



Enfield
Heights
ACADEMY

Kingfisher Hall
ACADEMY

Woodpecker Hall
ACADEMY

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Primary Academies

January 2024

Our aims

For each of our Primary Academies our aims are to: -

- give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Curriculum

Our Nurseries and Reception classes follow the curriculum outlined in the '*Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework*' document which defines what we teach and is available from the gov.uk website.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

Our approach

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, three areas known as the 'Prime Areas' are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas of learning and development

- **Communication and language**

A focus on the development of children's spoken language, acknowledging that this underpins all of the areas of learning and development. It advocates language rich environments where children are frequently read to, talked to and encouraged to become comfortable hearing and using a rich range of vocabulary

- **Personal, social and emotional development**

This area focuses on building relationships, managing feelings and emotions and provides support for children to learn to self-regulate. This is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives and provides a secure platform from which they can achieve at school and later in life. There is also a focus on staying healthy and managing their own needs

- **Physical development**

This area focuses on the development of the child's physical control, both in their gross motor skills and in fine motor skills. It provides opportunity to develop core strength, co-ordination and balance allowing children to develop proficiency, control and confidence

The specific areas of learning and development

- **Literacy**

This focuses on reading, writing, comprehension and encouraging the development of a life-long love of reading. Children are taught pre-reading skills and prewriting skills in the early stages of the EYFS, then they are taught phonics, enabling children to decode and recognise the written word.

- **Mathematics**

This area focuses on learning through practical activities and on developing a strong grounding in number as the foundation essential to excel mathematically. It supports children's understanding and spatial reasoning skills across all areas of maths, including shape, space, measure, looking for patterns and relationships, spotting connections and generally being willing to 'have a go' and not being afraid to make mistakes.

- **Understanding of the world**

This area focuses on the development of children's knowledge and understanding of their physical environment and their community. It forms the foundations necessary for the later work in year 1 in Science, Design and Technology, History, RE, Geography and ICT.

- **Expressive arts and design**

This area focuses on the development of the children's imagination and their ability to communicate and express ideas and feelings in creative ways. It incorporates exploring and using media and materials. Creativity is fundamental to successful learning.

These areas are not delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development; the development of the whole child is crucial. All of the areas of learning and development are delivered through planned, purposeful play and learning opportunities, with a balance of adult and child-led activities.

Key requirements

As per the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework: - *“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”*.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. It seeks to provide: -

- Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what that have learned regularly
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and / or carers
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

The guiding principles, which shape our practice, are grouped into four distinct but complimentary themes: -

1. A unique child
2. Positive relationships
3. Enabling environments
4. Learning and development

Characteristics of effective learning

The Early Years and Foundation (EYFS) also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the respective classrooms with these in mind reflecting on the different rates at which children are developing and adjusting their practice appropriately. Characteristics of effective learning highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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

Creating and thinking critically

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. Most days the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

We are focussed on ensuring all of our children have excellent Literacy and Numeracy skills as early on as possible. Therefore, once the children are settled, we will deliver high quality phonics and mathematics sessions to the children in small, matched-level learning groups. This also supports transition to Year 1 as the children are used to more formal teaching strategies.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and from experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide them with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can

explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace.

Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play (which is controlled) and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work; maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning, such as learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, and sitting still etc.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories and nursery rhymes they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child requires their own book bag and has a designated day when they will have a group reading session. In addition to this we encourage parents and carers, where possible, to play an active role in the 'library' session supporting the children to pick an appropriate book to borrow and share at home.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and learning journey's are a great way to fire the imagination.

We have an annual learning journey cycle where the Nursery and Reception focus on a theme or topic (such as People who help us, All about me, etc).

The learning journey's are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, academy themes and local or national events (such as the Olympics).

Every half term (and occasionally termly), staff plan the next learning journey and book visits and / or visitors that will enhance learning. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to and these weekly plans are regularly scrutinised by senior leaders. Although class teachers are responsible for writing plans, the EYFS plan as a team, with senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and nursery practitioners all attending planning meetings and giving input whenever possible.

Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at our nurseries and reception is given great emphasis in Early Years and we aim to build up to an increased number of visits in the Summer Term (such as a visit to the local farm or travelling to the local wildlife park).

We actively seek parental support on trips (subject to DBS checks where applicable and successful volunteer application). For safety reasons we are unable to allow younger siblings (who are not admitted to our academy or in the cohort attending the trip), to come along on school trips.

Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children (such as a doctor). We often ask parents if they are willing and able to share knowledge or a skill (such as cooking, how to bath a baby, painting mehndi patterns on hands or playing guitar).

As an established family of schools we are fortunate to have a bank of excellent visitors who can enhance the curriculum. We utilise the skills of other public sector workers in the local community to ensure a sense of 'belonging' and 'togetherness' in topic work. Working in partnership with the police, fire service, ambulance and even local library affords us the opportunity to provide additional experiences the children may not otherwise come across.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction / small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. However, all of these spaces are flexible and we encourage staff to move the zones around to keep the children motivated and interested. A variety of activities are planned for and set

up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session / day is.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We believe that outdoor learning is the opportunity for 'big' learning and so generally the activities are large scale. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. In Nursery, physical activity often dominates with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. The Reception class also have a dedicated outdoor area with high quality play equipment demonstrating our belief in the importance of physical development.

We ensure that, whatever the weather, our children have access to our excellent outdoor provision. We ask that children have waterproof jackets and wellies in school, as puddles and snow can be great learning opportunities.

Each child has their own labelled peg in the classroom / corridor. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely in one place.

Assessment, recording and reporting of progress

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain in-depth knowledge of each child's level of understanding. Information may be collected in a variety of ways including photographs, examples of independent and supported work, parental conversations, information from other professionals, 'in the moment' or 'snap shot' notes, learning stories and play partnering and most importantly, the practitioner's knowledge about the children. This is not an evidence-gathering exercise rather an opportunity to provide some examples that might be kept on the child's Tapestry Profile for Nursery and Reception to document the children's educational journey.

Using all of this gathered information, alongside spending quality time interacting with children, practitioners will make decisions regarding their level of achievement, interests and learning styles.

When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the three prime areas. This 'Progress Check' will identify the child's strengths and areas, if any, where the child's progress is less than expected.

Within the first six weeks that a child starts Reception, practitioners will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a mandatory assessment, which will be undertaken once the children have settled in.

We also undertake our own baseline assessment for each child when they start Reception. Children are then monitored during regular meetings ensuring that they are making the progress they should so that they are 'On Track' towards meeting the Early Learning Goals. To support the decisions practitioners make regarding children's learning the school use a variety of non-statutory guidance in correlation with the school's Progression documents. Progress is shared with parents/carers at regular, Story Cafés, Parent Meetings and in their end of year report.

At the end of the EYFS, practitioners 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 and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

Role of staff and key worker

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being both now and in their future successes.

There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences utilising support staff where appropriate.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception open days we offer a stay and play session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and other sessions for parents (such as our successful SHARE programme).

When a child gains a place in one of our Early Years settings we will not be able to start the child until we have completed a home visit. This provides us with the opportunity to spend time with the child and their family in their most comfortable setting. We then ask them to attend a 'stay and play' session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents. This is an excellent introduction to the environment for both the children and our families.

We have a fast-paced staggered entry into Nursery and Reception and a slightly quicker staggered entry into Reception. In our experience a quick stagger helps the children to settle into a routine much quicker than if this period is prolonged. If a child is struggling to adapt we will adapt this stagger timetable on a one-to-one basis in conjunction with senior leaders and the family.

We encourage all parents to say goodbye to their child and leave at the classroom door. The children enjoy the independence of putting their belongings away independently and it is often easier to settle children without lots of families present. Early in the first term parents are also invited to a parents' meeting so the child's progress towards settling in can be reviewed.

We are aware that most parents will be part of the school for the next seven or eight years and want them to get to know their child's peers and their families, so we encourage all of our new parents to attend our regular coffee mornings / afternoon teas. The EYFS team, the Head teacher, deputy / assistant head teacher and other school staff attend regularly so they can meet the parents in a more informal setting. Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting twice a year and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

Health and safety / safeguarding

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 the safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in the '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)' document; which can be found here: -

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

We follow whole school procedures for child protection and our [Safeguarding, child protection and associated procedures](#) are available on the policy page of our website.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets in line with our e-safety policy and data protection requirements.

Members of staff do however, use academy tablets to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios and in class displays. We may use images on our academy website but we will never do

so without consent from parents and this will be sought through paperwork provided in the initial starter pack.

In some circumstances we have kitchens / cooking facilities in our EYFS classrooms. These are secure spaces with prohibited access for the children. When using a portable cooker, safety measures are strictly enforced and extra health and safety measures are taken in line with risk assessments.

We take all accidents seriously. If a child bangs their head or has an accident leaving a serious mark we will always log it and phone home immediately. We have cold compresses stored in close proximity to the EYFS areas.

We require all children to start school without nappies and will support any families struggling with this by providing proactive advice and guidance. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in an open space within the toilet facilities.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our Facilities team and fire drills are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment and further information can be found in the [Health and Safety policy](#) available on our website.

For more information about the administration of medicine in school and off-site visits, please see our [Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions](#) and [Educational Visits & Offsite Activities](#) policies also available on our website.

We take all accidents seriously and, should they occur, will be treated in line with our first aid procedures. All staff working in Nursery and Reception hold a valid paediatrics first aid qualification.

Staff ratios

For nursery children aged two:
1 member of staff for every 5 nursery children

For nursery children aged three:
1 teacher for every 18 children and 1 support staff for every 8 children

For reception children
1 teacher and one support staff for every 30 children

Meals

Our academies are 'healthy' and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme.

Whilst reception children are entitled to a daily free school meal as part of the Government's Universal Free School Meals initiative, we encourage parents of both nursery and reception children to check if they would otherwise be eligible for free school meals because if they are, the academies receive extra funding which can be spent on resources to further support teaching and learning. Further information about the free school meal assessment process can be found in the [Privacy notice for academy pupils](#) available on our website; or parents can ask a member of nursery, teaching or office staff.

Our staff model good eating habits by supporting the lunch service, regularly accompanying the children for a 'duty' lunch meal.

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 around them.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general through our curriculum, for example by talking to the children in an age appropriate way about the: -

- effects of eating too many sweet things and how moderation is best
- importance of brushing their teeth
- importance of mental health and well-being
- importance of e-safety (our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our [Safeguarding, child protection and associated procedures](#) are available on the policy page of our website)

Attendance at nursery

We will use nursery attendance as a register for safeguarding purposes to establish who is (and who we expect to be) on academy premises and to identify total numbers of children. We also support parents of nursery pupils in preparation for the expectations of Reception year attendance monitoring (which is a requirement for all UK schools and academies).

We therefore request that parents inform us of any absences as soon as practicable.

Additionally, as we have a waiting list for our nursery places it is unfair to allow continued, prolonged periods of non-attendance when the space can be allocated to another child

Should non-attendance continue we will speak with the parents or may even write to them to see if there is any underlying problem or any support we can offer.

Children are at risk of losing their nursery place if they are absent for 20 or more consecutive school days without prior notification given.

We also have a duty to monitor safeguarding concerns relating to pupils of any age in line with our [Safeguarding, child protection and associated procedures](#) available on our website

Further information with regard to the attendance expectations of Reception children upwards can be found in our [Attendance policy](#) available on the website.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be annually reviewed and approved by The Early Years Leaders. Areas for development will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan as necessary. Policies can be found on the policy page of the school website.