

Early years foundation stage policy

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Vision, mission and values

Our trust is committed to giving our youngest children the best possible start to their education. Our commitment to providing the best possible opportunities, facilitated by a professional workforce ensures that our children are able to begin their statutory education with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve further success.

1.2 Purpose and intent

The purpose of this statement is to meet both statutory requirements with regard to early years children as set out in the statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (2014 and subsequent amendments) and the day-to-day needs of our academies and their stakeholders (parents, Local Authorities, related agencies, staff and children). Diverse Academies has a number of key principles that underpin the approach to early years education in our academies. These are being child centred; developing confidence and resilience; encouraging aspiration and achievement; high expectations for all; adaptation of the curriculum; supporting children to overcome barriers to learning through the use of individual support strategies and focussed on improving outcomes for children.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board has legal obligations to ensure the statutory requirements for early years foundation stage (2014 and subsequent amendments) are followed. These responsibilities are delegated to principals and the early years leader in each of our primary and special academies.

1.4 Benefits

The policy ensures that all children will thrive in our inclusive, child-centred early years foundation stage departments, be safe from harm and have their needs met to ensure the best possible start to their education is achieved.

2 Policy

2.1 Policy overview

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (effective March 2014 and subsequent revisions). This policy should be read together with the [statutory framework](#).

The academies' (Diverse Academies) policies and procedures in relation to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) are also reflected elsewhere in the general policy framework, including (but limited to) the following policies:

Individual academy appendices to this policy.

These policies may be viewed at www.diverseacademies.org.uk or by visiting individual academy websites by following the links at the above website.

2.2 Aim

Within Diverse Academies, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all of our children, thereby giving them the strongest foundation for their future learning. We create happy and safe environments with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident, resilient and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the statutory 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.

We adhere to the statutory framework and the four guiding 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 or carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

2.3 The foundation stage curriculum

Diverse Academies plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on observation 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**.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas of learning are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity for future learning, relationships and allowing them to thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

- **Communication and language**
- **Physical development**
- **Personal, social and emotional development**

Children are also supported through the four specific areas of the curriculum, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive arts and design**

Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the **prime** and **specific** areas of learning and development. These foster the **characteristics of effective learning**.

- **Playing and exploring** children investigate and experience things and are willing to 'have a go'
- **Active learning**: children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically**: children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. Diverse Academies aims to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Within academy-based teams, and across Diverse Academies cluster, long-term and medium-term plans use the early years foundation stage curriculum to provide a series of themes, each of which offer experiences in all seven areas of learning. In turn, these plans inform short-term planning,

alongside observations of children, which remain flexible to accommodate unplanned circumstances, events or to follow the children's interests and responses.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in our nurseries (F1) will focus sharply on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the 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 of the areas of learning as the children move through the early years, into the reception Class (F2), whilst ensuring that the children continue to grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group times, small group times and individual sessions with practitioners. When it is appropriate, daily 'Read-Write Inc.' times are incorporated into the day to focus on phonics and early reading. Daily numeracy times allow the children to flourish as early mathematicians. Power Maths is used in all academies and year groups. The early years planning reflects this.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach to learning as outlined in the early years foundation stage curriculum. The requirements state that each **area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.**

Diverse Academies plans a balance between children having time and space to engage in self-initiated activities and those that are planned by adults. During children's independent play, Early Years practitioners, when it is appropriate to do so, interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways in which children learn and reflect these in our practice. Practitioners create stimulating environments to encourage children to free flow between indoor and outdoor activities.

Children are encouraged to use all of their senses in their learning. This means that children will often be 'dirty' at school and this is encouraged. Diverse Academies believes that it is a child's right to play and whilst efforts will be made to protect children's clothing it is accepted that paint, glue, water, mud and a range of other materials are facts of early years life.

2.4 Observation and assessment

As part of their daily practice, the academies observe and assess children's development and learning to inform future planning, measure progress and, when appropriate, implement individualised support programmes. Practitioners record their observations in a variety of ways. As children's entry and exit data is collected, it is compared against both the local authority and national data.

Practitioners **remark on the remarkable** and keep records accordingly. Shared information from parents and carers and other professionals are then combined and this information is used to base judgements and help shape future experiences for each child. The academies make use of records and documentation to accurately chart, and plan for, children's learning and development on their journey to meeting the Early Learning goals.

During the first half term of the reception class (F2) children will complete the reception baseline assessment (RBA). This is a government initiative which is led by the teacher in the setting. Parents are informed about the baseline through Trust approved documentation. The RBA focuses on language and mathematics. The outcomes of the RBA will not be shared directly with the school but are used as a progress measure from reception (F2) to year 6.

In the final term of the early years (in the academic year which the child reaches five years of age) the **early years foundation stage profile** (EYFSP) is completed. The profile reflects:

- Ongoing observations
- Relevant recordings of the child's achievements
- Examples of the work that the child has produced
- Useful information shared by families
- Information from other professionals

Reception (F2) teachers provide a copy of the EYFSP report, together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities relating to the characteristics of effective learning. These documents are shared with the Year 1 teachers and parents and carers. The final judgements are submitted to the Department for Education no later than 30 June in each year.

Final data is secured through internal and external moderation processes. The academies work closely together to ensure that standards are judged fairly and there is security in the judgements. Periodically, individual academies will take part in the statutory local authority moderation processes.

2.5 Safeguarding and welfare

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. The academies create safe and secure environments and provide curricula that teach children how to be safe, make good choices and assess risk. Each academy has stringent policies, procedures and documents to ensure children's safety.

Members of staff may not take photographs in our settings on personal devices of any kind. Photographic permission is sought from parents and carers and is reviewed regularly.

Practitioners promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when there is a concern about a child, they become ill or have an accident.

2.6 Inclusion and equality

Diverse Academies values all of our children as individuals. The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most children achieve or exceed the early learning goals.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with special or additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the children the support that they need and, in doing so, work with the parents and a variety of external agencies.

Each academy's approach to equality, inclusion and meeting children's needs is set out in the associated policies mentioned at the end of this policy.

2.7 Parents as partners and the wider context

Diverse Academies strives to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. Practitioners welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times, we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. Parental permission is always sought before sharing information.

Our academies draw in their links with their communities to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting appropriate vetted members of the community into our settings.

2.8 Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the children and other settings, including day nurseries and child minders. Children attend introductory sessions to F1 and F2 to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners. All nursery (F1) children are invited, along with a parent, to attend 'Parents as Partners' sessions before they start at their settings. This is a six week programme aimed at building relationships as well as showing parents the importance of developing skills in reading.

In the final term of the F2 year, the year 1 teacher will formally meet with the early years staff and discuss each child's development against the early learning goals in order to support a smooth transition into year 1. This discussion helps the year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of all children. Year 1 teachers will visit the reception (F2) classes regularly during the last term to read stories, have circle times and work with small groups. Children with additional needs will be given more bespoke transition opportunities. Reception children will also visit the Year 1 teaching areas so that they are familiar with the space.

At unstructured times (playtimes and lunchtimes) reception children will have the opportunity to mix with key stage 1 children. The organisation of this will be decided at a local level. All of these opportunities provide the best opportunities for children to settle into new classes/provision.

2.9 Associated policies

[Equity, diversity and inclusion policy](#)

[Special educational needs and disabilities policy](#)

[Safeguarding and child protection policy](#)

[Admissions policy](#)

[Behaviour policy](#)

[Attendance policy](#)

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