

NORTON PRIMARY ACADEMY



Early Years Policy 2016

Norton Primary Academy Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

'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 its 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

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Norton Primary Academy we value greatly the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stages (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

We recognise that every child is a learner from birth and that children enter our school with varying range of experiences. The early education we offer our children is based on four guiding principles:

A Unique Child – every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments – children learn and develop well in environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Learning and Development – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The EYFS framework covers the education and care of all children in the early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Early Years Vision

As each child enters the formal stage of their education in our academy, we aim to nurture the individual, recognising and celebrating the unique qualities each has to offer. We are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and through an initial home visit we aim to effect a smooth transition into our setting. By involving and consulting with parents we aim to develop strong relationships and partnerships with parents and extended families in order that they can support their child on their learning journey, to enable them to thrive and flourish.

Children engage in structured and self-initiated learning opportunities to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding in order that they learn about themselves and develop a curiosity for the world around them. By immersing our children in an environment rich in language and embracing every opportunity to model expectations we encourage them to be effective communicators, making themselves understood and able to express their thoughts and feelings. Through creating a safe supportive atmosphere we encourage our children to socialise, make friends and develop an understanding of, and a sensitivity to the needs of others.

It is our aim to develop in each child the very attributes needed to be a highly skilled independent learner, preparing them for their transition into KS1.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Norton Primary Academy, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- To ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference, with all children irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, having the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
- To work continuously to strengthen partnerships between school and home. This occurs through home visits, information booklets, newsletters, VLE, written reports, consultations evening, Key Person system, contact books, parents notice boards and maintaining dialogues with partners. It is also important to develop a good relationship with other agencies, such as Speech Therapy Services, Social Services and other Early Years providers, such as local nurseries and child minders.

The Curriculum

We nurture and build upon the natural energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and unique characteristics of each child. Play, in many forms, is one of the most effective means of doing this, therefore the provision is made for imaginative play, creative play, energetic physical play. Through these planned, purposeful play experiences, children's powers of language and their understanding of the natural and the man-made world is extended. Physical ability, co-ordination develop, levels of concentration and persistence are raised. Classroom and outdoor play is observed and recorded in order to ensure progression in learning for every child. Children are also given opportunities to develop their own ideas, to encounter and solve problems independently.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

- Physical Development- involves providing opportunities for children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- Communication and Language- involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are:

- Literacy- involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters, to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Read Write Inc is introduced in Nursery and is taught daily in Reception
- Mathematics- involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures. Approaches including Ten Town, Big Maths and Numicon are introduced as appropriate to support mathematical development.
- Understanding the World- involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- Expressive arts and design- involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers, in collaboration with the wider Early Years team, plan activities within the setting with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching and Learning

The Early Years curriculum is based upon the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS document, which is available to download from

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf. This clearly defines what we teach.

A range of teaching and learning styles are used in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The features of good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- a strong partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- the understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- the carefully planned educational programmes that help children make progress towards the Early Learning Goals throughout our Early Years Foundation Stage.
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests.
- 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 indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations.
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage and access to such CPD wherever possible.

Assessment, observations and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have precise records of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual Learning Journeys. Within each Learning Journey are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team and also inform planning.

On entry into Nursery, all children are assessed during their first six weeks against statements from Stockton Early Years Profile System (STEPS) which forms the baseline assessment on Target Tracker. Initial assessment judgements are based on evidence gained through observations of the child, dialogue with parents, weekend challenges and other information from home. Where children have, or continue, to attend another early years setting staff arrange meetings to share information.

Following the initial assessment, appropriate and relevant learning experiences are planned and delivered to allow each child to make progress towards the Early Learning Goals and achieve success.

Evidence used to make judgements about children may be in written, photographic or video form, or, through the in depth knowledge of the child's Key Person. Some evidence is annotated by staff and placed in individual Learning Journeys for each child. Parents also contribute to their child's Learning Journey. Parents are encouraged to view their child's Learning Journey regularly and are able to see their child's STEPS records whenever they wish.

At the end of a child's time in Nursery, a written report detailing achievement in the seven areas of learning is sent to parents and they are invited to come and discuss the report if they wish. STEPS pupil tracking sheets, Learning Journeys and an electronic copy of the report move into Reception

with each child. The Key Person shares these, and other relevant information, with the Reception teachers at a handover meeting towards the end of the final term, to ensure that appropriate experiences continue to be planned for and provided for all children.

In Reception, the system is continued through the individual annotated Learning Journeys, a Maths book, a Writing book and STEPS pupil tracking sheets, showing pupil's progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Children within Reception are assessed within the first six weeks of the autumn term using the CEM Baseline tool which provides an individual baseline for each child which is submitted to the DfE. This information gives a very clear indication of pupil strengths and areas for development which complement other information about each child.

Parents are informed of their child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals at school Consultation Evenings throughout the year. They are also informed that they are welcome to ask questions about their child's progress at any time throughout the year.

In the final term of the Foundation Stage, the EYFS Profile is completed. Each child's development is assessed against the early learning goals and submitted to the Local Authority who ensure statutory submission deadlines are met. A written report detailing whether a child is meeting expected levels or is emerging, or exceeding them is sent to parents and they are given the opportunity to discuss it with the teacher.

Learning Journeys, STEPS and an electronic copy of the report move into Year 1 with each child. A short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning is also provided. The Reception teachers share these, and other relevant information, with the Year 1 teachers at a handover meeting towards the end of the final term, to ensure that appropriate experiences continue to be planned for and provided for all children.

Throughout Early Years, in line with the rest of the Academy, pupils progress is tracked through half termly submission of Target Tracker data. This data is then analysed by the class teachers, Early Years Lead, Principal and other members of the leadership team to identify progress and attainment at an individual, group and cohort level. This analysis informs half termly pupil progress meetings where barriers and support / interventions are identified. The Early Years lead in conjunction with the Early Years team monitors and ensures the impact of these.

Homework

In both Nursery and Reception weekly homework is provided to the children and, upon return, added to the child's learning journey. In Nursery homework is set as weekend challenges and we encourage nightly reading. In Reception RWI and maths homework is differentiated to address the needs of the children, it is provided weekly. Parents are encouraged to write in their child's reading record and books can be changed daily.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our academy we believe that all children matter equally. We provide our children with every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, as they work towards the Early

Learning Goals. We plan to meet the needs of all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence. These opportunities are based upon the pupil's stage of development, not their age.
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs as identified through on-going observational assessment.
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- planning challenging activities for all children including those whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- monitoring children's progress continually, analysing data and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- consulting and liaising with other agencies where necessary eg. Speech Therapy.
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the recognised procedures for early identification of needs for pupils with SEND, liaising with the SENCo at the earliest opportunity to provide appropriate support and guidance.
- maintaining open communication with all partners involved with the child.

The role of parents

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. We promote partnership through:

- Home Visits by Nursery Staff prior to child's entry into Nursery to meet the child and parents, discuss the information booklet and to complete admission forms.
- Nursery Information Booklet given to all parents prior to child's entry into Nursery including information about their Key Person.
- Induction session for all children and parents to experience Nursery and meet all staff prior to entry.
- Information meeting for parents prior to start of Reception followed by a transition day in Reception in the Summer term.
- Staggered entry procedures so that the staff can give attention to and welcome new starters individually in Nursery and Reception.
- The development and continuation of dialogue between home and Nursery with one member of staff available daily at drop-off times to talk to parents.
- Providing a formal consultation appointment each term in Nursery and Reception for parents to discuss their child's progress with the teacher in private and informing parents that they may discuss their child's progress at any other time throughout the year.
- Providing a written report for parents at the end of Nursery and Reception detailing their child's achievement and future needs.
- Maintaining regular communication with parents through the daily staff contact, home-school contact book, weekly challenges, parent view forms, newsletters, VLE and school website amongst others.

Transition in and beyond Early Years

To ensure that transition is as smooth as possible for each child a range of approaches are undertaken in addition to the sharing of information as detailed above. For children transferring into Reception a number of short visits take place in the Summer term which complement the late Summer transition day and family picnic. Such visits take into account the needs of individuals so that for some they may be more frequent than for others. Reception staff also spend some informal time in Nursery getting to know the children before they move into Reception. Parents are invited to accompany their child on a school dinner sampling day in the Summer term including those who are not attending the school nursery.

Due to the lower numbers in Nursery at the beginning of the Autumn term Nursery staff are able to offer support to individuals who may be finding the initial transition to Reception difficult.

Equally, the transition into Year One is as well planned taking into account individual needs so that differentiated transition plans are in place to support each child. The Year One curriculum continues to follow the Early Years curriculum for those children who still require this.

Early Years Pupil Premium

For pupils in Reception identified as eligible for Free School Meals and therefore Pupil Premium individual needs are analysed and resources appropriately targeted to support these. Such resources may include additional adults, interventions, staff training, practical resources, Learning Mentor projects, access to Speech Therapy and the school-based Speech and Language TA amongst others. Plans for pupils are recorded in Pupil Premium workbooks and the impact tracked through Target Tracker data analysis undertaken by the class teachers, EY lead and Principal.

The recent introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium has resulted in additional funding for identified pupils within Nursery. This funding is allocated following analysis of need and may include resources, staff training, additional staff time, speech therapy amongst others. Again this is tracked closely by the Nursery teacher, EY lead and Principal.

The EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The safeguarding and welfare requirements are legal requirements which are designed to ensure we provide a high quality setting which is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

Child Protection- Requirements 3.4 to 3.8 are met through the academy's Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The Principal is the designated officer, with the Vice Principal as the deputy. Safeguarding information is on the school website and the Principal maintains a safeguarding training folder and ensures that training for all staff is updated. The EYFS Lead has the number for First Contact to use if the designated officers are unavailable.

Suitable People-Requirements 3.9 to 3.13 are met through the Single Central Register procedures, for ensuring that all people are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles, including enhanced DBS checks. This information is stored securely and centrally in an electronic format by the Office Manager.

Staff taking medication/other substances- Requirement 3.17-Practitioners will not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. We follow the NET Confidential Reporting Policy and other relevant policies and the Principal / Office Manager maintain occupational health records.

Staff qualifications, training, support and skills-Requirements 3.18, 3.19, 3.20, 3.22, 3.24, 3.25 are met through all staff being part of the school CPD and Performance Management processes and following the school CPD Policy. New staff are allocated a mentor and all staff attend EYFS meetings. The EYFS Leader monitors in all areas regularly, providing an impact of leadership report, stating strengths and areas for improvement. More than the requested numbers of staff hold current paediatric first aid certificates, kept in the EYFS Leader's Welfare File.

Key Person- Requirement 3.26-Each child is assigned an Early Years Foundation Stage member of staff as their Key Person. Parents are informed of their child's Key Person at the Home Visit or when their child is admitted and given an information pack. All Key People are aware that part of their role is to help to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to liaise with families. Each Key Person is responsible for keeping the child learning journey up to date, for completing their STEPS and for updating Target Tracker.

Staff: child ratios- As a minimum we meet, and often exceed, requirements 3.27, 3.28, 3.36 and 3.37 for adult-child ratios. Evidence of this is contained in Teaching Records and Nursery Information Booklet.

Health-Medicines- Requirements 3.42, 3.43 and 3.44 are met through following the guidance on infection control and stating exclusion periods in the Nursery and Reception information booklets. We follow the school's Medication Policy and Health and Safety Policy and written records are kept in the Welfare File. Key People ensure that their children's medical information is updated in their admission booklet.

Food and drink-Requirements 3.45 and 3.46- fresh drinking water is available at all times for Early Years Foundation Stage pupils. We participate in the school fruit and vegetable scheme. Completed dietary requirements forms, using information from admission booklets, completed with parents, are kept in the Welfare File. All staff are aware of hygiene practices and the member of staff responsible for preparing food has received training in food hygiene which is kept up to date.

Accident or injury-Requirement 3.48-First aid box is kept in a high, labelled cupboard with a child lock. All incidents and treatment are recorded in the First Aid/Accident Book. For minor injuries, parents/carers are informed at collection times. For other injuries, emergency contacts are telephoned, in the given order, and informed so that they are able to decide whether or not they wish to collect their child for further treatment. If somebody other than parent/carer collects the child, they are given details in written form. Notes for this purpose are kept in the Welfare File. Significant injuries are reported to the Principal who ensures all necessary reporting occurs.

Managing behaviour- Requirements 3.50 and 3.51 are met, as we adhere to the ethos, aims and codes as in the EYFS section of the academy Behaviour Policy and the Policy for Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Development. Parents are given copies of the School Rules and information about our Behaviour Policy in the Nursery and Reception Information booklets. Children are supported in their behaviour development, at an appropriate level, through Rights and Shine and positive engagement with adults during play activities.

Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment-Safety Requirements 3.53 and 3.54- We adhere to the school Health and Safety Policy. Updated risk assessments and internal checks records are kept in the Welfare File. A log of external inspections is maintained in school.
Smoking-Requirement 3.55 is met through our No Smoking Policy. Appropriate signs are displayed.

Premises- Requirements 3.57 to 3.62-Continuous and Weekly provision plans detail outdoor provision . The EYFS area has features suitable for disabled children, including ramp and disabled toilets. There is a quiet sleep area with appropriate furniture and blankets. The setting meets the requirements for number of toilets and hand basins. There is a designated changing area with all necessary provisions. There is an EYFS Parent's area where staff and parents may talk confidentially. The school has appropriate public liability insurance. All parents fill in a collection form detailing who may collect their child and children are not realised to anybody not named. An adult supervises the gate whenever it is opening time. Gates are kept locked at all other times. All visitors to school follow a signing in procedure, and all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises.

Risk assessment- Requirement 3.63-EYFS written risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that hazards indoors and outdoors are kept to a minimum. All staff have access to the risk assessments and are aware of their responsibilities. The academy Health and Safety Policy is followed and copies of up to date risk assessments are kept in the Welfare File.

Outings- Requirement 3.64 and 3.65 are met through following the academy Policy for the Organisation of School Visits, which includes strict adult-child ratios. Written parental permission is obtained for every outing. Only LA recommended transport is used. All visits are risk assessed and submitted to the Educational Visit coordinator for checking before being submitted for approval from the Principal using the EVOLVE system.

Equal opportunities- Requirement 3.66- We follow the school policies for Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. Staff are involved in Rights Respecting Schools planning and evaluations taking account of the SMSC policy including reference to British Values.

Information and records-Requirements 3.67 to 3.70- Relevant records and information is shared with a number of partners, evidence is kept in our Contact Files and Partnership File. Parents are given free access to all their child's records unless DPA exemptions are applicable. Written permission is obtained from parents to share information with other providers. Parent/ Carer's views forms are included in children's Learning Journeys and a member of staff is available on a daily basis, to talk to parents, if requested. We follow the NET Freedom of Information Policy ensuring confidential information is protected. Whenever possible, all records are passed onto a child's new school/nursery. Where this is not possible, they are retained for a reasonable period of time.

Information about the child- Requirement 3.71-All required information about a child is recorded in their admission booklet and forms, which are stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Information for parents and carers- Requirement 3.72- All the required information is available to parents through newsletters, VLE, Parents Noticeboards, Nursery and Reception Information Booklets. These booklets give parents details of where they can view all policies and procedures, including the Equal Opportunities and Missing Child procedure.

Complaints- Requirement 3.73- Procedures are in place for complaints and parents are given details of this in their child's admission booklet. All complaints are recorded in the Contact Files, including

action taken. The Principal has procedures for dealing with complaints in the event that EYFS staff are unable to deal with them. Details of how parents can contact Ofsted and a telephone number are given in the admission booklet. The Principal keeps parents up to date with regards to Ofsted Inspections and reports.

Information about the provider- Requirement 3.75- Required information about all staff is held on the Single Central Register. Registers have details about the attendance of children and Learning Journeys and Observation Files detail Key Persons.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, 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. Available resources are fully detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Continuous Provision Planning.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the quality of provision and pupil outcomes across the Early Years Foundation Stage is carried out by the EY Lead, other members of the Leadership Team and the Principal. Evidence is gathered from a wide range of sources including:

- observations of lessons
- snapshots of teaching and learning
- planning scrutiny
- work sampling
- moderation exercises
- data analysis
- learning walks
- environment evaluations
- impact of professional development
- discussions with children and staff
- pupil shadowing

Internal monitoring is supplemented by external challenge including the School Achievement Partner, NET advisors / reviews etc to ensure robust and rigorous evaluations occur.

All monitoring links to the Academy Improvement Plan priorities and Early Years action plan(s) along with performance management systems.

Through governing body committees and portfolio holder meetings governors are informed about the quality of teaching and outcomes within maths so that they are able to hold the school to account effectively.