

Liberty Academy Trust

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

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1. 1. Policy Aims

1.1 This policy aims to ensure:

That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life

Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind

A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers

Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

All staff in Liberty Academy Trust schools should understand the importance of the Early years Foundation Stage in establishing a strong foundation for future educational attainment, health and wellbeing.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and Articles of Association.

Structure of the EYFS

Thames Valley School was asked in Summer 2023 by Reading Brighter Futures to support with increasing specialist places. Working in partnership the school has set up a satellite provision on the grounds of Ridgeway Primary School in Whitley. (Thames Valley School, Whitley Campus). This provision includes one class for pupils within the EYFS stage of reception age. This classroom room is situated within the main school site but has its own entrance, toilets and good sized play area. It has places for 6 pupils.

In line with the Thames Valley School Satellite provision admissions policy all pupils will have a diagnosis of Autism. All pupils in the satellite provision will also have learning difficulties and are pre-verbal. This will have implications for curriculum, staffing arrangements, environment and pedagogy.

The room includes the following areas:

Carpet area
Maths area
Creative area
Reading corner
Role play corner
Water and sand area
Construction area
Writing and mark making area
Outdoor area

The staff team is:

Head of School

EYFS teacher

2 Learning support assistants

Due to the needs of our pupils' higher staff-child ratio's will be in place than the minimum expectation of 1 staff to 13 children.

Staff will be suitably qualified with at least one member of staff working directly with the pupils holding a level 6 qualification such as Qualified Teacher Status or Early Years Professional Status with at least one other member of staff holding a level 3 qualification.

The school will hold the following documentation:

- name, home address and telephone number of the provider and any other person living or employed on the premises (this requirement does not apply to childminders)
- name, home address and telephone number of anyone else who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children attending the early years provision
- a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of each child's key person
- their certificate of registration (which must be displayed at the setting and shown to parents and/or carers on request)

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 3 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 are:

1. Communication and language
2. Physical development
3. Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the world
4. Expressive arts and design

Research

Ofsted's EYFS research and analysis document (2023) Best start in life part 1: setting the scene - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) emphasises the importance of the early years for all pupils and especially those with disadvantaged backgrounds or those who have a special educational need.

They also report:

“One in 4 (23%) children who struggle with language at age 5 do not reach the expected standard in English at the end of primary school, compared with just 1 in 25 (4%) children who had good language skills at age 5.”

All the pupils within the EYFS Satellite provision experience difficulties with communication as part of their autism. Most of the children joining the setting may be pre-verbal and working on developing communication via signs, symbol, gesture and using objects of reference. This underlines the priority that this must have within the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND

Pupils' special educational needs (autism) mean that all pupils will be working towards early learning goals and are likely to be at an emerging level for Early Learning Goal's (ELG's) (see assessment section 5). Curriculum priorities will be as follows:

1. Communication and Language – for all pupils to develop functional communication including signing and use of symbols as appropriate.
2. Physical development – for all pupils to be supported with individual self-help programs including toileting.
3. Personal, social and emotional development – for all pupils to develop learning to learn skills including early play, copying and imitation, attention, sitting, focus, using equipment appropriately.

It is understood that Communication and language skills are essential for learning in all areas and that the skills acquired by age 5 can be a predictor of future success. We recognise the starting points of our pupils mean may not be ready for building vocabulary and developing their use of language.

It is also acknowledged that the quality and quantity of interactions with adults, supports development in the early years and that this can be difficult for some autistic children who may find social interaction challenging. Through individualised support, a well-designed environment, specialist training and approaches we seek to be ambitious for our pupils and support them to overcome these challenges, providing an environment in which our children can thrive.

The importance of Reading

We recognize the importance of Reading to all children at all developmental stages. The National Literacy Trust's research found that over 18.6% of children do not have books in the home. Therefore, it is a priority for our curriculum to include lots of opportunities to access high quality carefully selected books that support our pupils to:

1. Develop an interest in books
2. Enjoy sharing a book with an adult
3. Know how to handle a book appropriately , including turning pages one at a time and holding the right way up.
4. Listening to stories as a group
5. Focusing on the page and sharing attention

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Staff should also take account of the specific need of autistic pupils. This may include :

1. ensuring the environment is not over stimulating.
2. ensuring sensory needs are understood and planned for
3. creative activities take account of any sensory issues such as not liking hands to be sticky , or aversions to different textures.
4. Following individual pupil profiles and plans
5. pupils' choices are clearly structured
6. routines are clearly established
7. clear signs and symbols
8. objects that may be hazardous are kept out of reach
9. there are opportunities for pupils to work away from the main group

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Teaching

Play is an important aspect of the EYFS Curriculum, this includes self directed chosen play and play guided by adults. This area needs to be considered in light of autistic pupils strengths and areas of difficulty. The typical EYFS exploratory classroom filled with areas, activities and toys may be overwhelming for autistic children. However, the same opportunities should be provided but structured in different ways. This may include:

1. Some toys being kept in cupboards and brought out for specific activities
2. Clear labelled cupboard
3. Clear structure / curriculum areas
4. Keeping areas clutter free
5. Thought given to layout of classroom materials so it is clear what is expected
6. Less resources being placed out at any one time
7. Some clearer areas with less stimulation
8. Sensory calming area.
9. Support children with making choices / reduce number of choices available
10. Model how to use equipment before leaving children to choose.

Practitioners should understand pupils' interests but also seek to broaden preferred activities in order to develop flexibility and confidence in using a range of resources.

Supervision and Training

The school will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for staff supervision.

Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being, including child protection concerns

1. Identify solutions to address issues as they arise
2. Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness
3. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.
4. The school will support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Adults need to think carefully about what the children already know and can do when planning the curriculum.

On entry to the school we will liaise with their previous setting to obtain the child's progress check assessment.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

1. Meeting expected levels of development
2. 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.

Working with parents and carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person, a “keyworker” who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child’s development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

The school will make the following information available to parents/carers.

1. how EYFS is being delivered in the school, and how parents and/or carers can access more information
2. the range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can share learning at home
3. how the school supports children with special educational needs and disabilities
4. food and drinks provided for children
5. details of the provider's policies and procedures and the school will make copies available on request including the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer / local authority transport failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting
6. staffing in the setting; the name of their child’s key person and their role; and a telephone number for parents and/or carers to contact in an emergency

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with adults caring for them.” (Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, September 2023)

We comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. As such we understand that we are required to:

1. Ensure that children are kept safe in education.
2. Promote the welfare of children.
3. Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
4. Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
5. Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
6. Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
7. Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

8. Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

A practitioner will be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding in this setting.

The school will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). The school will also notify Ofsted of action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days of the allegations being made. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

First Aid

1. At least one member of staff will be trained in paediatric first aid.
2. The school will ensure there is always a first aid box accessible with appropriate content for use with children.
3. When pupils are ill they will use xxxx sick room
4. The school must keep a written record of accidents or injuries and first aid treatment.
5. The school must inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, and of any first aid treatment given.

The school must notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, any child while in their care, and of the action taken. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident occurring. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence. Providers must notify local child protection agencies of any serious accident or injury to, or the death of, any child while in their care, and must act on any advice from those agencies.

Food and Drink

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

The school/ classroom will be which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. Including suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children

Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must also obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements.

The school will record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.

Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible to children at all times.

Toothbrushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by supporting children to have good oral health and engage in brushing their teeth.

We follow Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Team annually.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

| Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS | Where can it be found? |
|---|--|
| Safeguarding policy and procedures | See child protection and safeguarding policy |
| Procedure for responding to illness | See health and safety policy |
| Administering medicines policy | See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy |
| Emergency evacuation procedure | See health and safety policy |
| Procedure for checking the identity of visitors | See child protection and safeguarding policy |
| Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children | See child protection and safeguarding policy |
| Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints | See complaints policy |