

SILVER BIRCH ACADEMY TRUST

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

At the Silver Birch Academy we believe that 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.

This policy outlines the purpose and nature of Early Years Education in this Trust.

Rationale

Children develop rapidly during the Early Years- socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually – and each child is entitled to provision that supports and extends knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a valid stage of learning in itself, not simply a preparation for the next stage of education.
- Personal, social and emotional well-being is the basis for successful learning and development.
- The whole child is important; social, emotional, physical and intellectual developments are inter-related.
- Young children do not learn in subjects. Learning is holistic.
- Children develop individually and at their own rates and need to be given time to move through the developmental stages at their own pace.
- Observation and monitoring of children's progress is vital. It informs the planning of the next steps forward for each child and is essential for the early identification of those with special needs.
- Children learn best when they are in control and therefore need to be given the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning.
- Children need a stimulating and challenging environment, both indoors and outdoors, in which to develop. In particular, it should promote personal and social skills and support the acquisition and development of language.
- Children find abstract learning difficult. They need experience of doing things, handling objects and exploring the physical and social world before they are ready to understand abstract concepts.
- Children learn best when they are actively involved where situations make 'humansense' to them. Therefore, children should have the opportunity to learn through first-hand experience. Planning should be based on individual children's interests and their needs
- Adults should display positive attitudes to all of the children and to each other to promote high self-esteem and make children feel valued.
- Parent/carers are recognised as a child's first educator, even before they start in a setting.

A Principled approach

EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinctive but complementary themes;

The Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers.

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting a child's development.

Learning and Development

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning are equally important and interconnected.

Our aims reflect these principles.

Our Aims

To develop the child personally, socially and emotionally by:

- Planning for the needs and interests of each individual child (See planning and assessment policy)
- Offering a safe and secure environment.
- Making each child feel valued.
- Helping the child form stable relationships.
- Encouraging a sense of responsibility and consideration for others.
- Developing a positive self-image increasing confidence, independence and control.
- Developing an awareness that there are similarities and differences among all groups of people but that all groups are equally important.
- Providing resources and materials that reflect the many different types of backgrounds, challenging multicultural and gender issues.
- Developing a curriculum that includes discussion and activities on different religions, cultures and languages.
- Ensuring that their well-being and Involvement is monitored.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Tickell review of the EYFS curriculum (2011) identified 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning which are essential for children's holistic development. These are:

Playing and exploring—engagement

Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning—motivation

Being involved and concentrating, keep trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically—thinking

Having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways to do things

We organise our Pre-school, Nursery and Reception classes to ensure that we offer all children opportunities to explore these characteristics and in addition we will:

Develop the child intellectually by;

- Providing a stimulating environment in which each child can learn through first-hand experience.
- Promoting the use of language.
- Stimulating the child's curiosity.
- Giving opportunities for children to make their own decisions.
- Encouraging active learning.
- Encouraging self evaluation.

Develop the child physically, improving skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement by;

- Providing opportunities for children to use their bodies effectively by providing space for learning experiences both indoor and outdoor.
- Develop fine motor skills through activities such as modelling, painting and construction.
- To develop an awareness of their physical ability.

Develop the child aesthetically and creatively by;

- Providing a stimulating environment in which creativity, imagination, originality and expressiveness are valued.
- Providing opportunities to experiment with a variety of materials.
- Providing opportunities for children to use and explore their senses
- Encouraging children to be creative and express themselves through a variety of media, music, dance, role-play art activities.
- Establish a smooth transition from home to school and develop a positive parent partnership model by;
- Starting from the child, taking into account previous pre-school experience.
- By adopting an admissions procedure that eases the transition from home to school, e.g. home visits, play visits to the setting.

Learning and Development

A broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum is rooted in our child centred philosophy, in which the focus is the development of the individual as a whole person. Active learning is at the heart of the developmental process, children learn best from hands on experience. We offer a well-planned indoor and outdoor curriculum.

Each child comes to our setting from a different starting point and planning the curriculum must take account of this. Activities must be appropriate to meet the needs of the individual child. They must be flexible enough to take account of individual diversity as well as be relevant to the individual child.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into 7 areas of learning;

3 'Prime' Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

4 'Specific Areas:

- Literacy Development
- Mathematics

“There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early year’s settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter connected.”
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

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.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

The Role of the Adults

The professional team comprise of, the teaching staff, nursery nurse, and teaching assistants. Others involved in the partnership are the Head Teacher, parents/carers, governor’s volunteers and students.

The role of the professional team is to;

- Plan the curriculum
- Organise the learning environment
- Interact with the children to extend their learning opportunities
- Monitor and assess children’s learning
- Record observations and assessments
- Communicate with all involved
- Meetings with the Foundation Stage team are held on a regular basis to establish agreed frameworks and common approaches.
- Adults in the Foundation Stage setting work together as a team. The nursery nurse and the teaching assistants work in partnership with the teachers and are an invaluable part of the professional team. Voluntary support from parents/cares and other members of the community is welcomed.

The Role of the Key Worker

“Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

Parent/Carer Involvement

The role that parents/carers have played in the early education of their child needs to be valued and recognised. Their involvement is crucial to the development of children’s future learning. Parents/carers need to be involved in a positive partnership. This partnership is developed by;

- Home visits
- Making parents/carers feel welcome in school.
- Keeping parents informed prior to admission into both Nursery and Reception a meeting is held to explain procedures and routines and our philosophy on Early Education.
- Involvement in home reading scheme
- Involving parents/carers in discussions on their child's progress during formal and informal meetings (See assessment policy)

Special Educational Needs

Every child's needs are different, but when a child is having difficulty progressing in any aspect of their development in the classroom this is recognised. We follow the Trust policy for special needs. The teacher, with the involvement of parents/carers, will identify the child's needs and in collaboration with the SENCO/Inclusion Manager will work towards meeting the child's provision as most appropriate. See the Trust policy on special needs for a more detailed look at our procedures.

Inclusion

As part of the larger school community we adopt the whole school policy for Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and Race Equality.

The core values of our Trust emphasise the need to value and respect everyone in our community.

Our Trust policy states our intent to promote Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Race Equality.

Aims:

- To be an inclusive school making equality of opportunity a reality for all of our children in their everyday lives.
- To develop the children's awareness of the pluralistic and diverse society in which we live. We will help them to learn positive attitudes and equip them to take their place within this society.
- To educate our children so that they have a good understanding of what equal opportunities means.
- To provide children with differing and appropriate levels of support for them to succeed.
- To eliminate any actions, words or practices that contribute to inequality whether they intend to or not.
- To develop children's appreciation of the positive and enriching experiences that can be gained from living and working in a multi-faith, multi-race and multi-cultural society.

In order to be inclusive we will have due regard to the needs of different groups within our school:

Girls and boys.

Minority ethnic and faith groups.

Children who need support to learn English as an additional language.

Children with special educational needs.

Gifted and talented children.

Any child who is at risk of disaffection or exclusion

For further information, see our whole school policy for Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and Race Equality.

