



Primaryes Early Years Policy

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1. Purpose

- This policy has been written to outline the philosophy and principles of early years teaching and learning.
- This document is to be used as a guide and framework to support the individual settings.

2. Aims for Early Years at West Norfolk Academies Trust:

We recognise at West Norfolk Academies Trust that all children learn more in the period from birth to five years old than any other time in their lives. By providing them with the best Early Years experiences, we not only give them the ability to progress in that year but also the best chance of success in future years.

- The early years secures the foundation for learning, development and care of each individual child to ensure their future personal and academic success.
- Each setting in West Norfolk Academies Trust aims to enable every child to fulfil its potential through quality, consistency, working in partnership and providing equality of opportunity.

2.1 We give all children opportunities to-

- Develop a strong sense of self and high levels of confidence
- Develop self-regulation and positive behaviour
- Feel secure and confident within an atmosphere of respect for others, building positive relationships
- Feel included, secure and valued
- Be supported and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding
- Make progress through our curriculum by remembering what they have learned
- Enjoy and listen attentively to stories, songs, new ideas, concepts

2.2 To achieve this our practitioners will-

- Work in partnership with parents/carers to support the children's rapid development, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially
- Share information with a child's family about their progress and help parents extend learning at home and encourage a love of reading
- Ensure that their own speaking, listening and reading of English helps children develop their own language and vocabulary well
- Read to children in a way that excites and engages them identifying new vocabulary
- Deliver the curriculum using varied approaches and teaching methods with relevant and appropriate content that matches the different needs of young children

- Build upon what the children already know and help children remember what they are learning through quality interactions
- Model characteristics of effective learning to encourage positive attitude towards learning from the children
- Encourage the children to learn for themselves by providing opportunities for them to engage in activities planned by the teacher alongside those that they plan or initiate themselves
- Allow time for the children to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities
- Identify pupils who require early intervention and adapt learning to overcome barriers
- Develop basic skills through well-structured activities
- Ensure the children are ready for Year 1

3. Organisation:

- West Norfolk Academies Trust primary schools follow the curriculum as detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (updated September 2023)

4. Admission:

- All children are offered full-time learning in Reception from the first day of the Autumn term.
- Home visits are an essential part of the transition period so that staff can fully understand the relationship between the child and the parent/carer and build on this aspect of the child's learning, as well as visiting any pre-school settings the child has attended.
- Where possible home and pre-school visits will be completed in the Summer term prior to the child starting Reception.

4.1 To ensure the best possible transition we:

- Value the parent as the first educator of their child
- Make contact with the feeder preschools to discuss essential information on every child
- Share important information about our school during new parents meeting
- Use written information sent by preschools to inform early planning
- Hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children in June and July
- Share information in a transition meeting(s) with key adults for children with additional needs
- Meet with every parent and child before beginning school to share important information from home and school (wherever this is possible)

5. Partnership with Parents and Carers:

The school recognises the huge importance of establishing effective relationships with parents/carers in ensuring the children achieve their full potential.

- Parental involvement is actively encouraged.
- Parents are very welcome to communicate with staff via class dojo or at the end of the school day giving them opportunities to discuss any concerns with staff.
- Staff ensure that parents are well informed about the curriculum their child is experiencing through Knowledge Organisers, Learning Journeys, mini reports, parent evenings, class dojo and newsletters.
- Staff take the opportunity to post achievements on class dojo. When appropriate staff will talk to parents at the end of the day about any concerns.
- Throughout the year, parents are invited to attend workshops that help support their child's development at home.
- At the end of the year, parents are informed of the outcomes attained in the EYFSP

6. Inclusion/Equal Opportunities (including SEN):

- Children will be taught to respect the cultural differences and abilities of all the children and their families and to recognise how other people feel.
- When appropriate, advice and guidance will be sought from outside agencies and professionals to support individual children.
- No child will be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- Pupils will be identified for SEND at the earliest opportunity and those pupils that do not meet the GLD will be discussed at a transition meeting with Y1 staff and SENCO

7. Observation, Interaction and Assessment

"Observational assessment doesn't need prolonged breaks from interaction with children, or excessive written recording. It is likely to be interwoven with high quality interactions or conversations in words or sign language with children about their activities and current interests"

7.1 To ensure impact on learning we:

- deliver a well-planned curriculum with curriculum checkpoints on each knowledge organiser which introduce new concepts and vocabulary every 6 weeks
- Our curriculum is our progress model and through it, children learn more, remember more and develop the confidence ready for Year 1.

7.2 In order to ensure impact for every child, practitioners will:

- Use extensive interactions and knowledge of each child to understand and assess children's learning.
- Enjoy interacting with children to help them engage purposefully in a breadth of activities, events and experiences using our curriculum
- Check the curriculum checkpoints on knowledge organisers checking through quality interactions and questions that children are making progress and remembering what they are taught throughout year
- Know that progress is measured through
 - **knowing things**, such as that caterpillars metamorphose into butterflies and knowing how to write sounds and numbers
 - **knowing how**, such as knowing how to hold a pencil and scissors
 - **knowing behaviours and habits**, such as knowing to look at others when they are speaking and to listen to stories

7.3 We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:

- Quality interaction in a range of daily activities and events that cover breadth of the curriculum for every child
- Responsible pedagogy that enables each child to flourish to their full capacity
- Assessments that engage a range of contributors e.g. parents, the school nurse, Speech and Language Therapy, outreach teachers and other relevant adults
- In-house moderation across the Trust EYFS team and CPD using Trust and National exemplification materials

8. Baseline, moderation and tracking:

Statutory baseline assessment will be completed and sent using the current framework by the end of the third full week in September. A moderation meeting will be held to cross moderate the baseline at the end of the third week. Moderation will continue across schools each term. We also establish a school baseline assessment for EYFS pupils on entry to school across all subjects, which is entered onto the tracker. This is updated on pupil asset each term. Final data at the end of Reception is also moderated and reported to parents and the local authority.

- At the start of the year for baseline, and at the end of each term, examples of learning across the curriculum are collected with a commentary to provide a best fit of development against our curriculum checkpoints and to show progress.
- Baseline evidence will be collected within the first 4 weeks and summarised on the school tracking system. Within this period, some evidence will also be collected in Eng/Maths and the learning journey of each child.

- End of term evidence for Autumn, Spring and Summer Term should be collated onto a two-page spread in the learning journal of each and must be shared with practitioners and families.
- The school tracking system is updated after moderation of the evidence. Pupil and parental voice should be evident as well as the characteristics of effective learning.
- Learning journal observations on a 2-page spread will be longer annotations to cover several curriculum areas in one longer interaction, drawing from evidence gathered by practitioners in a range of sources e.g.-storytelling annotations, word reading and comprehension attainment, writing and mathematics book examples.
- The areas of learning from Development Matters will be identified and cross-referenced with colour-coded stickers with gold representing the characteristics of effective learning.
- In addition, teachers complete an ongoing record of phonic attainment for each of the 26 phonemes and 10 diagraphs.

9. Learning and Development in the Early Years:

The Early Years phase must provide the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises, whilst providing a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. We take action quickly when we notice that a child is falling behind and recognise that it is not helpful to wait for them to become 'ready'. Rather provide the learning elements that they need in order to make progress.

9.1 Activities will provide first hand experiences through:

- Learning and discussion where children are encouraged to interact with their peers, use self-regulation and explore a wide variety of learning situations in order to deepen their understanding
- Clearly defined rich learning environments, indoors and outdoors, which provide a balance across the areas of learning.
- Use of resources, materials and adults to support through modelling learning allow children to flourish.
- Areas that are well planned in order to provide relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child.
- Communication friendly spaces that are language rich in order to stimulate the children in developing good speech and language and communication skills.
- Opportunities are provided for sustained play, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen play.
- Adults will join in this spontaneous play in order to extend children's learning.
- All children receive valuable adult time which up levels their quality of learning.
- Provide a balance of whole class, group, individual and continuous provision.

- By Summer, whole class and group work increases ensuring that children are ready for Year 1.

9.2 'The Characteristics of effective teaching and learning'

These are central to ensuring that quality teaching and learning is taking place. These underpin learning and development across all of the prime and specific areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

- **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
- **Creating and thinking critically**
Children have and develop their own ideas, make link between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

9.3 Direct whole class and group teaching

At specific times through the week, the children will take part in whole class and small group learning. These lessons include;

- Phonics
- English
- Maths
- Knowledge Curriculum
- Physical Education
- PSHE
- Religious Education
- Stories
- Singing

9.4 English

West Norfolk Academies Trust follows the RWI scheme for Phonics.

- Phonics is taught from day 1 regardless of baseline.
- We use reading books daily as appropriate depending on each child's phonic knowledge.
- We encourage reading for pleasure books with adults reading stories to the children frequently.
- A love of books is celebrated through reading, re-reading, storytelling and role-play.
- An EYFS poetry spine, which details rhymes, stories and poems, is used as part of daily teaching in order to develop vocabulary and language comprehension. Classes participate in the school poetry recitals.

- Talk4Writing is the basis for our writing scheme with a focus on orally retelling stories and on independently writing simple phrases and sentences, when appropriate.
- Alongside frequent opportunities for independent learning within our continuous provision, we directly teach reading, writing and mathematics through directed learning.

9.5 Mathematical development

Mastery mathematics is taught through coherent and well-sequenced plans that reflect learning in the strands for Number and Number Pattern and the White Rose Maths Scheme. This includes reasoning and problem solving. The Knowledge Curriculum has been carefully sequenced to support initial language development and prepare the children for future learning.

9.6 Termly Teaching

Time spent on delivery of core subjects builds up each term so pupils are ready for Year 1 by the end of EYFS.

Autumn term

- Practitioners deliver RWI sessions, which pay attention to saying, segmenting, blending phonemes (oral sound) and focus on the correct handgrip and formation of graphemes (written letter).
- Oral story retelling is captured for each child through cold and hot retells in writing books.
- There will be a class storybook, which celebrates children's own storytelling and is read to the children.
- A weekly mathematical activity is taught and teachers introduce and revisit specific content from our knowledge rich curriculum three times during the week.
- Aspects of live marking is used in books to get ready for Y1- learning objectives are highlighted green for success or yellow for consolidation and green highlighter is used to identify successful elements to the child with yellow to show misconceptions, purple pen corrections to be made by the child with the teacher to support

Spring Term

- Practitioners continue to embed these sessions so no child is left behind.
- A weekly T4W session is introduced to allow pupils to build confidence when applying specific reading, writing skills. This is live marked.
- The weekly mathematical activity continues and is live marked
- Nuffield Early Language Intervention is delivered to those identified through screening.
- RWI intervention continues for those who need gaps filled.

Summer Term

- Practitioners prepare pupils readiness for Year 1 further by introducing 2 English and Mathematical sessions each week.
- Live marking should be developed fully with Step For Depths evident ready for Y1
- Shorter RWI sessions continue.

Teachers will also teach key new skills to groups/individual children who have been identified as needing extra support. The focus will depend on the child/ren and those children may change over the course of the year. All taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and, in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

10. Learning and Development Through Play:

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. We carefully plan and organise the learning environment in order to provide high-quality play opportunities, which reflect our curriculum and children's interests to extend their learning further, whilst also making sure that children also have the opportunity to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching.

- Constant opportunities are provided for children to be able to make their own decisions and choices in order that they can become independent, confident and happy learners as soon as possible for each individual child. Some children will need gentle encouragement in this step as they become more comfortable in their new setting.
- Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to self-regulate themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support, this process enhances the child's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

11. Learning Behaviours:

These are intentionally taught and modelled. Learning behaviours focus on the child's ability to self-regulate. In order for a child to self-regulate, they need to develop executive functions. Executive functions are where the child can hold information in their mind, focus their attention, regulate their behaviour and plan

what to do next. These functions are the initial focuses when children start in early years.

Using these functions and language development, the children then develop the growing ability to self-regulate.

Self-regulation is the ability to focus their thinking, monitor what they are doing and adapt where appropriate, regulate feelings, show patience and resilience. We teach learning behaviours through:

- High expectations for learning
- Clear routines and procedures that help build self-assurance for children
- Purposeful and challenging experiences
- Purposeful Play
- An enabling learning environment
- Inspiring teaching that will enable the children to display a thirst for knowledge and understanding and a love of learning
- The formation of a strong partnership with parents/carers
- An individualised approach to the pastoral care and needs of every child

12. Learning Environment:

- Children's work will be recorded in Maths, English, Art Sketchbooks and updates in Learning Journey books in line with the rest of the school. This ensures that progress from baseline is clearly visible for all children.
- Working walls will reflect the whole class learning in Maths, English and the Knowledge Curriculum
- Questions related to the learning expectation, will be used in all learning environments, enabling the development of language. These will develop across the academic year, as the children's reading knowledge develops.
- There will be opportunities for children to write in the continuous provision.
- The environment will provide stimulating resource areas, which are accessible and open-ended so that they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways independently to enhance play.

Areas:

There will be a variety of areas inside and outside the classroom:

- Teacher input area
- Fine and Gross motor skills
- Block/construction
- Maths
- Writing
- Story Telling Space
- Reading
- Phonics
- Expressive art and design
- Science and investigation
- Snack
- Computing
- Music/Sound

- Physical development
- Role-play
- In each area, it will be clear to the children how they can independently access the tasks and tidy away. It will also be clear if there is a limit of how many children can participate at one time.
- Learning areas other than writing will have the equipment available for children to choose to write whilst immersed in their play.
- Teachers will explain specific learning expectations in particular areas to the class when activities change.

13. Learning Outside:

Opportunities to learn outside are essential for the development of all children. All schools offer a sustained time outdoors to develop Teaching and Learning. This time is imperative for the vital development of the 'The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'. All schools provide appropriate clothing such as; waterproofs and wellington boots to ensure that learning takes place all year round.

There will be opportunities to write in the continuous provision.

The outdoor areas:

- Provide the children with a different environment where they can develop their learning and self-regulation.
- Provide opportunities for large mark making and writing including writing resources such as paintbrushes with water, pencils and clipboards.
- Provide reading opportunities in the form of signs, labels and simple stories and sequences.
- Provide opportunities for mathematical development such as opportunities for counting natural objects, comparing length and weight with real life objects such as sticks and stones. Be able to solve problems using mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Provide a quiet area for activities such as reading and observation.
- Provide opportunities for large-scale construction and gross-motor development through sports equipment and other open-ended resources.
- Provide a sensory 'mud kitchen' with free access to water
- Provide water and sand opportunities
- Provide role play activities
- Provide musical activities with a variety of objects
- Provide an area to develop the knowledge of growing plants and vegetables
- Provide large physical activities including climbing and balancing (including bikes)

Outdoor areas will be regularly enhanced as the children develop their learning through a specifically taught subject and according to their observed interest fascinations. This is to support the children moving their learning forward and demonstrating they are secure with knowledge in a variety of contexts.

14. Safeguarding and Children's Welfare

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance. See the Schools Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection policy.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to teach children that, in society as in a classroom, there is a need for boundaries, rules and limits to which we all need to adhere to, to help us stay safe.

- We aim to teach children to be consciously aware of their feelings and the feelings of others and how to manage their own behaviour by identifying behavioural issues and using them as a teaching moment.
- We also aim to teach our children to take risks whilst learning how to recognise and avoid hazards.
- Should accidents occur an emergency contact form is completed for all children on entry into school, which includes medical, personal and social details
- Accidents are recorded following the school procedure.
- Ratios and Qualifications for staff employed in our EYFS classes are compliant with Statutory guidance updated Sept 23

15. Health and Safety:

- Priority will be given to every child's safety at all times.
- One member of staff with a current paediatric first aid certificate will be on site at all times and will accompany the children on outings.
- Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Prescription medicines will only be administered where they have been prescribed by a medical professional.
- At least one member of staff in the setting will hold a Food Hygiene certificate.
- Pupils are supervised closely and compliant with Reception class ratios when eating food and snacks throughout the school day
- Teachers will complete a checklist each morning checking the areas of the classroom and outdoor environment for any risks.
- Where a risk arises, it will be reported immediately and the area cornered where necessary.

16. Training/Professional Development:

- The Early Years staff are supported and encouraged to continue their professional development.
- All Early Years staff through their training and experience will be able to interact and respond appropriately to the children.
- New staff will have a thorough induction in line with the rest of the school.

Appendix

Questions to ask EYFS children

- What do you think about?
- What could you do about it?
- How could we fix it?
- Just suppose that.. then what?
- What would happen if....?
- What else can we use this for?
- What is this like?
- What will happen if we add this?
- What will happen if we take this away?
- Why do you think this happened?
- How do you think this works?
- How did you.....?
- How could you?
- How else could you do that?
- What is similar about these?
- In what ways are these different?
- What could you tell me about?
- What did you notice about...?
- How do you think we could?
- Tell me about

Daily Safety Checklist – example – this is adapted for each setting

Item	Details	Tick or Comment
Outdoor Environment		
1	Walk around the whole area checking for any rubbish/broken fencing/boundaries and clear	
2	Check the surfaces and consider the outside temperature with regard to safety of all areas	
3	Check the climbing frames, free standing frames for damage and bird mess – remove, clean or make secure (if unsafe to use)	
4	Check the sand pit and water area for animal mess and rubbish and clear	
5	Check the mud kitchen, drain any containers that could be dangerous, small containers could be left for play.	
6	Unlock any areas that are securely locked over night	
7	Ensure all areas are set up and ready for learning with enhancements/writing opportunities and key questions	
8	Check the gates are secure	

Daily Safety Checklist – example – this is adapted for each setting

Item	Details	Tick or Comment
Indoor Environment		
1	Check the classroom areas and toilets have been cleaned. Check there are paper towels in the toilets.	
2	Ensure the snack table has been wiped and laid out with the healthy snacks for the day, clean cups.	
3	Place chairs out around tables and check for damage	
4	Unlock the door to the outside area and check around under the cover for any blown in rubbish/damage, clean	
5	Check around the children’s hooks to ensure they are safe for use	
6	Ensure all areas are set up ready for learning and the tools being used are not broken or damaged	
7	Ensure independent learning has enhancements/writing opportunities and key questions	