

Walton Primary Academy



EYFS Policy

Reviewed: September 2019

Next Review: September 2020

1. Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Walton Primary Academy.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Walton Primary Academy. In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

The Early Years setting is available to children who enter nursery (F1) the term after they have had their third birthday.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting at Walton Primary Academy we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Walton Primary Academy is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.'

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Educational programmes which practitioners deliver in the setting must involve activities and experiences from one of the following seven areas. These are:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development.

No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning.

All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

At Walton Primary Academy, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

4. Our learning environment

In our environment children have the experience of both the indoor and outdoor environment.

4.1 Indoor Environment

Both Nursery (F1) and Reception (F2) have access to all areas of the environment and we are a Foundation Stage Unit. This enables us to use a wider space to provide a workshop environment, where larger spaces can be devoted to, for example, creative, messy or large-scale block play. It also helps us to provide a wide range of resources, have greater freedom of movement and more space in which to develop activities.

F2 children benefit from the continued provision of a play-based, nursery style environment and the opportunity to progress through the Foundation Stage at their own pace.

There are various 'Learning Zones' within the provision, these include a messy zone, a natural zone, an investigative zone, a building zone and a physical development zone. Within each of these zones writing and number activities are incorporated.

4.2 Outdoor Environment

“We ensure children have opportunities to be outside on a daily basis all year round` and `link the indoor and outdoor environment so that children can move freely between them”.

The Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education and Skills, card 3.3, Enabling environments, The Learning Environment.

Being outdoors:

- has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development.
- offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.
- gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world.
- offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant

We provide free flow play, allowing children to experience the areas of the curriculum both indoors and outdoors. This is available to all children every day.

The outdoor environment is well planned for and contributes to the development of the whole child.

It provides opportunities for the adults to observe record and extend young children’s development in different contexts.

We are very fortunate to have a very attractive outdoor environment and we have resources provided by the Early Excellence, where some of the staff were trained to use the equipment to enhance the children’s learning and development effectively.

5. Active Learning through Play

‘Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.’

Statutory Guidance for EYFS 2012

At Walton Primary Academy we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children’s play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Walton Primary Academy practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the

world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

6. Role of the adult

In the EYFS setting at Walton Primary Academy all the adults:

- Encourage children to actively explore all the space and resources.
- Encourage children to use all of their senses to learn about the world about them
- Acknowledge the importance of activities that promote self-motivation and independence.
- Know when to step back and observe and allow children to find out things for themselves.
- Know when to intervene to support and extend a child's learning.
- Understand that children learn best when they have time to work through their ideas.
- Attempt to understand children's perceptions and reasoning
- Encourage children to observe and ask questions and develop ideas.
- Recognise that children have preferred learning styles e.g. some children are very physical in their approach to exploration.
- Ensure there is a balance between adult directed and child led activities.

Key person role

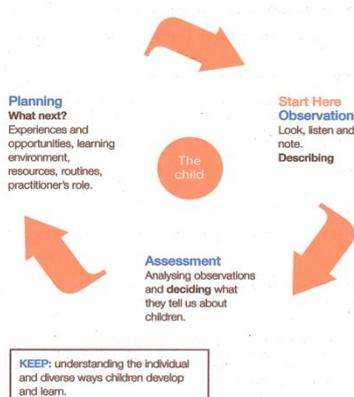
'The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home.'

There is a Key Person designated to a group of approximately 13-14 children (2 Key people for F1/ 4 Key People for F2)

The Key Person is responsible for engaging with the parents on a regular basis, observing the children in their group on a regular basis and feeding this information back to the EYFS teachers and the rest of the team when relevant to inform planning and assessment.

7. Assessment/ observations and Record Keeping

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Walton Primary Academy. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data.



The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play.

Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. We take the time to stand back and observe, watching, looking and listening to children in a wide range of situations.

Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs). All practitioners are involved in observing children.

We observe in a variety of different ways, these include observing:

- An individual child (to observe general development or an area of concern)
- A group of children (to observe their interaction, a selection of their activities and their social relationships.)
- An activity (to observe how children respond to it.)
- An area of the classroom (How is the area being used? Which children visit it? Which equipment is used? How? Are there implications for future resources or the repositioning of equipment? Does one group or gender dominate the area? If so how can this be overcome?)

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles.

Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. These next steps are fed into the short term plans to enable children to make progress and then these are evaluated.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play.

REMEMBER don't record anything unless it is useful to you, useful to the child or useful to an outside agency.

When the children arrive in the unit the FS1 children are given a 'base-line' which is related to the Development Matters document and links with the age related elements. FS2 children are given a baseline in the first six weeks of starting school, which include well-being and involvement, phonics, mark making, basic numeracy skills. These are also fed into our tracking data on Learning Book. We then review the children's progress termly and record their attainment on Learning Book reports.

In the final term that the child reaches five the EYFS profile is completed for each child. The profile is a reflection of the on-going observations; all relevant records held by our setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child is assessed on the Early Learning Goals, whether they are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) or whether they are working above the Early Learning Goals (exceeding). These are passed on to the Year 1 teachers along with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. We also share the results with parents/carers and explain these outcomes further.

8. Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning (formative assessment) takes place when learning **is** happening and *'is a process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there'* (Assessment Reform Group 2001).

Learning intentions describe what children will know, understand or be able to do and may be shared with the whole class, groups or individuals. Sharing learning intentions is appropriate when introducing significant or new learning but is not necessary in every lesson. These may be displayed during large group teaching times, in continuous provision areas or focused group times.

Success criteria are the steps required to achieve the learning intention and offer explicit guidance on how to be successful. Modelling these by the adult is particularly important for helping children in the Foundation Stage. They may not always be in a written form and teachers may use photographs or images to illustrate the process.

Formative assessment focuses on how the children have met the success criteria in relation to the identified learning intention and offers advice on the next steps in the learning process. Feedback is mainly given orally and takes place throughout the learning process. It is also discussed at the end of the session, the end of the day and at the end of the week.

Reflection on learning is an important element of AfL, it promotes independent learning, communication and support in the classroom. In our Foundation Stage centre this occurs when adults model appropriate language and behaviour. It is sometimes developed through peer and self -assessment and evaluation which is given as oral feedback

9. Learning Journeys

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. We use the online site 'Learning Book' to record observations of what children are learning through written, photographic and video evidence. This links into the assessment process, tracking children's progress and attainment.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012). This is updated at least once each term to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

Baseline assessment is carried out using the Early Excellence Baseline Assessment for Foundation Stage 2 and these are completed in the first 6 weeks of a child starting in the setting.

Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

10. Gifted and talented/more able children

Gifted and talented learners are defined as those children and young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with potential to develop those abilities).

The adults in the setting use their judgements and skills to challenge the more able in their thinking and understanding. This may be challenging questioning, challenging tasks to complete and adults modelling more advanced language opportunities.

The teacher also liaises with the Year One teachers, to ensure that the provision provided for these children is related to the National Curriculum Year One objectives.

We also provide the following activities to challenge these children appropriately:

Challenges - which focus the children to investigate and enquire further.

There are questions or challenges within activities to guide the extension of the children's work or to develop particular skills.

11. Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all the Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. The long term planning runs over a two year cycle and includes the different seasons, festivals and special days throughout the year.

There is a curriculum map for the year, to ensure there is maximised coverage throughout the year, with opportunities for child-led opportunities to take place throughout the year.

Medium term planning is created with all early years' practitioners' involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs. These highlight specific skills that need developing during the half term including Prime and Specific areas and Characteristics of learning and there is a particular broad theme for the children to develop and the coverage of activities the children wish to follow are then recorded at the end of each half term. We highlight the objectives that are to be covered during the half term and link themes and activities to these.

Weekly plans for phonics and maths are created which are differentiated, these include a focused teaching group session and resources and activities are then fed into our continuous provision and small focused activities.

Provision areas are planned for at the end of the week based on observations and assessments made during the week. Sometimes, areas within the classroom are not planned to detail to allow independence and imagination to develop through the children's own selection of resources.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and outdoors. These learning opportunities are differentiated according to the child's stage of development and link with AfL.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom. We also invite visitors into the academy to help with the children's learning.

12. Parents/Carers as Partners

At Walton Primary Academy we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents/carers, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between the academy and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and

development. Practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents/carers.

We value the role of parents/carers as children's primary educators. Through informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents/carers to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents/carers are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents/carers can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Whole academy newsletters are also sent home on a weekly basis.

Parents/carers are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year.

- The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents/carers to discuss how children have settled into the setting.
- Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.
- At the end of the year parents receive a report detailing the achievements that their child has obtained throughout the year and their targets for the next year. These will include the profile results for FS 2

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents/carers include Learning Journeys, end of year reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents/carers are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading.

Parents/carers may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where they can become involved in activities within the classroom with their child, for instance Easter fun days.

Parents have online access to the Learning book website which gives them the opportunity to review what their child is learning at school, making comments about what they feel about their child's learning. They are also able to add information and photographs that their child is experiencing at home or special events which can be added to the Learning Book.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents/carers are always welcomed into the academy and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

13. Admissions and Induction

Walton Primary Academy provides part time Early Years education (3 hours per day) for children in Nursery (F1), this is for children who enter nursery after the term they are three.

We also provide full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year, this is for children who enter the Academy from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a visit in the term before they start. The purpose of this initial visit is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment.

Practitioners, with parental permission, will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Walton Primary Academy as smooth as possible.

In the term before their child starts either Nursery (F1) or Reception (F2) parents/carers are invited into the academy to meet the setting practitioners. This will be in the Summer term for Reception children. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and questions. Academy information packs will be distributed to parents/carers at this meeting, detailing academy routines and expectations.

From September children attend the setting full-time. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about the academy.

See Admissions Policy for more information.

14. Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at Walton Primary Academy have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Walton Primary Academy.

See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.

15. Special Educational Needs

See Special Educational Needs Policy.

16. Behavioural issues

See Behaviour and Discipline Policy.