will be shared with The Trust Board and academies.