



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Newbury Academy Trust

March 2018

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. "Academy", "Academy Trust" all refer to Newbury Academy Trust, Love Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2DU. School refers to one of the three schools within the Newbury Academy Trust, Trinity School, Love Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2DU; Fir Tree School, Fir Tree Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2RA; Speenhamland School, Pelican Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1NU.
- 1.2. The term Governor refers to both Full Governing Body Trustees and Local Governing Body Governors.
- 1.3. Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children who are in our Nursery and Reception Class. The EYFS applies to children from three years to five years of age.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 2.1. We aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.
- 2.2. As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework 2017 '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.'
- 2.3. We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four overarching principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.
 - Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
 - Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
 - 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/or carers.
 - **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.

3. Principles into Practice

- 3.1. As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are child-initiated and supported by the adult.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

4. Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

- 4.1. We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable children to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.

These three areas are **prime** areas:

- **Communication and language** - giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Physical development** - providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

- 4.2. Children are also supported through four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The four specific areas are:

- **Literacy** - encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** - providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers,

calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

- **Understanding the world** – guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
 - **Expressive arts and design** - enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.
- 4.3. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.
- 4.4. Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Fir Tree and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.
- 4.5. Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS including teaching aspects of Mathematics, Literacy, shared reading and writing. All children have a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds'.

5. Characteristics of Effective Learning

- 5.1. These characteristics explain the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. They underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Characteristics of Effective Learning	Explanation	Possible lines of enquiry
Playing and Exploring - Engagement		
Finding out and exploring know	'Finding out and exploring' is concerned with children's open-ended hands-on experiences. These result from innate curiosity and provide the raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds things out.	Does the child respond to first hand experiences in an exploratory way? How does the child demonstrate natural curiosity? Does the child notice patterns, changes, similarities and differences when exploring across the curriculum?
Playing with what they know	'Using what they know in their play' describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing	In what ways does the child use what he or she discovers in play and links it to existing knowledge? Can the child combine, refine and explore ideas in imaginative ways?

	experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.	Can the child see things from other perspectives?
Being willing to 'have a go'	'Being willing to have a go' refers to the child finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenge, having a 'can do' orientation, being willing to take a risk in new experiences, and developing the view of failures as opportunities to learn.	Does the child initiate activities around own interests? Does the child seek challenges and take risks in new experiences? Does the child learn from mistakes without becoming disheartened?
Active learning – motivation		
Being involved and concentrating	'Being involved and concentrating' describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities.	To what extent does the child become completely focussed in activities and experiences and not easily distracted? To what extent does the child show intensity of attention for example by being concerned about details in activities, experiences and ideas?
Keeping trying	'Keeping on trying' refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties, an element of purposeful control which supports resilience.	Does the child pursue a particular line of interest in an activity? Does the child demonstrate persistence in the face of difficulty or a challenge? Can the child refocus and re-plan to overcome difficulties, setbacks and disappointments? Does the child know how to seek appropriate help in terms of materials, tools and other people?
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do	'Enjoying achieving what they set out to do' refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.	Does the child become involved in activities and experiences which arise out of personal interest, curiosity and enquiry? Does the child demonstrate satisfaction when engaged in and completing personal endeavours?
Creating and thinking critically – thinking		
Having their own ideas	'Having their own ideas' covers the critical area of creativity – generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.	Does the child generate new ideas during activities? Does the child adapt, refine or make changes when previous ideas were unsuccessful or could be developed? Is the child inventive in solving problems, using and synthesising knowledge and skills across areas of learning?
Making links	'Using what they know to learn new things' refers to the way in which children develop and link concepts, find meaning in sequence, cause and effect and in the intentions of others through both narrative and scientific modes of thought.	Does the child talk about or explore the idea of cause and effect through actions? Does the child use acquired knowledge and skills to explore new learning across and within areas of learning? Does the child offer ideas of why things happen and how things work or show this in exploratory play?
Choosing ways to do things	'Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways' involves approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways, making choices and decisions about	Does the child explore ways of solving new problems including trial and error? Is the child able to plan and monitor what has been done?

	how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies.	Can the child change strategies when appropriate?
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6. Observation and Planning

6.1. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. We follow 'In the moment planning'. The cycle of planning, observation and actual 'next steps', is carried out on a moment-by-moment basis. Each class has three to four 'focus children' each week. This gives us thorough observation and future planning for each individual child.

6.2. We work in this way because...

"Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the 'teachable moment' – which the skillful adult makes a difference. By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment)." From National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 - 23

6.3. We have focus children **NOT** focus activities.

The adult goes to the child. The child is NOT called to come to the adult.

We work this way because high-level involvement occurs in child-initiated activity. Children need to be children, they have their own ideas of what they'd like to create or play with.

Play should not be interrupted or challenged by an adult, unless a child willingly engages the adult, we need to stand back and allow them to investigate and explore in order to learn.

When children show high levels of involvement, that is when there is progress and development occurring – when the brain is at its most active. High-level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment supported by skilled staff. Planning in the moment helps to make this possible.

7. The Leuven Scale for Well-being

- 7.1. Wellbeing focuses on the extent to which pupils feel at ease, act spontaneously, show vitality, and self-confidence. It is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and good mental health.

Level	Well-being	Signals
1	Extremely low	The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming. They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/ herself or others.
2	Low	The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.
3	Moderate	The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort.
4	High	The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.
5	Extremely high	The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He/she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expressed self-confidence and self-assurance.

8. The Leuven Scale for Involvement

- 8.1. Involvement focuses on the extent to which pupils are operating to their full capabilities. In particular it refers to whether the child is focused, engaged and interested in various activities.

Level	Involvement	Signals
1	Extremely low	Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.
2	Low	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.
3	Moderate	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.
4	High	Continuous activity with intense moments. They child's

		activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.
5	Extremely high	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period.

9. An Enabling Environment

- 9.1. We have a **workshop style environment** indoors and outside. **Minimum items are set out** on the tables. The children select what they want to do in each area. The principal is that resources are accessible to the children and they are varied, open-ended and high quality. This gives children the opportunity to select resources to support their chosen activity.

10. The Role of The Adult

- 10.1. The adults are there to facilitate learning. They do this through observations and interactions.
- 10.2. Our adults get to know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level.
- 10.3. The Ofsted definition of teaching (2015) fits exactly with our way of planning and teaching – in the moment.

11. Planning in the moment and focus sheets

- 11.1. We use the observation cycle on a moment-by-moment basis.
- 11.2. Children are busy and learning all the time.
- 11.3. The planning sheets are a record of activities that have occurred.
- 11.4. It is particularly important that the adults' input (teaching) is recorded. These follow on from the in-the-moment observations and form a child's 'next steps'. It is particularly important that the adults' input (teaching) is recorded along with the child's direct speech.

The symbol "T" indicates "adult". Adult input is high-lighted in yellow:-

"T suggests ... encourages ...models ...ponders ...models ...helps ...
offers resources .. etc."

The child's direct speech is high-lighted in purple.

- 11.5. The "planning sheets" are blank at the start of the week. They are then filled up gradually during the week. All adults contribute to these sheets. When possible, photos are printed and added to the records.

- 11.6. In addition, “snap shot” observations are recorded for children who are not focus children, as and when they occur. These are fed into their individual learning journeys.
- 11.7. We still have a yearly and termly overview plan. These plans will include any adult-led activities, or events being shared or celebrated.
- 11.8. With a system of focus children, a workshop style environment and records kept on spontaneous planning sheets and learning journeys, the children are learning effectively all the time.

12. Assessment

- During the first term in reception and nursery the teacher assess the ability of each child, using the Early Years Outcomes document. The assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme from individual children.
- The teacher completes an assessment every half term on the children. From this a class overview, yearly tracker, and case notes are produced. The Reception teacher also produces a summary of data which shows the percentage of children below, in line and above typical development in each aspect of the EYFS.
- Each child's personal assessment grid is in the back of their learning journey which shows their assessment for each half term.
- At the end of the Summer Term we send a summary of the Reception assessment to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead.
- As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways such as photographs and comments; short snap shot observations and learning stories. Each child will have a learning story produced on them once a long term. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey.
- Parents are invited to attend parents meetings during the Autumn, Spring and Summer Term. Parents are able to look at their child's learning journey. Parents are also encouraged to complete 'wow slips' to document children's achievements outside of school.
- During the Summer Term we provide parents with a report based of their child's development across the EYFS curriculum. It highlights children's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.
- At the end of the year children in Reception are assessed against each of the Early Learning Goals and this information is sent home to parents. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher.

13. The role of parents

13.1. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- Visiting the child and parent at home.
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Having flexible arrangements and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.
- Encouraging parents to stay initially if there are problems with the child's admission.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between the child, school and parents.
- Providing various activities that involve parents, i.e. home activity packs, rhyme challenge, wow slips, focus sheets.

14. Safety

14.1. Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

14.2. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see Appendix 1 for our intimate care procedure.

15. Inclusion

15.1. We value all our children as individuals at Fir Tree, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

16. Organisation (Nursery)

16.1. The induction and entry arrangements for the nursery are:

- Children may start Nursery the term after their third birthday.
- We offer 15 hours per child which equates to either a morning or afternoon place

- If parents/carers wish to take up 30 hours funding they may split our provision with another provider to make the hours up
- Information pack (with relevant and updated details) given to all new intake.
- Visits to nursery for new parents/carers and children
- Home visits are offered to all new parent/carers
- Maximum of 26 children in the nursery class in the morning/afternoon
- If Nursery is at full capacity, children will be placed on a waiting list in order of age
- A staggered entry for all the children starting nursery (not more than two new children per session)
- Arrangements for entry are:
 - a. First session child stays for an hour
 - b. Second session child stays for two hours
 - c. Third session child stays for the full three hours
- If a child struggles to settle the Nursery teacher will discuss transition options with the parent/carer and the child may attend shorter sessions until they are settled.

16.2. The nursery times are:

Morning session: 8.45 to 11.45

Afternoon session 12.30 to 3.30

17. Organisation (Reception)

17.1. The induction and entry arrangements for the Reception are:

- An information evening offered to all parents/carers with children starting Reception in September
- Information pack (with relevant and updated details) given to all new intake
- Visits to Reception for new parents/carers and children
- Home visits offered to all new parent/carers
- Reception staff will visit pre-school children have attended to gain educational information about them
- Staggered entry is provided for all children.

Authorised by	Resolution of the Board of Trustees
Date	14 th March 2018
Effective Date of the Policy	14 th March 2018
Effective Date for Review	March 2020

