



# Darlinghurst

## ACADEMY

### Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**September 2018**

Date created	September 2018
Version	1
Status	Published
Applicable to	Early Years
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Checked by	Leanne Hahn
Valid from	September 2018
Review date	September 2019

## **Rational**

At Darlington Academy we believe that a young child's experiences have a major impact on their future life and that by providing a caring and nurturing environment, children will be encouraged to develop holistically. This policy outlines the provision Darlington Academy offers to all its pupils aged three to five years old. Children within this age range are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Foundation Stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate key stage.

Children who attend the Nursery are age three to four years old. All children are entitled to fifteen hours provision each week, with some children being able to claim an additional fifteen hours each week. Children who attend a Reception class are age four to five years old. Entry into the reception class is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday). Admissions will be made according to the admissions policy.

## **Aims of the Foundation Stage**

We value The Foundation Stage in its own right, and it is important in preparing children for lifelong learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage document sets out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage. The early- years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- Parents and practitioners work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect
- It builds on what our children already know and can do
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

## **Effective Early Years Education**

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and who are able to implement the curriculum requirements. At Darlington Academy we believe that children develop rapidly during their early years, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Practitioners work to ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.

To be effective, the early years curriculum should be carefully structured to the different needs of the children and recognising different starting points. We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children initiate for themselves. Practitioners observe the children and respond appropriately to them as individuals, informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn. Well planned purposeful activity and stimulating experiences will engage children in the learning process, with appropriate practitioner intervention as necessary.

## **The Foundation Stage Framework**

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing seven areas of learning.

### **The Prime Areas are:**

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development: making relationships, self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour. This focusses on children learning to work, play and co-operate with others in a group beyond the family. It includes important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.
2. Communication and Language: listening and attention, understanding, speaking. This area covers important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. It places a strong emphasis on children's developing competence in speaking, listening and understanding.
3. Physical Development: moving and handling, health and self-care. This area covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. Physical development is embedded in all other areas of the EYFS framework. Teaching concentrates on children developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulation skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

### **The Specific Areas are:**

4. Literacy: reading, writing. Early reading and writing skills are fostered through the children being encouraged to mark make in a wide variety of activities, both adult led and child led, with phonological awareness of words important to each child, eg own name, topic based words. In the Reception classes all children take part in focused daily teaching of phonics for develop blending letter sounds to read and segmenting words to write.
5. Mathematics: number, shape space and measure. Important concepts of mathematical understanding are taught by children engaging in practical activities and by being encouraged to understand and use the language of mathematical ideas.
6. Understanding of the world: people and communities, the world, technology. This is a major area of learning focusing on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people, and features of the natural and man-made world. It provides a foundation for scientific, technological, historical and geographical learning.

7. Expressive Arts and Design: exploring and using media and materials, being imaginative. This includes art, music and drama and focusses on children's developing imagination and their ability to communicate and express their own ideas and feelings in creative ways.

### **The Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which are central to children learning and ongoing development as effective life-long learners. They are vital elements of support for the transition from Early Years to Year 1 and beyond into all aspects of school life. They represent the process of learning in different situations, following through ideas and how children achieve their goals. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background information and context when planning for the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

The characteristics of effective learning look at:

- Playing and exploring – engagement in finding out and exploring new things, playing with what is familiar and being willing to 'have-a-go' at new experiences.
- Active learning – motivation by being involved and concentrating, keeping on trying and enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking of their own ideas, making links between ideas and concepts and choosing ways to do things.

### **Teaching and learning style**

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our main school teaching and learning policy. The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have 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 or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that supports children to achieve within the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 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, in both indoors and outdoors environments.

- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents through Tapestry, EIP's reports, parents evening, drop-in sessions and stay & play.
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

### **Play in the Foundation Stage**

Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

At Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations pivotal to the needs of our children, so that most achieve as expected in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception. Some children may be judged as emerging in their development while others may show exceeding progress beyond these Early Learning Goals. Staff support children to progress as individuals by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs and interests.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources that reflect diversity and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support as necessary.

### **The Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The curriculum for the foundation stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage document (2017). The children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skills across a number of learning areas. The learning opportunities are taught through topics at an individual learning pace, using mainly practical activities as recommended.

Differentiation of learning will be planned for and based upon observations and assessments.

When learning exceeds The Early Years Foundation Stage learning opportunities, learning experiences will be planned in accordance with the National Curriculum Key Stage 1, phonics and reading. Recommendations will be based on teacher assessment when a child is developmentally ready.

### **Assessment**

The Foundation Stage team assess and plan for the differing needs of all the children. The learning opportunities are planned around The Early Years Foundation Stage and topic themes. Ongoing observations and assessments are carried out on a regular basis so that the class teacher can plan for the children's personal development and progression. These include recorded observations and assessments of the children's development. Each child's achievements are recorded in their individual Learning Journey and this information is then transferred to the Foundation Stage Profile program. In addition to this each child has a writing book that holds examples of work that show their progress. All children take part in daily phonics learning which is recorded daily in their books. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals. This starts when the child enters Nursery to end of Reception or from the start of Reception to the end of Reception if the child comes into a Reception class from another setting.

### **Parents as Partners**

We believe that all parents have a crucial role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- The opportunity given to the parents to meet with their child's teacher before starting at Darlington Academy
- Offering the Reception children visits to their new class during the Summer term and Nursery parents and children being given the opportunity to visit the Nursery before they start.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to be informed about their child's progress in our Nursery or Reception class by viewing their own child's Learning Journey and contributing 'wow moments' for this.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns, either by appointment in school or by phone appointment.
- Parents attending the regular consultations which are held throughout the year at which parents can discuss their child's progress.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, parents and school, for example collaborative homework activities, being parent helpers on topic related visits in the local environment.

### **The Learning Environment**

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, with reference to our Learning Outside the Classroom Policy, that encourages a positive attitude to learning.

We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. Being outdoors offers children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Classrooms are organised to allow children to find equipment and resources independently.