



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

At Tees Valley Education Trust, all curriculum policies are developed in close communication with academy and trust stakeholders and support the overall trust policies. All policies are shared between academies to ensure cohesion and continuity while allowing each individual academy to personalise these in order to best support the unique learning journey of their pupils.

The following policy has been written to support the ethos, vision and values of both Discovery Special Academy and Tees Valley Education Trust. As a special school, the policy reflects the unique character of the academy and needs of the pupils while continuing to uphold the overall identity of the Trust.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Discovery, pupils join us at the beginning of Reception and are referred to us through Local Authority place planning procedures.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of first-hand experiences that will give pupils the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they develop the skills they need to move through the academy.

Aims

At Discovery Special Academy we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

Therefore, Discovery Special Academy aims to ensure that pupils:

- enjoy the process of learning and discovery;
- experience partnership and continuity with home, community and school in collaboration with all stakeholders and relevant professionals;
- experience a caring and supportive environment in which there is equality of opportunity and within which they can gain the full benefit of the experiences offered;
- acquire knowledge, skills, concepts and understanding which will support them in their personal journeys in their educational career and in life;
- experience, appreciate and celebrate personal achievement and the achievement of others; and
- have opportunity to experience responsibility for self and begin to develop an appreciation of the needs of others.

Objectives

- To offer opportunities for pupils to develop as individuals and develop a good self-image.
- To develop lively, enquiring minds and independent thought.
- To allow pupils time to explore, investigate and discover their own personal potential.
- To enable pupils to understand the world in which they live.
- To support pupils in building relationships with adults and other children through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to work and play cooperatively with others.
- To allow pupils to occupy themselves constructively and apply themselves to tasks.
- To enable pupils to communicate their feelings, needs and experiences clearly and confidently through arrange of appropriate and personalised communication aids.
- To give pupils opportunities to make simple choices through a range of communication opportunities including the use of PECS, Makaton and other ACCs

Roles and responsibilities

The EYFS leader has the following responsibilities:

- To coordinate curriculum provision for children in EYFS;
- To advise on in-service training to staff where appropriate. This will be in line with the needs identified in the academy development plan and within the confines of the academy budget;
- To advise and support colleagues in the implementation and assessment of EYFS provision using appropriate and relevant assessment tools;
- To purchase and maintain resources required for EYFS provision within the confines of the academy budget;
- To regularly scrutinise pupil learning journeys;
- To analyse personalised progress data in conjunction with SLT and suggest interventions if appropriate;
- To review and revise subject action plans on an annual basis to contribute to the academy development plan.

Trustees have the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that an up-to-date EYFS policy is in place and is made available to parents and for inspection;
- To ensure that the EYFS policy and curriculum are in line with the non - statutory guidance in the National Curriculum 2014;
- To ensure that the policy and programme reflect a whole school approach particularly in relation to consultation.

Teachers have the following responsibilities:

- To develop and update skills, knowledge and understanding of the EYFS curriculum;
- To identify inset needs with regard to EYFS and take advantage of training opportunities;
- To keep appropriate on-going records;
- To plan effectively for EYFS pupils, liaising with the phase leader when necessary;
- To inform parents of pupils' progress, achievements and attainment;
- To analyse progress data in conjunction with the EYFS leader and suggest interventions where appropriate.

Working with parents and carers

At Discovery, we value and recognise the role of parents and carers as the child's first teachers. We believe in working in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals in an atmosphere of mutual respect to ensure the best possible education for the child. Prior to a child starting at Discovery Academy, we offer a visit where the class teacher and DHT can gather more information about the child and explain what support the school is able to offer.

Maintaining contact with parents and carers once their child starts school is vital, particularly when the child travels to and from school by transport. We maintain contact through the home school book / phone calls / text messages and the parents app Marvellous Me. Parents are invited into school termly to discuss their child's IEP, annually for EHCP reviews and annually for parents evening. In addition, there are less formal events such as Christmas craft sessions, open afternoons and stay and share sessions to which parents are invited.

The EYFS curriculum

Provision

At Discovery, pupils will access a personalised EYFS curriculum with activities planned to match their developmental stage. This curriculum begins at 0 years and therefore all pupils joining the school in reception will be able to access this. The philosophy of our provision underpins a curriculum founded on exploration, discovery and holistic development; it is supported by a high quality caring environment and provides a broad framework for all our work with young children.

Discovery Special Academy adheres to the four guiding principles which shape practice within EYFS 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 the school and parents.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The EYFS identifies three characteristics of effective learning which Discovery will use to offer an engaging and balanced EYFS curriculum:

- Playing and exploring;
- Active learning;
- Creating and thinking critically.

There are **three prime areas of learning** which “are fundamental, work together and... support development in all other areas”:

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

There are **four specific areas of learning** which, “include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society”:

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

Delivery

The EYFS curriculum will follow the principles of play based, experiential and exploratory learning. Activities in each area will be purposefully designed to teach the foundation skills needed to progress.

Discovery ensures the prime and specific areas are the foundation of all learning and therapies during the early years to enable holistic development. To support this, we consider the total development of the child as an individual: their social, emotional, physical, therapeutic and intellectual needs are given equal importance in an environment where pupils feel included, secure and valued.

During the early years a child is most receptive to learning and develops rapidly. Children come to school with a variety and wealth of experiences. What the child already knows and can do will be used as the starting point in planning their future development. We provide a stimulating, attractive and exciting environment, which offers first hand experiences, opportunities to practice and consolidate developing

skills and interests, time to initiate and develop activities themselves and chances to encounter new challenges.

The curriculum is well planned, offering purposeful activities both indoors and outdoors, structured in content to match the learning needs of individual children. Practitioners are knowledgeable about child development, able to make skilful observations which inform future planning, respond and interact appropriately with children and offer effective intervention to help them make progress in their learning.

We recognise that our pupils' development and progress will differ from those in a mainstream setting but we actively celebrate each step they achieve and use those achievements to plan their future development.

Resources:

The EYFS leader is responsible for ordering resources, in consultation with other academy staff.

The leader will inform staff of new resources that have been purchased and offer advice on their appropriate use. The leader will also monitor and evaluate the use of EYFS resources within the academy. Most EYFS resources are stored in the EYFS classrooms. These are available to other classes to borrow as appropriate and to support children in their individual stages of development throughout the academy.

Resources are planned and budgeted for in a yearly subject action plan as part of the academy Review and Development Plan.

Assessment, recording and reporting

At the start of Reception, pupils are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any form of testing and parent's/carer's views on their child as a learner will be taken into account. Children in EYFS have a baseline PIVATS assessment as well as a Development Matters baseline. PIVATS is then updated termly in line with school policy. Development Matters will follow statutory requirements and be updated mid-year, the end of the year and a copy of this will be forwarded to parents.

Assessment in EYFS depends on getting to know pupils very well, and to this end, we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in reception has a 'Learning Journal' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work.

The Foundation Stage Profile, the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning, is a statutory report. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum. Parents/carers will be given information of their child's achievements in a written report at the end of the summer term.

Monitoring and evaluation

The EYFS leaders and SLT are responsible for monitoring the EYFS programme and its delivery using appropriate resources and a variety of teaching and learning styles. The EYFS leader and SLT monitor planning and carry out observations of teaching, evaluating the outcomes of the EYFS curriculum.

Staff development

The EYFS leader, along with the senior leadership team, will identify staff development needs and arrange whole academy and individual staff training opportunities as required. The outcomes of training are disseminated during staff meetings.

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 significant disparity between groups.

Links to other relevant documents and policies

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.

The EYFS policy links to the following academy policies:

- Equality
- RE
- SRE
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- British Values
- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Curriculum policy and plans