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**PART OF THE THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST**



**Children first – Challenge – Aspire - Achieve**

## Early Years Foundation Stage policy

Inception date: September 2020

Review date: September

## **Introduction**

This policy outlines the purpose, nature, provision and management of the early years that we offer to all pupils attending the Gordon's Children's Academy. The Foundation Stage has its own statutory framework, which applies to all pupils from birth to the end of the reception year.

*'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

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Gordon Children's Academy, children are admitted to the Reception year in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Gordon we greatly value the significance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life linking to our school values 'Children first, Aspire, Challenge, Achieve. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

## **Aims & Objectives**

It is our aim that children settle into school calmly with eagerness and enjoyment that develops their love of learning.

We aim to provide a place where learning is nurtured and encouraged so that everyone is treated equally and respectfully. We believe that all children thrive when a reception class is well organised and managed by adults, but led by the children. We are committed to all children becoming independent and collaborative learners in a happy, caring and fun environment that allows them to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually.

At Gordon Children's Academy, we will:

- Offer a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable all children to achieve their full potential
- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will support further learning and development into Key Stage 1, enabling choice and decision making whilst promoting independence and self-confidence.
- Value what each child can do by assessing their individual needs and helping them to progress.
- Develop relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

### **Our Early Years Foundation Stage provision is based on the following principles:**

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It recognises the importance of a partnership with parents and carers.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework:**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the curriculum from birth to five years old; it is based upon four themes, with principles that inform them to work together for children.

1. A Unique Child:
2. Positive Relationships:
3. Enabling Environments:
4. Learning and Development:

#### **A Unique Child**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Gordon Children's Academy are treated fairly regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion or disability. All families are valued within our school community.

#### **Inclusion**

- We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all.
- We set realistic and challenging learning opportunities to support and extend the needs of all our children.
- We use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- We offer a safe and supportive learning environment.
- We use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- We plan challenging activities 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 monitor children's progress and take action to provide support where necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy).
- We work closely with parents, carers, other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met, and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress from their starting points.

## **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At Gordon, we aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with all of our children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our stay and play sessions in the summer term, our induction meetings in the autumn term when the EYFS staff visit the home setting.
- Arranging, visits by the EYFS staff to see children joining us in their childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Working with the local PVI providers (Private, voluntary and independent sector) to outline cohorts profile of need.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. For working parents this is done through the Contact book. If staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them, alongside collaborating with the school's inclusion manager and the Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- School newsletters, curriculum newsletters and website.
- Publishing a Creative Curriculum topic map termly.
- Inviting parents to attend workshops about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation meetings throughout the year where progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each year.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Tapestry, an online Learning Journal that parents can access to see their child's current learning. They can also comment and make contributions.

## **Staff**

All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them, being a positive play partner and taking time to listen to them.

## **Enabling Environments**

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers. At Gordon Children's Academy, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged.

## **Environment**

At Gordon we will offer rich learning opportunities through stimulating resources that support children to take risks and explore safely by:

- Allowing all children to have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment with planned continuous provision set up alongside discrete learning opportunities.
- Providing play-based learning where children have opportunities to direct their own learning alongside planned opportunities provided by staff.
- Ensuring learning environments are planned for both indoors and outdoors, that will encourage a positive attitude to learning and reflect the children's interests, passions and abilities.
- Providing materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world.
- Providing opportunities that encourage independent learning.
- Ensuring that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.
- Allowing all children to use the environment in all types of weather (parents will be asked to provide a waterproof coat, wellington boots and sun hat as well as PE kits and plimsolls).

## **Learning and Developing**

Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our Foundation Stage curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in Development matters.

There are seven areas of learning and development

Three Prime Areas:

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

And four Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Prime areas are fundamental to support development in all other areas. Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for pupils to participate successfully in society. These are both interconnected with 'The Characteristics of Effective Learning' that look at the ways in which pupils interact with other people and their environment.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities to ensure that all children make progress from their starting points. Through play and practical experiences, pupils learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our pupils.

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the inclusion manager and the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with the school's phonics policy (within the English policy).

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning and ensure that these underpin learning and development across all areas whilst supporting children to remain an effective and motivated learner

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to find out and explore through investigation, playing with what they know and experience things and being willing to 'have a go'.
- Active learning- children will have time and space to be involved and concentrate on their learning whilst persisting when they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for choosing ways of doing things.

### **Planning**

The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths, reading and writing directed teaching. Planning is based upon a different topic each term; however, these can change direction in response to the children's needs and interests. Our medium-term planning identifies next steps for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, as well as for those working towards National Curriculum levels.

### **Assessment**

As each pupil enters the Foundation Stage we use the information collected through home and nursery visits along with our professional judgement to assess the age band children are working 'within' across the 17 Early Learning. These judgements alongside the statutory baseline guidance

form a baseline assessment of each child. These assessments will happen within the first 6 weeks of a child starting and will be recorded within the following age bands;

40-60 months = In line with ARE (Age Related Expectations)

30-50 months = Below ARE

Any other lower age band below = Significantly below ARE

These assessments will allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

### **Formative Assessment**

Throughout the year children's learning is monitored and observations are recorded on their development and progress in all 17 areas of learning. Provision is planned for to allow these observations and assessments to happen through experience and play. Progress is recorded by using formal and informal observations as well as information gathered on Tapestry.

Parents will have the opportunity to come in and discuss their pupil's progress at least twice a year. Their input will be used to help inform planning for their children's future learning and development.

### **Summative Data**

At the end of the Reception year, all pupils will be assessed against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are EMERGING, EXPECTING or EXCEEDING. A copy of this will be submitted to the Local Authority as requested.

Throughout the year we record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning goals as Beginning (b), Working (w) or Secure (s). We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs ensuring children continue to progress throughout the year.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic/ film evidence, written work and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves all Foundation Stage practitioners as well as parents views, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

A data capture is taken at the end of each term, this information will be taken to pupil progress meetings to ensure that children are progressing and those requiring support or extension are identified and have their needs met appropriately.

The class teacher keeps progress records, workbooks and records examples of each child's achievements within the Tapestry app and on post it notes. These are shared with parents regularly and child voice plays a key role within their ongoing assessment.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. Pupil progress meetings termly ensure gap analysis takes place and that all children are supported and extended.

At the end of the final term in Reception as well as sending a summary of these assessments to the Local authority we also give this information to the child's next teacher who can use this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. It is our statutory requirement to report to parents about the

Characteristics of effective learning and their children's final levels against the Early learning goals. Children who achieve the Early learning Goals in the prime areas and the specific areas of Literacy and maths are classed as reaching a Good level of Development (GLD).

Teachers will moderate judgements throughout the school year with other teachers within the school, with Colleagues from the Trust, with the local authority and with other local schools. Staff will attend agreement trialling and moderation sessions to ensure that judgements are consistent and accurate.

### **Teaching & Learning Styles**

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the entire school.

Features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children learn and develop, 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 helps children achieve 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 of 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, both indoors and outdoors;
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- 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 in the Foundation Stage.

### **Transition**

At Gordon we believe that we should be prepared for the pupils entering each stage of learning. We see learning as a continuum and aim for a smooth transition from home to Nursery to School. We carefully plan to support children with transition and to ensure that each child starts school positively and settles into their new class quickly and happily.

## **Starting Reception**

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to

- Go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and universal school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain the Foundation stage curriculum and how parents can support children at home.

New class sessions - The children are given two opportunities to come into school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. Parents are welcome to stay in these sessions or can leave their child. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

Arrangements are also made for Foundation Stage staff to visit them in their current nursery setting.

## **September Intake**

When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- A home visit to have a meeting with child, parents/carers and new class teacher.
- Children have the option to start full time or complete half a day for the first week- unless Foundation staff and parents or guardians agree that it is not in the best interests of the individual child. If this is the case this will be reviewed fortnightly with the expectation that the child will attend full time as soon as possible at least the term after their 5th birthday.

## **Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)**

Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing Lunchtimes with the Key Stage 1 children in Term 6.

Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend time in their new class during the summer term.

A workshop is run for Parents to explain the National Curriculum and how to support their child in Transition.

Summer homework is given to support the expectations of Year 1.

## **Safeguarding & Welfare**

At Gordon Children's academy, we understand that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure when their individual needs are met. Legally we are required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. These requirements will include:

- Having a named Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Providing training to all staff to ensure they understand the safeguarding policy and procedures
- Ensuring that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so
- Providing induction training so that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring at least one member of staff holds a current paediatric first aid certificate and is available and present at all times that children are present
- Ensuring that there is a first aid box visible and accessible at all times with guidance on keeping it well stocked and up to date.
- Ensuring that all children have a named Key worker assigned to them
- Ensuring that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children to ensure their safety
- a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promoting good health of all children attending the setting
- Adhering to the schools policy and procedures for administering medication
- Providing healthy snacks and encouraging parents/carers to support this by also sending in healthy snacks
- Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensuring that all furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for
- Ensuring that fire regulations and guidance are displayed and that all staff understand and know the procedures in place for evacuating children safely
- Ensuring that children have access to the outdoor play area daily
- Ensuring risks are managed and risk assessments in place where necessary
- Ensuring children with special educational needs (SEN) have specific arrangements in place and are these are reviewed with parents and children three times a year or sooner if needed due to statutory requirements
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children and our statutory requirements.

### **Keeping Safe**

We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits. We follow the school's behaviour systems and policies. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

## **Good Health**

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day. Milk is offered free of charge. They have access to water at all times. Parents are given a free water bottle at the start of the Reception year and are asked to bring it in daily with water. We encourage children to bring in water only.

## **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. Any child identified as having specific needs will have an Intimate care plan which will be shared with and agreed with parents/carers.

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. Intimate care can be provided with permission from the parent or guardian. If a child has an accident, staff will provide help to change the child (gloves will be worn at all times). If the child cannot be cleaned to an acceptable standard parents will be called to assist.

## **SMSC in the Early Years**

We recognise that the personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. We therefore aim to provide an education that provides pupils with opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive, caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the cultures.

All curriculum areas within the EYFS have a contribution to make to the child’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and opportunities for this will be planned in each area of the curriculum. All adults will model and promote expected behaviour, treating all people as unique and valuable individuals and showing compassion and respect for pupils and their families.

As children start in our EYFS they will learn that it is a place where pupils can find acceptance for themselves. Children should learn to differentiate between right and wrong in as far as their actions affect other people. A key part of starting in EYFS is learning about this. They will be encouraged to value themselves and others. Children should understand the need for rules and the need to abide by rules for the good of everyone.

Reception rules reflect, reiterate, promote and reward acceptable behaviour and provide opportunities to celebrate pupils’ work and achievements. This is continued throughout the year as the children start to learn all of our special whole school rules. All curriculum areas should seek to use illustrations and examples drawn from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible. This will be reflected in staff’s planning and budgeting decisions.

## **Spiritual Development**

We aim to provide learning opportunities that will enable pupils to:

- Sustain their self-esteem in their learning experience.
- Develop their capacity for critical and independent thought.

- Foster their emotional life and express their feelings
- Experience moments of stillness and reflection.
- Discuss their beliefs, feelings, values and responses to personal experiences.
- Form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships
- Reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life.

### **Moral Development**

We aim to provide learning opportunities that will enable pupils to:

- Recognise the unique value of each individual.
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views of others.
- Gain the confidence to cope with setbacks and learn from mistakes.
- Take initiative and act responsibly with consideration for others.
- Distinguish between right and wrong.
- Show respect for the environment.
- Make informed and independent judgements.

### **Social Development**

We aim to provide learning opportunities that will enable pupils to:

- Develop an understanding of their individual and group identity.
- Begin to understand the need for social justice and a concern for the disadvantaged.

### **Cultural Development**

We aim to provide learning opportunities that will enable pupils to:

- Recognise the value and richness of cultural diversity in Britain, and how these influence individuals and society.
- Recognise Christianity as a world-wide faith.
- Develop an understanding of their social and cultural environment.
- Develop an understanding of Britain's local, national, European, Commonwealth and

### **Teaching and Organisation within the EYFS**

Development in SMSC will take place across all areas of learning, within activities that encourage pupils to recognise the spiritual dimension of their learning, reflect on the significance of what they are learning, and to recognise any challenges that there may be to their own attitude and lifestyle.

All curriculum areas should seek illustrations and examples drawn from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible.

Group discussions and circle time will give pupils opportunities to:

- Talk about personal experiences and feelings.
- Express and clarify their own ideas and beliefs.
- Speak about difficult events, e.g. bullying, death etc.
- Share thoughts and feelings with other people.
- Explore relationships with friends/family/others.
- Consider others needs and behaviour.
- Show empathy.
- Develop self-esteem and a respect for others.
- Develop a sense of belonging.
- Develop the skills and attitudes that enable pupils to develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally – e.g. empathy, respect, open mindedness, sensitivity, critical awareness, etc.

**Provide opportunities to:**

- Listen and talk to each other.
- Learn an awareness of treating all as equals, and accepting people who are different.
- Agree and disagree.
- Take turns and share equipment.
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively.
- Link with the wider community in EYFS
- Welcome visitors into EYFS.
- Develop a strong home-school link that builds effective partnerships that support the child
- Be taught to appreciate their local environment and to develop a sense of responsibility to it. This includes helping to care for our garden areas.

In our setting we will challenge children, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views. We will also challenge racism and expect everyone within our community to respect British laws whilst supporting their own culture.

**Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working within the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and SLT will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule along with Curriculum leads.