



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Document Control
Policy Review Date
September 2016
Date Policy Finalised
June 2017
Version no
1
Review period
2 years
People involved in writing/reviewing this policy
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Date Approved
13 th July 2017
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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in it's own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow'.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – DFE, 2012

The aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum:

- To provide quality learning experiences for all the children. Learning will be through practical and play activities which are structured well balanced, relevant to the child and related to the real World.
- To ensure the children have positive experiences of success at their own levels in order to give them confidence and motivation for learning.
- To provide a curriculum which takes account of the children's developmental needs and allows them to make progress related to their differing abilities.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their child.
- The philosophy of our provision underpins a curriculum founded on play; it is supported by a high quality caring environment and provides a broad framework for all our work with young children.

The Early Years Education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and do
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of the pupil and activities that provide opportunities both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich stimulating environment

The EYFS is based upon four themes:

- A unique Child – ‘Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self – assured’.
- Positive Relationships – ‘Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships’.
- Enabling Environments- ‘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 parents and carers’.
- Learning and Development- ‘Children develop and learn in different ways’.

In line with guidance from the EYFS and the SEN Code of Practice we will endeavour to:

- Be alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and respond quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary
- Extend and challenge all children's ability to learn
- Encourage children to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children
- Maintain records suitable for sharing with parents, carers, colleagues and outside agencies involved with the child
- Should staff feel that a child is in need of further specialist support they will speak to parents/carers in the first instance to seek their opinion and to discuss how best the child can be supported. No outside agencies will be contacted without parental permission
- Ensure a smooth transition for the child to this setting from another setting by working closely with parents/carers and staff and agencies from the other setting.

Staffing, Equipment and Resources:

At Woodlands Academy pupils are placed in classes which are appropriate to their communication and learning needs. Woodlands Academy admit pupils from the age of three beginning with a part-time placement during transition from home or another Early Years setting. Full-time placement starts in the child's Reception Year.

A Key worker is allocated to all pupils in the Early years. The Key Worker contributes to the pupil's progress files as well as the teacher or instructor and specialist team of Teaching Assistants.

Staff work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies to provide the correct provision and support, ensuring parents' views and wishes and the needs of the pupil are paramount to the process.

Children have access to specialist areas and equipment in school including Sensory Rooms; light and dark, Rebound Therapy, Music Therapy, baking, swimming, horse riding, gymnastics and trips out in the Community.

EYFS Curriculum:

At Woodlands we follow the guidance in 'Development Matters', using this as a foundation for our pupils learning with high regard for differentiation for each pupil. Throughout the EYFS children will work through individually planned programmes to help achieve in the areas of the Early Learning Goals.

We believe in the balance between adult-led and child-initiated activity. We recognise that our children's development and progress will differ from those in a mainstream setting but we actively celebrate each step they achieve and use these achievements to plan their future development.

Learning Through Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Our curriculum provides a balanced provision of structured activities and play-based learning, incorporating specialist curriculum activities where needed.

The emphasis is on play-based learning across the seven areas of Learning in the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage Practice Guidance 2012:

The Prime Areas of Learning:

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

The Specific Areas of Learning:

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

Structured activities provide the basis for development and learning of personal skills such as learning to sit with a group of peers, turn taking, sharing, and interacting with others. They also help develop the ability to concentrate and attend for longer periods over time, building connections and developing reasoning, problem solving and thinking skills. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually.

We look at, and record the ways in which children are learning in order to make better judgements about their dominant learning style and to provide better insight and information to parents/carers and to teachers and staff.

Pupils in the Early Years classes are offered a wide range of resources and play experiences that offer challenge and invite exploration and investigation. Staff in the Early Years offer support and encouragement, using verbal and/or physical prompts when necessary, to allow pupils to gain confidence and knowledge as they encounter their learning journeys.

Links:

To be read in conjunction with The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2013,

Assessment and reporting arrangements Early Years Foundation Stage, 2013, Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2013. All quotes in this policy are taken from these documents.

As part of the framework of the school, the Early Years Unit shares the ethos and Mission Statement of the school and has links to its policies, these include:

- Child Protection
- Accessibility
- Health and Safety
- Behaviour Management
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting
- Equal Opportunities

(A complete set of school policies is held in the Administration Office)

Partnership with Parents/Carers:

At Woodlands Academy we recognise the role of parents and carers as the primary educators of their children. We, therefore, make every effort to ensure we work alongside parents and carers and keep them informed throughout every stage of their child's education.

Information about each child's day is recorded in a Home/School diary and sent home on a daily basis. Parents/carers may also record messages to staff to inform them of anything that they feel important to share with staff, e.g. the child hasn't slept well or eaten any breakfast.

Where a child is attending two settings in an Early Years environment, everything possible will be done to create a consistent approach to a child's care and individual targets.

Assessment and Record Keeping:

Pupils are observed continually throughout all aspects of their daily routines and written or photographic records are kept of a child's attention, interactions, and engagements with things they encounter. Over time, these records show how a child is progressing through their individual targets and EYFS Profile statements, recording their growth in confidence and development of skills and abilities.

These records are kept in Learning Journey documents and assessment folders and can be seen by a parent/carer at any time on request. These are confidential documents and are not available to other parents/carers, but may be shared with other professional agencies involved with a child.

Children in EYFS have a baseline PIVATS assessment which is updated bi-annually. Woodlands also use the SCERTs assessment approach which is a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to enhancing communication and social- emotional abilities of individuals with ASC and related disabilities. SCERTS also acknowledges that most learning during childhood takes place "...in the social context of daily activities and experiences" - therefore every day, natural routines are used. A Foundation Stage Profile is also completed for Government Education Data.

All pupils at The Woodlands Academy have an Educational Health Care Plan. Parents and any necessary agencies are invited to an Annual Review to review the child's plan and progress. An annual report is issued which reviews outcomes from the previous year and outlines SMART targets for the following year.

Parents' Evenings and Open Evenings are informal meetings in order for Parents, Carers, Teachers and other staff to meet and discuss the children's achievements and the next steps in their school journey. Parents/carers are kept informed of events in school by letter.

Equal Opportunities:

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, ethnicity or learning difficulty. This is monitored by analysing pupil performance throughout the school to ensure that there is no disparity between groups.

Monitoring and Review:

It is the responsibility of the Early Years' teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The named governor responsible for Early Years is Mrs Diane Raper. This Governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and SMT carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.