



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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‘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.’

(Early Years Statutory Framework, 2021)

Statement of Intent

Our vision is to promote a love of learning in order to maximise the life chances of every child in our Trust. Through nurturing, high expectations and skilled teaching, we will have a lasting and positive impact on our local and wider community.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Act which came into force in April 2011, the Trust has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

All our Trust schools are gold level Rights’ Respecting schools. By becoming Rights’ Respecting schools, we have adopted a coherent values framework which shapes the ethos and curriculum of the school. In our learning, teaching, action and word, we recognise and support the rights of all children, and celebrate diversity. This, and our core values of: trust, excellence, aspiration, collaboration and honesty, underpin our educational provision. This enables us to improve self-esteem, enhance moral and academic development, improve relationships and behaviour, eliminate prejudice, and develop global citizenship

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate our philosophy, aims, principles and ethos in the Early Years Foundation Stage at TEACH Trust. Our philosophy is based on nurturing life-long learners by valuing the individual child and supporting them in developing their creativity and social skills. We believe that a child with high self-esteem will flourish in education and thrive in life.

Aims and Principles

At TEACH Trust, we are determined to create the right environment for children when they first start school. We carefully plan every aspect of the school year with the following aims in mind:

- To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To deliver an Early Years curriculum that deals with educating the whole child so that they are life long learners.
- To ensure that no child should be excluded or disadvantaged.
- To ensure that early years experiences build upon what children know and can already do.
- To ensure that parent(s)/carer(s) and practitioners work together.
- To create a happy purposeful atmosphere, based on a spirit of co-operation between members of staff, children and parent(s)/carer(s).
- To be concerned with the exploration of the world through senses, feelings and experiences, allowing young children to learn through well-planned play activities.
- To provide active learning experiences, giving children opportunities to explore practical activities, make decisions independently, and develop problem-solving skills.
- To provide structured teaching activities, which start from the child’s knowledge and understanding.
- To promote independence, confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- To provide well organised, rich and stimulating experiences.
- To encourage children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.
- To ensure that we provide high quality care and education.

- To ensure that we work in partnership with children and parent(s)/carer(s), building an honest and open relationship.

In the Early Years at the TEACH Trust, we believe that every pupil is unique. We ensure all children have the opportunity to develop and learn in a safe and nurturing environment where play and learning is combined. Through practical learning experiences, we strive to equip children with a love of learning and a natural curiosity. We are committed to giving our pupils the best possible start to their school life, teaching those skills that ensure their well-being now and success in the future.

Intent

Our intent is to:

- Establish a nurturing, bright and exciting environment that offers interesting and challenging activities in which learning can take place.
- Respond to children's interests and use them to develop planning.
- Deliver a curriculum based on entitlement for all, that considers each child's existing knowledge, and where the children can engage in first hand experiences.
- Give children opportunities to practise, revise and extend knowledge and skills in a consistent and stable environment.
- Enable children to develop characteristics of effective learning, which will allow them to become independent, resourceful and resilient learners now and throughout their education.
- Provide learning opportunities that form the foundations of a well-sequenced progression which continues through Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Facilitate effective transition from EYFS into Key Stage 1 learning through carefully planned provisions for curriculum content and character development.

Concepts:

Our curriculum is designed to develop the characteristics of effective Learning:

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

Implementation

In order to implement our intent, we provide:

- A curriculum that is broad and balanced, which builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils, from their own individual starting points.
 - A curriculum that uses a combination of topic themes and enriched opportunities.
 - Meaningful learning experiences that develop each pupil's characteristics of learning.
 - High quality interactions with adults, which has a direct impact on the progress of all pupils.
 - Opportunities for assessment through careful observation, recorded through 'Bubble Ups' or electronically via '2Simple'. The observations are consequently used to inform the next steps for the child's learning, as well as sharing wonderful achievements. They are then shared with parent(s)/ carer(s) at the end of the year.
 - An effective and engaging environment in which pupils can access all areas of learning, both inside and outside, at any one time.
 - Home learning opportunities that allow children to build on their school experiences at home.
 - A carefully planned timetable that provides a balance of both adult and child-initiated activities alongside direct teaching.
 - Opportunities for children to work individually, in groups or as a whole class.
 - Daily differentiated phonics lessons alongside the continuous provision where phonics, reading and writing activities are available for children to consolidate and extend their phonic skills and knowledge.
 - High quality professional development for staff to deliver our curriculum to the highest standard.
 - An Early Years leader who monitors teaching and learning to improve standards and outcomes alongside the support of other Senior Leadership Team members.
 - Regular opportunities for parent(s)/carer(s) to attend sessions to support learning at home, celebrate achievements and be involved in school life in a variety of ways.
 - A growth mindset approach to promote positive attitudes towards learning, which reflect the values and skills needed to promote responsibility for learning and future success.
- An evidence-informed approach to support children to make progress by knowing more and remembering more

Impact

Through implementing the above;

- All children make good or better progress socially, emotionally, academically, creatively and physically, from their varied starting points.
- We strive for every child to reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception, or in some cases, to reach their own individual targets.
- Evidence of children's achievements are recorded in writing books and both physical and electronic Learning Journey documents.
- Class teachers make formative assessments which inform in the future planning and ensure that all pupils build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace.
- Judgements are moderated regularly, both within school and externally with local schools, including between partner schools within TEACH Trust.
- Children become fantastic role models and are happy, keen to learn and feel safe to try new things.
- Individuality is valued and each child has the opportunity to achieve and excel, based upon their own personal strengths and interests.
- Children are ready to transition from the Early Years curriculum to the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- Children demonstrate curiosity, independence, resilience and other characteristics of effective learning as well as our Teach Trust values of **trust, excellence, aspiration, collaboration and honesty**.

Entitlement and Equal Opportunities

- All children start at TEACH Trust in the September of the year in which they will be 5 years old, unless their parent(s)/carer(s) wish to appeal to defer entry.
- All children are provided with equal access to the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum regardless of their protected characteristics. (Also see TEACH Trust Equalities policy)
- The children work at their own level, progressing through the developmental stages, leading to the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).
- At TEACH Trust, we adopt an inclusive approach to education where the needs of children with SEND, EAL or higher attaining pupils are carefully met. (Also see TEACH Trust Inclusion policy)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching and learning in Early Years at TEACH Trust is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory framework and the four guiding principles that shape practice within the Early Years. The four guiding principles provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children.

1. Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. 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 parent(s) and/or carer(s).
4. Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

There are seven main areas of learning, ensuring there is breadth and balance to the curriculum. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected. There are three prime areas of learning and these 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 areas are:-

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

There are four specific areas of learning and these areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

At TEACH Trust, we plan an integrated curriculum in line with the rest of the school. We ensure every area of learning is delivered in a stimulating and relevant way for the children. We carefully plan for the four commitments ensuring all areas are covered equally throughout the year. When planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and we support children using the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are:

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

Active Learning through Play

We are committed to child-initiated learning and believe in children learning through well-considered play opportunities. We ensure the children have a balance of structured and unstructured play in their week through a varied timetable.

'Children at play are able to stay flexible, respond to events and changing situations, be sensitive to people, to adapt, think on their feet, and keep altering what they do in a fast-moving scene. When the process of play is rich, it can lead children into creating rich products in their stories, paintings, dances, music making, drawings, sculptures and constructions, or in the solving of scientific and mathematical problems.'
(Bruce, 2001, p.46)

We recognise that very young children learn most effectively through play. This is because it is a vehicle that provides children with vital feedback in a non-threatening way. *"The games children play are their means for exploring the world's intricacies. And when enmeshed in such play, children have no ends in mind, no goals, no limitations."* ('Learning with the Body in Mind' Eric Jensen). Intrinsic learning thrives in an environment of low threat, high feedback and lots of fun, where many chances to learn are inherent. We aim to encourage children to learn from the mistakes they make without facing the fear of failure. Effective play allows children to take charge over events and conquer fears. We also feel that it is particularly important as a tool for developing good social behaviours and prompting the use of critical and creative thinking.

At TEACH Trust, play in EYFS is an integral part of learning. When planned effectively, we believe that it helps to develop the whole person, motivation is intrinsic and children experience high levels of success.

The types of play offered will be appropriate to the individual children's needs and include:

- Adult led – adult interacts with the play to influence and guide its outcome
- Adult initiated – where the child engages in activities set up by the adult
- Child led – where the child makes their own decisions about the kind of play and the outcome of the play from a given range
- Child initiated – where the child has complete decision making and directional control of the play

Teaching and Learning

Teaching methods in Early Years Foundation Stage will accommodate the different ways children learn by planning for the same learning objective in a range of different ways. These include:

- A curriculum that is led by the children's interests.
- A multi-sensory practical approach as a starting point, building on the concrete rather than the abstract.
- Praise and encouragement to establish an ethos in which individual efforts are valued.
- A balance of groupings to include whole class, small collaborative groups, peer partner, individual, attainment and mixed attainment as appropriate.
- A balance of child led and adult led activities and direct teaching, which includes modelling expectations.
- A daily timetable, which allows time for each child to engage with a key person.

Classroom assistants or other adults (when available) will be planned for to support groups and/or individuals where appropriate.

- The EYFS builds on what children already know, understand and can do. It aims to provide learning based on first hand experiences and values parent(s)/carer(s) as the child's continuing educator.
- It enables the teachers to meet the needs of all children, including those working at a level that exceeds the requirements of the ELGs.

Assessment

A statutory 'on entry assessment' is completed for each child within the first few weeks of entering school. This, coupled with teachers' observations and interactions with each child, provides a secure assessment of individual's developmental stages to enable appropriate teaching and learning to be planned for all learners.

Throughout the year, assessment is completed alongside the EYFS Curriculum. The children are observed both in their play and focused activities and notes are made about their achievements. Mid-year progress is tracked against the Developmental Checkpoints set out in the EYFS. These are updated and learning is tracked until the final profile assessment in June. At the end of the year, a Narrative of the Characteristics of Learning is completed for each child showing what and how they have learnt.

Our careful and thorough planning and assessment in the EYFS ensure we fully fulfil the teaching and learning requirements of the EYFS. Our tracking system ensures the different needs of individuals are addressed quickly and effectively.

Health and Safety

The health and safeguarding of all the children in our care is of paramount importance at TEACH Trust and we have many stringent policies and procedures in place to ensure high standards of care are met. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. Please refer to our Health and Safety policy, Child Protection policy, Equality policy, Off Site policy, School Prospectus and Behaviour policies for further detail.

Admission/Induction Arrangements and Partnership with Parent (s)/Carer(s)

Admissions to our school are completed following the guidelines published by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority. The children begin school in September in the academic year of their fifth birthday.

The opportunities below are given to allow children and parent(s)/carer(s) to become familiar with their new school and teacher.

About Our School

Open days/evenings and meetings are held in the year before the child starts school. Our Trust mission and values are outlined, as well as admissions procedures and information on the curriculum. There is a detailed tour of the EYFS base and all other areas in school. Parent(s)/carer(s) are given the opportunity to ask questions about admissions, our school philosophy etc. Admission forms and a school prospectus are available on request.

Liaison with Pre-School Settings

Meetings and conversations are held between pre-school leaders and the Early Years Foundation Stage leaders at TEACH Trust. During these meetings general practise is discussed as well as the needs of children currently in Early Years Foundation Stage and those due to start school in September. Children from our main feeder pre-schools may also be invited to attend performances hosted by the school, to aid familiarisation with the school setting.

In the term before the children start school, many of the pre-schools are visited by the Early Years Foundation Stage Leaders.

Welcome to Early Years Meeting

A meeting is held and all prospective parent(s)/carer(s) are invited. Our core aims and principles in the Early Years Foundation Stage are identified; school routines, ways of working in a reception classroom, information about the EYFS curriculum and assessment procedures are provided. Parent (s)/carer(s) receive a 'Welcome to Early Years' pack, including a letter informing them of which class their child will be in and who their teacher will be. They are also given the opportunity to visit their child's class and meet the class teacher.

Initial Visits

Children and parent(s)/carer(s) are invited to visit the school for a morning. Senior members of staff meet with the parent(s)/carer(s), giving them the opportunity to discuss important information about their child and any worries or concerns they may have. The children go with their new teacher and teaching assistant to their new classroom.

The children are given the opportunity to work in small groups exploring their classroom environment. The teacher and teaching assistant carry out informal observations and discussions with the children.

During the visit, children and parent(s)/carer(s) are introduced to some of our school routines, particularly how we end the school day and greet parent(s)/carer(s) in the Early Years playground.

Staggered visits

During the first full school week in September, for one morning only, the children attend school in small groups of six to eight children. Over the course of the morning, the children are given a brief tour of the Early Years Foundation Stage base, the school hall, office and a visit to the Head Teacher's office. The teachers and teaching assistants use this morning to carry out some of the 'On entry' assessment observations. Over the following three weeks a staggered entry is in place so that routines are gradually introduced and the children can begin to form relationships in a safe, secure environment. In the second week of term, all children attend school every morning up until lunchtime so the children are able to meet the rest of their class. In the third week, the children stay for lunch and go home after afternoon registration. By the fourth week, the children attend full time.

Home/School Partnership

At TEACH Trust we value the contribution of all the adults involved in a child's life and strive to establish positive relationships with them, as highlighted in the EYFS Framework. We believe a good relationship with parent(s)/carer(s) is vital in the development of all children. We recognise that parent(s)/carer(s) are the children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We establish a positive relationship and recognise the role that parent(s)/carer(s) play through:

- A home visit by each child's key adult(s) from the school before the children begin school in September.
- Running curriculum workshops where we explain how we teach Reading, Writing and Mathematics and how they can support their child at home. We may also run curriculum workshops where parent(s)/carer(s) are invited in to play games with their child and speak to the class teacher if necessary.
- Providing a curriculum newsletter at the beginning of each term and a curriculum map of the term on the school website.
- Holding formal parent(s)/carer(s) evening in October and February.
- Encouraging parent(s)/carer(s) to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Reporting on children's progress and attainment at the end of the school year.
- Arranging activities throughout the year to invite parent(s)/carer(s) into school to celebrate their child's learning, e.g. performances, 'Fab finishes' for our topics.
- Parent(s)/carer(s) share through 'Evidence me'. Every parent(s)/carer(s) is invited to sign up to parent(s) share where photos of their child's learning is captured and sent to them at the end of every half term/the year. Parent(s)/carer(s) are also invited to capture their own learning points at home and send them through the 'parent(s) share'.
- Written contact through the home school reading records as well as the acknowledgement that parent(s)/carer(s) can ring/email school to contact staff.

Home School Learning

The children are encouraged to discuss the learning they do at home with parent (s)/carer(s) to develop their thought processes.

From the end of the Autumn Term, the children take home story books from the library to share with their parent(s)/carer(s). The children also take home a phonics and keyword workbook. Parent (s)/carer(s) are informed of how they can support their children as a result of meetings held with the class teacher. As soon as it is felt appropriate, the children take home 'Home Learning Challenges' where they can complete a fun activity directly linked to what they have been learning about in the week. Parent(s)/Carer(s) are given suggestions and tips on how to complete the weekend challenge. As soon as it is appropriate, children will take home a book band book to read at home.

Newsletters

Termly curriculum newsletters identify key areas of learning for the following term, as well as some activities the children will carry out. Long, medium and short-term plans are readily available to parent(s) on request.

Regular letters are sent home informing parent(s)/carer(s) of events and how they can become involved.

All letters are also uploaded on the TEACH Trust school websites:

<http://www.adastra.poole.sch.uk>

<http://www.chis.poole.sch.uk>

Learning Environment

The learning environment, both indoors and out, is of crucial importance in stimulating and encouraging active learning and thinking. Within the classroom, resources are clearly labelled with words and pictures in order to promote the children's independence. The classrooms are organised into key areas including Communication Language and Literacy, maths, creative, exploring and investigating.

Systems and routines are in place to provide safety and security and to develop confidence, high self-esteem, knowledge and understanding. (See Health and Safety policy).

Outdoors

The Early Years Foundation Stage Handbook emphasises the importance of using the outside environment as a tool for learning. At each TEACH Trust infant school, there is a fenced Early Years area for the children to use at various times of the day, for their child-initiated learning. Part of this area has a canopy enabling the children to access the outside area in all weathers. The outdoor toys are rotated regularly to ensure the children have a variety of opportunities to extend their learning and skills through play. Damaged resources are reported to the EYFS senior leader and carefully disposed of or repaired to a safe standard.

Policy updated: July 2021

Review Date: July 2022

Equality Impact Assessment EYFS

Question	Response	
Which relevant groups and stakeholders have been consulted with in relation to this policy?		Please tick
	Pupils	
	Trustees	√
	Staff	√
	Parent(s)/Carer(s)	
	Local Authority	
	Trade Unions	
	Other Advisors (give details)	
What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy?	Termly	
	Annually	√
	When applied	
	If legislation changes	✓
	If a formal complaint	√

Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address potential positive/negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	✓	Risk that children with disabilities may not be able to access all resources	Assessment of individual's needs and provision of specialised resources as needed to enable equitable access
Gender reassignment			
Marriage or civil partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Race			
Religion or belief			
Sexual orientation			
Sex (gender)			
Age			
SEN	✓	Risk that children with SEN may not be able to access all resources	Assessment of individual's needs and provision of specialised resources as needed to enable equitable access
Vulnerable			
Traveller, migrant, refugees and people seeking asylum			
EAL	✓	Children with EAL may acquire reading at a slower pace and therefore written signposting will be hard to follow	Written signposting accompanied by visual cues to support language acquisition