Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Date:	September 2022
Date approved by Management Committee:	
Signature of Chair of Management Committee:	
To be reviewed:	Bi Annually

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Review – **Summary of Changes**	September 2022
The September 2022 policy has been amended to provide further clarity in relation to the EYFS statutory framework – paragraph pre introduction Communication and Language – additional text *Changes highlighted in yellow*	

There is a Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.
This framework is mandatory for all early year's providers in England (from 3rd April 2017) which includes all maintained schools and on the early years register. In September 2021 a new EYFS statutory framework was introduced to enable all schools were setting age appropriate standards for children's learning to ensure that children were getting the best possible start in life.

Introduction

Within Early Years we value every child. For those within the Early Year's age group we ensure that each child can access learning at their own developmental level. Some children referred require their learning to be delivered at a developmental level which is lower than their chronological age. Therefore, access to an appropriate curriculum will be carefully planned for and offered in an inspiring and stimulating way to promote curiosity, fun and interest in learning and to encourage lifelong learning.
We provide a curriculum built around children's needs to promote personal, social, intellectual, spiritual, physical and creative learning.
The environment is safe, secure and designed to encourage children to make friendships, build trusting relationships, independence, confidence, cooperation and learning.
Foundation Stage Profile and Development Matters enhance early year's values and so underpin the curriculum offer. Children's learning is based around the 7 areas of effective learning Communication and language development ,Physical development, Personal, social, and emotional development, Literacy development,. Mathematics, Understanding the world. Expressive arts and design.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in it's own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."
"Early Years Foundation Stage Profile"
Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Principles

We believe in:

A unique child:

We recognise that every child is a competent learner, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and

at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
Every child is unique and one who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. They will learn within an environment where positive relationships are highly valued. There will be an enabling environment with strong partnerships and acknowledgement with a firm understanding that children learn in different ways and rates.

Positive relationships:
We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
Enabling environments:
We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
Learning and development:
Our Nurture Group Provisions are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely, and so this reflects the early years' curriculum.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.
At The Link School we greatly value the importance that the curriculum plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view early year's opportunities as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

All children begin our school setting with a wide variety of experiences and learning. Children are referred to our school as they are experiencing difficulty in settling to learning effectively alongside their peers. Many have adverse childhood experiences. We have developed a holistic approach to learning, whilst also working to support parents/carers and staff to work effectively together, to support the learning and development of every child.

Aims
It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with opportunity to economic well-being.
We aim to:
Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to achieve their full potential. Each child will be valued as an individual. Teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates and so will be taught at their developmental age while still challenging their learning.

We aim to:
Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, and according to any additional needs.

DRAFT

Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in preparation for Key Stage 1 and beyond.
Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
Provide inclusive experiences in which every child can participate and enjoy.

Learning and Development
Learning and development is categorised into three **prime** areas of learning:
Communication and language:
We recognise that the development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children are provided with experiences and support which help them develop competence in speaking , listening and attention and understanding. Children participate in story sharing, nursery rhymes and phonics activities.
Physical development:
Children are provided with activities to develop moving and handling skills to encourage them to be active and interactive to improve skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement on a daily basis. Health and self-care also encourages the importance of physical exercise, good health and a healthy diet
Personal, social and emotional development:
Children are provided with experiences and support which helps them develop relationships, confidence, self-awareness and strategies for managing feelings and behaviour. Activities are planned daily to promote emotions, moral, spiritual and social development.

Any concerns around the child's development in any of these prime areas of learning will be discussed and reviewed to support the child's next steps in learning.

Additionally there are four **specific** areas of learning:
Literacy:
Children are provided with experiences and support to develop reading and writing of simple sentences. Daily phonics sessions develop their ability to decode, read and write.
Mathematics:
Children are supported in developing their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numbers in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. Opportunities are provided for children to practise and extend their skills to help them gain confidence and competence.
Understanding the world:
Children are supported in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding that helps them to make sense of the world, people and communities and technology. Opportunities are provided daily to allow children to use a range of tools, encounter

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creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations, undertake practical experiments and work with a range of materials. Children have opportunity to investigate within a Forest School setting.

Expressive arts and design:

Creative activities are provided to extend the curiosity exploration and play of the children. They are encouraged to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role play activities and desi and technology.

Achievement of these **prime and specific areas** of learning is by:

- **Playing and exploring**: Play is vitally important in the Early years. It reflects the wider ranging and varied interest of each child to support their interests and extend their learning as children learn at their highest level during sustained play. Children will experience to learn and will have confidence to 'have a go'.
- ·**Active learning**: children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested developing independence and control over learning with increasing confidence.

- **Creating and thinking critically**: children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well independence. They communicate with other as they investigate and solve problems.

Adults will support children in their thinking and help them to make connections. They will encourage problem solving by asking questions. Children will have access to resources and be able to move around freely to make choices and decisions to help them in their explorations to extend learning.

The Key Person

Within our specialist setting the Teacher will be nominated as the Key Person. They will have overall responsibility for knowing the background and barriers to learning for each child. They will maintain overall responsibility for progress and integration. Non-teaching staff will also be expected to know each child well and to take time to understand the wholeness of each unique child they are working with.

Health and Safety

Staff ensure that the environments and activities which take place are safe and secure to reduce risks to children.

The environment has a safety check each morning and is monitored throughout the day.

We encourage children to take risks and talk about keeping safe by indicating hazards.

There are qualified staff to manage first aid at work and all staff are paediatric first aid trained, with regular updates.

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Observation, Assessment and Planning
Children are all assessed on entry to determine their individual starting points.
Realistic, though challenging expectations based the needs of each child are set, to help each child progress towards or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. Well organised and prepared planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Activities are planned and are matched to each individual child's ability as well as being centred around their interests.

Assessment
Early Years children are assessed using Development Matters. Ongoing assessments inform weekly planning so that each week activities are well matched to individual children. Observations and photographic evidence are used to inform the assessments.
The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage is a statutory requirement. This remains the responsibility of the child's host school, as they attend our short stay school for a much shorter period of time. Should the child be permanently excluded then this would become the responsibility of this school.
Children in Foundation Stage (Reception) who enter our school are assessed using Development Matters in the 3 Prime areas and 4 specific areas.
Evidence is collated by staff over time and collated within profiles. Staff then link the evidence to the progression strands in Development matters. Progression lines are regularly updated and log the children's learning.

Learning through Play
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 can express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations. at the Link School children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Our environment
We believe that the environment in which children learn is vital to progress.
Both within the indoor and outdoor environments we aim to reflect and provide opportunities in which our children feel confident to safely explore, investigate, question and engage with to develop skills upon which future learning can be built. We also provide exploration within a Forest School environment where children are encouraged to risk take and develop life-long skills.
We offer a wide range of resources in which to develop freedom of choice and to develop personal disposition. Staff work closely, together with a small group of children, to offer encouragement and reinforcement.
The children work with 2 staff, often in a group of up to 5 / 6. All members of staff are encouraged to form strong positive relationships and provide individual support for each child and parent as required.

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Resources
We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer as well as more structured activities, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Intimate Care
'Intimate' care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.
An intimate care log is kept is kept within our setting and a separate policy is available to view.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities
Each of our children have additional needs and so are referred for our support within a Nurture Group setting alongside a smaller number of children and a higher ratio of staff than would be available within a mainstream setting. Each child's needs is supported, as appropriate, to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able as well as those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. The child may be undergoing an Educational Health Care Plan assessment and this will be supported by both their mainstream SENDCo and in coordination with the KS1 SENDCo. SENDCOs are responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.
In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

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

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- providing up to date information about the school via our website.
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through our genuine "open-door" policy
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;

DRAFT

· offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
· providing various activities that involve parents, through regular communication with home (including newsletters and home-school books) to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking.

Monitoring and Review

Children's learning and development is carefully monitored and tracked during their time within our setting.

Progress review meetings will be held alongside parents and the host school staff. Advice and recommendations will be provided to agree and ensure the most appropriate pathway for each child.

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