



Policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)



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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure: that pupils learn in an enabling and purposeful Early Years environment where the curriculum is broad, balanced and progressive. The environment will be made up of carefully planned continuous provision. It will be open ended so that children are the owners of their own learning and can use their interests and passions as well as developing key skills. There will be a balance of adult led and child led activities. The adult led activities will vary depending on the needs. Some will be more formal, rigorous and pacy, other sessions will be calm and led at a slower pace.

It is a diverse world and children need to experience different types of learning. A range of taught knowledge and skills will mean that children have a secure foundation, and they will make good progress through the academy and life. The Early Years will be run as a unit so that adults are best used to ensure we deliver the best care and learning for every child. With all adults working together, we will ensure quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every pupil makes good progress.

We will work together with parents/carers, as they too should be part of, and responsible for, their child's education. Every pupil will be included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2023 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The EYFS includes Nursery age pupils (children can start the term they are three) and Reception age children. For Nursery age children we run two sessions: 8.45-11.45am and 12-3pm with the option to stay all day. The nursery accepts 30-hour funding and paid top up hours for families who are not eligible for full hours.

All children transitioning into our EYFS classes are offered a range of transition events – meetings (remote/in person); presentations; taster sessions and appointments with other providers and parents. We ask all parents to complete a 'starting points' document – the information is used to provide resources and activities that match the children's interests.

We have chosen to operate as an EYFS unit – through this we have a consistent and seamless pedagogy through the early years. The way the classes are structured is dependent on the cohort for that academic year – in terms of meeting the children's needs and ensuring they make good progress.

All teachers and TAs work together in a team approach to ensure that our expectations and planning are joined up and universal. This also enables us to use practitioners where it is most appropriate for learning, as well as for safeguarding and care. In short, our pedagogy is based on creating curious, active, independent learners ready for lifelong learning and whom fulfil their potential.

Children learn in a carefully designed and open-ended enabling environment using Continuous Provision, with informed interactions, and emphasis on vocabulary. Central to our environment is the concept of 'koselig' to ensure that children are in the best place to learn (koselig is a concept that is rooted in Norwegian culture and is about being content and creating a pleasant environment in a social setting).

We have a holistic approach to learning where we pay attention to children's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual well-being as well as the cognitive aspects of learning. The cognitive aspects take the form of explicitly taught curriculum focus sessions; pupils in Nursery have adult led activities every day; in Reception, pupils are taught structured, adult led, daily phonics, reading, handwriting and maths sessions.

Teaching is differentiated so that children can access learning and concepts at their ability. Working walls provide tools so that children can refer to them when problem solving. Observations and assessment are used to ascertain what children know and to plan for what they don't.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting builds a curriculum which is developmental and follows the educational programmes set out in the 2023 statutory framework of the EYFS. Our curriculum consists of the following interconnected elements: -

Characteristics of effective learning

These describe the behaviours needed for children to learn. Our curriculum is designed to teach children how to be curious and approach new situations with energy and enthusiasm. Activities on

offer are meaningful so that children can use, apply and rehearse what they have learnt. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are: -

- **Playing and exploring** – opportunities to investigate and experience things and have a go.
- **Active learning** – being able to concentrate and keep on trying when difficulties are encountered; enjoying achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – developing own ideas; make links between ideas and developing a range of strategies for doing things.

Prime areas

These areas lay vital foundations in the early years – they enable a child to access the world around them and relationships with other people. The three Prime areas are: -

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED) – seeing oneself in a positive light, making good relationships with others, developing social skills, developing confidence and managing emotions.

Communication and language (CL) – developing the skills to confidently express oneself, widening vocabulary, enhancing listening and attention skills; understanding verbal and non-verbal communication.

Physical development (PD) - giving children opportunities to be active, to move and learn about their bodies.

The prime areas are fundamental building blocks for children to develop well. Our curriculum is planned so that all three Prime areas are always in action - in every activity, the child is experiencing feelings and developing a sense of self and others, is physically engaged through their senses and movements, and is learning to understand and communicate with others.

Specific areas

There are four main specific areas. All four areas represent important features of a child's early development: -

- **Literacy** - this covers both reading and writing. Developing language skills are crucial for a child to be able to communicate and understand the world.
- **Mathematics** - numbers, shape, space and measures.
- **Understanding the World** - People and Communities (events in the past and the present, differences in the way we live and traditions); The World (similarities and differences in environments, objects, materials and living things); and Technology (an understanding of how technology is used).
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – (singing, making music, dance, role play, storytelling, using materials, tools and techniques in art and design).

All of the areas of learning and development are vitally important. Our curriculum is designed so that they are interwoven so that children have a holistic education.

5. Planning

Long term planning includes mapping the continuous provision to show how it meets the 7 areas of the curriculum and 3 characteristics of effective learning. Our long and medium term plans also include: success for all phonics, White Rose Math, RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education).

Our long-term and medium-term child-led planning is carried out using the EYFS educational programmes and Arch Pathway next steps/developmental stages (with reference to Development Matters 2021). Each child is tracked against the Characteristics of Effective Learning and seven areas. Observations inform assessments and planning, and each child has their own 'learning journey' on the Arch pathway site. Our curriculum is created and delivered to ensure that the level of development is as the children are expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS as defined by the early learning goals (ELGs). Each child has a mark making book to evidence progression.

Our short-term planning includes a daily plan so that every adult knows where they should be and what is being taught. The teachers collate the children's assessment and observations and provide a list of focus children to inform all adults of interactions and possible next steps to inform 'planning in the moment'. With reference to the EYFS 2023, observations and assessments are uploaded when they provide 'pivotal learning' – that is when they are necessary to inform assessments and individual next steps to take a child's learning on, to aid memory, or to prove a point. Therefore, when these observations are 'pivotal' to the child's journey. It is recognised that it is also appropriate for a practitioner to be able to articulate a child's stage of development by drawing on their learning experiences of the child (these are not always written down).

Practitioners plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. Practitioners also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

6. Teaching

Each area of learning and development and the characteristics of effective learning are implemented through planned, purposeful continuous provision, play and adult interactions. There is a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through positive, well informed and dynamic interactions. These interactions involve teaching children during planned and child initiated play and activities – communicating and modelling language; showing; explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging and questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating; setting challenges.

Teaching in the Early Years also takes account of: the equipment practitioners provide; the physical environment; the structures and routines of the day that establish expectations; assessment of what children know, understand and can do; children's interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning); use of observations and assessment to plan children's next steps in order to 'plan in the moment'; monitoring their progress.

Adult led activities develop and lengthen in tune with the children's development. As children grow older, and as it is developmentally appropriate, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children's transition for year 1.

7. Assessment

In the Early Years at Reffley Academy ongoing assessment is an integral part of the 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. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

At the beginning of Nursery, staff complete Arch Pathway (academy) baseline assessments with the children. The statutory baseline assessments are completed for Reception age children each September. These assessments are then used to inform planning and learning. Observations are constantly uploaded onto Arc Pathway and children are tracked to travel through the stages of their development and to reach the expected levels as defined by the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

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 then shared with parents/ carers.

8. Working with parents/carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. Photographs and updates are shared regularly on Dojo. Staff see parents every day when they drop off and pick up. There are 2 parents' evenings a year and an annual report. Staff put on workshops on reading, phonics, play etc. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents/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/carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

9. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy and Intimate Care Policy.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The Early Years is monitored by the headteacher. Practitioners work together every day, and peer support and questioning are part of our everyday strive to self-evaluate and provide the best for the Early Years children. Observations are undertaken and feedback provided for all staff in early years. All early year's staff have a supervision where mentoring continues. The Headteacher and other academy staff provide more formal observations too. Each year all staff take part in our performance management process.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Health and Safety Policy First Aid Policy Policy for Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Intimate Care Policy
Administering medicines policy	Policy for Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
Emergency evacuation procedure	Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Safeguarding Policy Nursery Procedures
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints Policy
Procedure for dealing with behaviour	Inclusion and Behaviour Policy