



Darlinghurst

ACADEMY

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy 2024-2025

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Darlinghurst EYFS Policy

Our Vision

The Early Years is a vibrant and happy place with passionate and nurturing staff who ensure that children feel they belong and have the best start to their journey and families feel well supported. Induction and settling routines are valued, with time given to building positive relationships. Our staff work collaboratively to provide high quality provision for all; meeting the demands of the new EYFS framework and the four guiding principles: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.

SPACE

- Successful learners
- Prepared for change
- Active citizens
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors



Darlinghurst Intent and Aims

At Darlinghurst, we will ensure that children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the foundation of knowledge and skills needed to make good progress through school and life. Quality and consistency in teaching and learning will enable every child to make good progress and no child is left behind. We endeavour to build close partnerships, working alongside practitioners and with parents/carers, ensuring that every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We want the best outcomes for our children and for our staff to feel empowered to do what they do best.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from January 2024.

Darlinghurst EYFS Design

Children to partake in an ambitious curriculum that is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress toward the end of reception goals, defined as Early Learning Goals. Learning through play, a balance between child and adult led learning with flexible planning, allowing timely response to children's new interests and needs.

A curriculum that is ambitious and well sequenced that encompasses the seven areas of learning and development. Three prime areas for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied through awe and wonder where children can encounter, explore and learn:

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

The three characteristics of Effective Learning are interwoven throughout our provision:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things
- Active learning – children encouraged to have a go and keep on trying – demonstrating determination until success is achieved
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, making links and developing strategies

Implementation

The Rockpool

Our EYFS, the foundation and starting point of our children's journey, is organised in such a way that our nursery and reception enjoy a central, outdoor learning environment that reflects our indoor provision. Within our EYFS environment, learning is carefully planned in all areas/zones, prioritising Communication and Language development, impacting on effective communication and enriched vocabulary. Our provision is accessible throughout the year and in all seasons, children are encouraged to learn through play in all weathers. Our classrooms surround the Rockpool, allowing our children to free-flow inside and out. Our nursery and reception children enjoying exploring the outdoor environment together supported by our entire EYFS team. This close working within the team supports building strong relationships, fostering a smooth transition of our nursery children as they move up into the next phase of the EYFS. We believe that the quantity and quality of interactions makes the difference to a child's development and enables them to know more, remember more and do more. Provocations are carefully planned around the seasons, the contextual make up of our cohort and key events during the year (inclusive of all religions and cultures).

Partnerships

We value the importance of positive working relationships between children, parents and staff at Darlington. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

At Darlington, we provide every child in Early Years with an online Learning Journal known as Tapestry, this is a celebration of their achievements and progress during their time in the Rockpool. The journal is accessible by both parents and the Early Years team. It contains observations, photographs, samples of drawings, writing and a document of their experiences, skills, interests and progress within the seven areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation stage. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of the child for everyone.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their academy journey. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning by reading each day with their child, completing simple homework activities as well as sharing experiences at home on Tapestry. Through starting points, mid-year consultations and end of year reports, parents receive information about their child's progress in the EYFS. Parents meetings are offered after baseline and as and when needed during the year, where parents have the opportunity to speak with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development and their next steps in learning. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the academy day.

Inclusion

At Darlington we embrace inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that they are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children irrespective of their gender, special educational need, ability, social

and cultural backgrounds, ethnicity and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs. We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Inclusion Leader and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Assessment and Reporting to Parents

Throughout Early Years, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans of interaction with our children. Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children and to identify any barriers to children's learning and narrow the learning gap.

At the start of Reception, the national baseline is carried out each child. We gather information from a range of additional sources; observations of the child-led activities, talking to children, adult-led activities and observations. Discussions with parents, carers and professional judgements are also used to finalise outcomes of this baseline. Daily 2-6-2 meetings are held in response to baseline results to ensure early identification and rapid response to individual needs are discussed, implemented and reviewed to ensure every child is able to progress to their next stage of development.

Every child has a 'Learning Journal', held on Tapestry, in which we record in-depth observations and samples of the children's work. Parents/carers receive regular notifications through Tapestry and they can view these observations and any related photographs/videos. Parents/carers are encouraged to add their own comments and also to upload their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home. Throughout their time in Nursery and Reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

At key points during the year, staff assess children's progress to ensure all children are achieving well. Using staff knowledge and progression documents of child development and the expectations set by the Early Learning Goals any child who is identified as not currently working at a 'typical level of development' in an identified area is offered additional intervention to support their progress and development. Planning is reflective of these identified gaps and adjusted to support and meet our children's needs as well as narrow the learning gap for all.

At the end of the year, the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the EYFS staff who use the Early Learning Goal criteria, the EYFS statutory framework, and an in-depth knowledge of the child to make a 'best fit' judgement. Children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each area of the EYFS curriculum:

2 = Expected ELG – meeting the expected level

1 = Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected level

This profile data is used to support transition into Year 1 and is the foundation for their next stage of development and learning. Parents/carers are given information of their child's achievements in a report at the end of the summer term. This profile data is statutory and sent to the Local Authority where it is used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2024) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy. We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk. All children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. The children in Reception are all eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch. Each classroom in the Rockpool has access to the toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene and hand washing techniques. We also provide the children with the experience of growing their own vegetables to understand and experience from 'ground to plate' and supports our wider academy understanding of sustainability. Throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food in our purpose-built kitchen in the Early Years environment. We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through our curriculum, for example by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- We also teach e-safety across our EYFS in age appropriate ways.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board for ratification.