



THE HILL
PRIMARY ACADEMY

Astrea Academy Trust
INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Written by	Mrs S Mason
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The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year. In our school, the Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5. At our school we have a 78 place nursery, which offers 39 places in the morning session and 39 places in the afternoon session. Children join FS1 (Nursery) the term after their third birthday. They then start full time school, FS2 (Reception) in the September of the year in which they are five.

Intent

At The Hill Primary Academy, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is crucial in securing solid foundations that children are going to continue to build upon throughout their school life. It is our intent that the children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. We believe that all children deserve to be valued as an individual and we are passionate in allowing all children to achieve their full, unique potential.

Curriculum - Implementation

Our Early Years setting follows the non-statutory Development Matters curriculum guidance which supports children in meeting the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development. All seven areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

There are three **prime areas** of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

There are four **specific areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In addition to these areas of learning, we strive for our children to develop effective characteristics of learning which will enable them to become learners for life.

We believe that reading is the key to all other learning and are committed to giving children the best opportunities to become confident readers. We do this by ensuring that high quality phonic sessions are taught daily using the whole school approach of Read, Write, Inc.

Children take part in a minimum of two shared story sessions each day. During this session, staff read a range of books including fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

Children's individual reading books are closely matched to their phonic ability and staff listen to children read their book once a week. We encourage parents to listen to their child read their reading book at least four times a week and to recognise the importance of reading to their child on a daily basis to promote an enjoyment and love of reading.

We understand that children need a vast range of vocabulary in order to succeed in life. Therefore, we place huge importance on the development of children's vocabulary. We ensure that staff are skilled in assessing early speech and language development and have the expertise to support children in being able to communicate their thoughts and ideas and explore the meaning of new words. New vocabulary is taught explicitly through reading sessions and chatter topics.

We aim to develop a love for learning by:

- Carefully planning sequences of learning that provide meaningful moments and learning experiences, developing each of the child's characteristics of learning.
- Plan opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Use high quality questioning and interactions to check understanding and address misconceptions.
- Staff acting as role models to the children they teach in order for children to develop their own speaking and listening skills.
- Using AFL to understand each child's current strengths and next steps to meet their individual needs.
- Developing an effective and engaging environment that is set up so that children can access all areas of learning both inside and outside at any one time.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued.
- Allowing children to be successful in their attempts at an activity and using effective feedback to help facilitate next steps in learning.
- Suggesting home learning opportunities with information about what has been taught, allowing parents to build on their child's school experiences, at home.

The EYFS is based upon four principles. A unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development.

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is unique and that they develop in their own way and at different rates. Our staff use their knowledge of each child and knowledge of early years pedagogy skilfully to support children in the next steps of their learning. The 'Characteristics of learning' are developed and embedded by learning through play in continuous provision and through interactions with attentive and experienced adults which develop deep sustained shared thinking.

Positive Relationships

We believe it is vitally important to develop a partnership between all the adults involved with each child. By working together, we can provide knowledge of the 'whole child' to assist their future learning needs. Our staff work with all children in their class. However, each child has a 'Key worker' who works more closely with them to observe progress. The Key Worker is also central in providing consistency for children within their care and learning.

Positive relationships are key to every child's education. We pride ourselves in developing excellent working relationships with parents; understanding their role as the first educators of their children. We also develop excellent relationships with the children by helping them to share, care and learn together.

Enabling Environments

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's learning and development. We provide the children with a nurturing environment which allows them explore and learn securely and safely where there are areas to be active or be quiet and reflective. Well organised and stimulating provision, both indoors and outdoors, encourage creativity, independence, self-belief and confidence.

Through play, our children have the opportunity to have a range of first-hand experiences, practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. We encourage our children to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. We use praise, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Learning and Development

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. Staff consider 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.

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

Planning, Teaching and Learning

Due to the fact that many of our children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with limited experiences, planning is based around half termly topics that excite and engage children, whilst widening their knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff may alter these themes throughout the year in response to the next steps and interests of the children.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through well-planned, purposeful play, and a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Our staff follow the 'I do, we do, you do' model in order for children to consolidate skills and then apply them independently through self-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests and guide their learning and development through warm, positive and focussed interactions.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1. When taking part in more adult-led activities, children are provided with verbal feedback at the point of learning to address misconceptions and to provide further challenge.

Assessment - Impact

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff interactions with the children identify their current level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These interactions provide staff with precise next steps and are used to inform future planning. Staff also take into account observations and information shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child starts the setting and they have settled into school, staff complete a short observation and baseline assessments. This first assessment is a snap shot of the prime areas of learning alongside Literacy and Maths attainment. The children in FS2 also complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a short assessment which the children complete within six weeks of starting reception.

There are three further assessment points through the school year. These take place at the end of each term to record each child's attainment and to identify gaps in learning and next steps. Pupil progress meetings are planned half termly to identify individuals/groups who require targeted interventions or further challenge to enable them to achieve at least the expected progress on their individual journey towards achieving a Good Level of Development.

Within the final term of the school year, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

We provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the ELG's. The parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher. This information is also shared with Year 1 teachers and reported to the local authority.

Inclusion

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We value the diversity of individuals and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Further information can also be found in our SEN report which is on our school website or can be made available if requested. Our Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDSCO) is Mrs Kirsten Middleton, who can be contacted via the main office.

Safeguarding and Welfare

At The Hill Early Years Foundation Stage, it is important to us that all children in the setting understand how to stay safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children are allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. All staff are aware of and follow our whole school safeguarding procedures. (See Whole School Safeguarding Policy)

Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. The Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. As is stated in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022):

*"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child"*

We understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Ensure that children are kept safe in education.
- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with adults caring for them." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2021)

To ensure children are released safely at the end of the day, we hold a list of parent nominated people who are allowed to collect a child in the absence of their parent. Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone who is not on list unless a message has been given verbally to the teacher or via telephone through the office. Any child that is uncollected will be looked after in school while their parent or carer is contacted. If contact cannot be

made the secondary contacts will be contacted. If we are unable to make contact we will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will attempt further contact. If contact is still not made after 30 minutes the local authority safeguarding team will be contacted.

Barnsley Social Care Assessment Team – 01226 772423

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/safeguarding-families-in-barnsley/safeguarding-children-in-barnsley/worried-about-a-child/>

At The Hill we recognise that everyone is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of our children. Should a concern arise it will be reported to our Safeguarding team:

Nicola Lawrence – Designated Safe Guarding Lead

Sue Miller – Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Kirsty Fisher – Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Health and Safety

At The Hill there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) that includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspect of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework, we undertake:

- A whole school Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicine and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist has prescribed them. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer and this will be administered by a qualified first aider. At The Hill a written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and the child's parents and/or carers are informed on the same day. (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021).
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Each classroom has a sink area and children are provided with a healthy snack in school.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept. Several members of the EYFS staff have paediatric first aid training.
- A health and safety policy and procedure which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- A code of conduct policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.

Parents as Partners

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

We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they join FS1 through stay and play sessions.
- Providing the children with the opportunity to spend an induction morning/afternoon in the Foundation Unit before starting FS1 and FS2.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting the term before their child begins FS2.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.

- Holding termly 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents, where parents are invited to play alongside their child for an extended length of time. This gives parents the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the Early Years curriculum, gain more of an understanding of our expectations and chat with the teacher about their child's progress.
- Providing termly curriculum learning leaflets
- Providing regular 'tweets', and DoJo messages to share activities and learning.
- Providing up to date Parent's noticeboards and informative display boards to explain EYFS practice.
- Encouraging parents to comment on the FS and suggest improvements through regular questionnaires.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development on a daily basis through face to face contact with staff when they bring their child to school and/or collect them. Parents are also invited to attend termly parents consultations (parents evenings), this helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Professional Development

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, we have a team of qualified and highly motivated staff, who provide excellent role-models for our children in both the FS1 and FS2 classes. All teachers and support staff attend after school Professional Development Meetings, with agendas closely linked to targets identified on the EYFS action plan.

Teachers attend termly early identification SEN meetings with outside agencies including Community Nursery Nurses, Health Visitors and staff from feeder pre-school settings, to share information about current children in the Foundation Stage and new children on the admissions list. These meetings ensure early identification of, and possible strategies for our children. Staff also attend regular meetings with the SENDCO to discuss strategies to eradicate current barriers to learning.

Teaching staff attend half-termly early year's meetings with our hub schools. Agendas are linked to national initiatives and moderation.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. TMB have the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the staff and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Principal and subject coordinators carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.