



Waverley Academy

Early Years Foundation Policy.

Introduction:

At Waverley Academy we understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially and we therefore plan a provision that extends their knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence. We plan a relevant and exciting curriculum that ensures that the early years' experience builds on what children already know and can do, which encourages a positive attitude and disposition to learning.

Within the school day there are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.

The EYFS at Waverley Academy, consist of a Nursery Class and a Reception class. These classes consist of a teacher and at least one EYFS support assistant. The EYFS classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard. Each member of the team has an iPad to capture learning electronically using the online 2simple platform. Children also have access to iPads to support their learning.

Our EYFS classrooms have access to substantial designated outside areas. The outdoor areas include: Mud kitchen, water/sand world, story/writing/ reading den and a role play area, environmental area, maths area & large construction space. Outdoor play is highly valued and activities outside compliment and reflects indoor provision. Children carry out activities and learning in other areas of the school such as the community kitchen, the hall, and the school library.

Children do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work' and neither do our practitioners ensuring that children have time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities. The children are exposed to rich and stimulating experiences inside and outside within which children can explore experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves enabling them to learn and develop. Practitioners constantly assess where the children are and plan the next steps for each individual child to ensure that the child develops and progresses across all areas of the Early Years.

In formulating our Foundation Stage policy, we have considered the following issues:

- **PRINCIPLES**
- **PLANNING**
- **PROVISION**
- **PRACTICE**
- **PEDAGOGY**
- **PARTNERSHIP**
- **PROGRESS** (within which play is an over-riding factor).

At Waverley Academy, we recognise that children aged under five require a curriculum which is appropriately geared to their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social and physical stage of development.

PRINCIPLES

- A Unique Child (Inclusive Curriculum)
- Positive Relationships (Key Person)
- Enabling Environments (High/Scope)
- Learning and Development (Next Steps)

Our Aim:

We aim to give the children the opportunity and encouragement to extend their experiences and develop their existing knowledge. We foster their socialisation, increase their confidence and self-expression, while developing their independence and encourage morality. We want the foundation years to be happy, exciting, challenging and successful for each child.

We recognise the need for a unique programme of learning in its own right, as well as being a preparation for the National Curriculum.

Our objectives:

- To provide a holistic structure based on the prime and specific areas of learning which interrelate.
- To provide:
 - Learning through play
 - Active learning
 - A developmental focus
 - An emphasis on developing independence
 - Involving the spontaneous
 - Close involvement of parents and children's local community

Self-Regulation: What is it and why is it important?

At Waverley Academy we understand that self-regulation has a foundational role in promoting wellbeing across the lifespan, including physical, emotional, social, and economic health and educational achievement. Self-regulation can be defined as the act of managing thoughts and feelings to enable goal-directed actions. This means, for instance, finding ways to cope with strong feelings so they don't become overwhelming; learning to focus and shift attention; and successfully controlling behaviours required to get along with others and work towards goals. Supporting self-regulation development in early childhood is an investment in later success, because stronger self-regulation predicts better performance in school, better relationships with others, and fewer behavioural difficulties. Moreover, the ability to regulate thoughts, feelings, and actions helps

children successfully negotiate many of the challenges they face, promoting resilience in the face of adversity.

At Waverley Academy we have developed a learning environment and approach that supports the development of self-regulation. We apply our approach systematically and proactively, this self-regulation support promotes a solid foundation in skills needed for social, emotional, behavioural, and academic success during the school years.

Enabling Environments

At Waverley Academy we acknowledge that the environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment, which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom during child-initiated learning time.

Children have access to a wide range of equipment including construction materials, role play equipment, small world, sand and water equipment, art materials, musical instruments, ICT equipment, mark making materials, counting equipment, books, larger outdoor equipment and specialist PE equipment. All areas are carefully planned to reflect learning needs, the theme and children's interests.

All children and adults are expected to take responsibility for the care of and use of resources and the environment and we believe that supporting the children and helping them to look after and respect their environment is a very important part of a child's development. We encourage children to tidy up as they go through the day and we also have 'Tidy Up Time' before lunch and at the end of the day as this offers a valuable opportunity for talking, reading, problem solving, reasoning, counting and sorting activities.

Learning and Development

At Waverley Academy we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

Effective learning and development is supported through:

- the partnership between staff and parents that helps our children feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have knowledge of how children develop and learn and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk and other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that help children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;

- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of ICT;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

Play and Exploration

At Waverley Academy we do not distinguish between work and play. We support children's play and learning through planned play activities, through observation of child initiated or adult led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. Adults 'play partner' with children to support their learning through play, carefully intervening when appropriate, getting involved with the play and modelling by example to extend the play. EYFS staff have knowledge of initiatives such as 'sustained shared thinking', Communication Friendly Spaces and 'learning through play'.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven inter-connected areas of learning and development. The three prime areas crucial for building foundations are:

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

These are strengthened and applied via the four specific areas:

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

These 7 areas provide a framework for the EYFS curriculum. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities and through our provision we attempt to provide activities which cover a range of learning areas and offer the opportunity for deep play experiences.

The revised EYFS curriculum also places high emphasis on the importance of practitioners recognising and understanding the ways in which young children learn in order to support them as effective learners. These **characteristics of effective learning** are an integral part of the three prime and four specific areas of learning and describe the skills, attitudes and approaches to learning which can be nurtured in the EYFS.

The characteristics of effective learning are:

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

At Waverley Academy we believe that these three characteristics describe learning processes rather than outcomes. This means that how a child exhibits these characteristics is observed as part of our

formative assessment process. This process enables us to understand each child fully and provides us with greater knowledge to best support the child's development as a learner.

Play

Play, both indoors and outdoors, is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of enquiry and exploration. Play is a vital part of children's lives and is key for children to develop and practise skills. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas and materials, connections and consequences
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning
- Play allows children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Child Led Planning

At Waverley Academy our curriculum is planned in a way that reflects what the children are interested in and what they want to learn more about. Learning in this way promotes high levels of engagement, high levels of interest, sustained concentration and development and progress.

How the environment supports the curriculum

We believe that developing a learning environment that allows the children to select their own resources is a crucial part of creating independent and curious learners. Adults support the children to select the things they need to follow their interest. Often when a new interest develops the adults will then adapt the environment and resources to support this thread of learning.

A **weekly plan** outlines the objectives to be focused on in each area of learning and shows how those activities and experiences will be delivered through '**Adult Led**' and '**Child Initiated**' learning opportunities. Planning is therefore constantly developed, adapted and evaluated through ongoing observations of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned opportunities (indoors and outdoors). Assessment for learning is crucial in response to children's needs and interests. The learning objectives are also informed by a thorough knowledge of child development enhanced by reference to the 'Development Matters' document.

Inclusive provision:

We provide for differences in children's development and understanding by:

- Differentiated tasks
- Differentiated adult support
- Level of teacher expectation
- Flexible and appropriate group sizing.

We set achievable targets ('next steps') to ensure that **all children** are successful with their learning. The children's 'next steps' are made each half term and shared with parents.

Use of adults:

Due to legal requirements, the adult to child ratio in the foundation setting requires there to be a full time Learning Support Assistant (LSA) working alongside the teacher. But there may also be additional adults, which may include;

- An additional LSA to support children with special educational needs
- Students (i.e. college or university students)
- Parents (to help with baking, reading)

All adults working within the foundation setting are given an induction and booklet with guidelines and expectations that we expect all adults to follow.

PRACTICE

These are essential experiences and areas of activity which are fundamental to early learning and give indications of the ways in which our Aims and Objectives for Learning are delivered in practice.

Learning through play:

Before starting school, children learn through play, by imitating others, by modelling, by reinforcement, by trial and error. Play in a child's early years is essential for development. It provides a valuable 'foundation' to prepare the child for a more formal approach to learning.

We aim to structure play to promote play of quality;

- To help children to learn and develop
- To enrich and widen their experience
- To enable children to explore social situations and work towards a solution to problems
- To make play an enjoyable experience that is shared with other children
- To allow children to extend and act out their imagination
- To learn how to control impulses and understand the importance of rules

- To help children to take risks and make mistakes.

Types of play:

- Imaginative: role play, small world
- Investigative; Sand, water, natural materials, clay
- Creative; art, music
- Constructive; bricks, design and technology
- Mathematical; counting, ordering, sorting
- Problem solving; puzzles, jigsaws

PEDAGOGY

The 'Plan, Do, Review' Approach:

During children's independent learning time we adopt a 'plan, Do, Review' approach. This approach follows a 'plan-do-review' system, whereby children are encouraged to;

- Think about and plan what they want to do (Plan)
- Carry out their activity (Do)
- Then discuss what they have done (Review)

The 'Plan, Do, Review' philosophy helps to promote independence in children, providing them with necessary skills for them to actively learn for themselves. The roles of the adult during 'Plan, Do, Review' time is to guide, support and encourages the children in their activities, and only intervene when they feel it is appropriate.

Both Foundation settings are organised to cater for 'Plan, Do, Review'. Area's and resources are labelled (with photographs/ pictures) to ensure that children can access everything without relying on an adult to support them. Children's planning time is supported through the use of a 'planning board'. The planning board refers to all of the areas available to the children in the classroom.

Teaching Approach:

The Early Years curriculum is taught with a structured practical approach. We believe that young children learn best from first hand experiences and therefore strive to provide these wherever possible.

There is a mixture of individual, small group and whole class teaching within the Foundation Stage. A variety of teaching strategies are used to cater the individual needs of all the children.

PARTNERSHIPS

There are three key areas to partnerships:

1. *With the children;*

Children are encouraged to develop their interests and bring these to classroom situations. For example, sharing a book, using areas of interest to help to settle into class life and to introduce new concepts.

Partnerships are encouraged between children within a class and children within school.

2. *With the parents;*

Parents are the child's first educators. They can provide a valuable insight into the whole child to support the future assessments made by the teacher and the future learning.

Parents are invited to come into school as helpers and educators, in areas which they feel they can contribute after guidance from the teacher.

For example, parents can help with sewing, computer work, play, language and maths games or they can help educate the children about work careers and roles, e.g. bringing a new baby to school.

'Stay and play' mornings and literacy/ numeracy mornings also take place once a week. This gives the staff, children and parents with an opportunity to share the children's progress and successes.

3. *With the staff;*

The Foundation Staff meet regularly and interrelate. The Class Teacher share their weekly plans with the School Assistants and Nursery Nurses so that they know the aim and objectives they are assisting. Good relationships are built to inform and support learning.

PROCEDURES

Induction Procedures for starting Foundation 1:

Parents are invited to attend a meeting during the Summer Term before their child starts Nursery. At this meeting, they can choose a time to visit a nursery session with their child. Home visits take place during the first week of the term that the child is to start Nursery. We have a 'staggered entry' to Nursery to ensure a smooth transition to suit the individual needs and requirements of our pupils.

Induction Procedures for starting Foundation 2:

During the Summer Term the Foundation 1 children that will be attending in September are invited to attend a school meal with parents and carers in the school hall. The children also attend either a morning or afternoon session with the current Foundation 2 class. These sessions will give the children experience in the classroom and also on the playground. Along

with the planned sessions there are also whole school events (i.e. Healthy Activities Week) where the Foundation 2 children are also included with activities.

During the Summer Term whenever possible, the Foundation 1 children join the KS1 assembly hall.

Starting School:

For the first week of school the children attend from 8:30 am- 1:00pm, this includes a half-day session with a school meal.

Special Educational Needs

Special Educational Needs are identified as early as possible so the process of help is initiated. They are identified through discussions, observations and assessments.

We adopt and implement a policy of inclusion where opportunities are actively pursued to ensure that all children can benefit from the curriculum that we provide. Where children are identified as needing additional help, it will be provided.

Equal Opportunities

We take care to ensure we promote equality of opportunity. All children are given equal access to all areas of the curriculum and our resources reflect this.

Health and Safety

Our outdoor play area is secure and clearly visible from the Foundation 1 and Foundation stage 2 activity area. The Foundation 2 children play on the school main playground during school lunch time which are supervised by a lunch time supervisor. The Foundation 2 children have access to the Outdoor Play Area on a daily basis, under the supervision of the Nursery Assistant or a Learning Support Assistant. Resources; materials and equipment, are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are safe, suitable for purpose and provide access to learning in all areas of the curriculum.

PROGRESS (Assessment and Evaluation)

The Foundation Stage requests the views and insights of parents as the child enters school to inform early assessments.

Whole class talking floor books are used to evaluate the weeks learning. This then informs next steps and how this transfers into provision for the following week.

We use development matters from Baseline to help us identify the developmental needs of our children. We use a summative check at the end of every term to identify progress and next steps.

At the end of EYFS, we assess against the EYFS profile.

