

Trust Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage



Contained within this document:

Planning & organising the curriculum

Record keeping

Inclusion

Learning environment



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Policy/Procedure management log

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Preface

In September 2021 the new EYFS statutory framework came into force. The new framework includes changes to the educational programmes, the early learning goals and the EYFS profile assessment.

Rationale

At Nova Education Trust, we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." (EYFS Statutory Framework 2021)

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and learning and teaching is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates but all should have access to high quality early years provision.

The EYFS learning and development requirements:

These are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" and comprise the seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes (outlined below), the early learning goals: which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year and the assessment requirements within EYFS. Early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (DFE 2021)

The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

A Unique Child - every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and wellbeing.

Positive Relationships - how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.

Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults – states that the environment and adults play a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. All adults should respond to individual needs and interests to help children build their learning over time. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context – transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development- recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is divided up into the seven areas of learning and development. The Statutory framework 2021 states that three are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

These are supported by the remaining four areas

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Planning and Organising the Curriculum

“In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning for those children in the Foundation Stage 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.”

(EYFS Statutory Framework 2021)

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

Within the EYFS, the curriculum is planned through agreed half/termly topics over the period of the academic year. The topics cover areas that are of interest to the children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The long term cycle planning reflects a balance of the seven areas of learning- with a particular focus on the three prime areas, the activities and experiences outlined in the framework and development across the EYFS.

Developing vocabulary rich opportunities and social experiences are at the heart of all the topics.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Learning intentions, assessment opportunities, activities and experiences for each area of learning and

development are identified. EYFS tracking of individual pupils' progress is analysed and any identified gaps from this are planned for.

Short Term Planning

The weekly plan is informed in two ways. Firstly, through on going observation of child initiated or teacher led activities (indoors and outdoors) to enable flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests. It is informed secondly by referring to the medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences in the half/termly topic.

Assessment and Record keeping

"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process" Statutory Framework EYFS 2021.

Baseline assessment is carried out during the pupil's first weeks upon entering the setting for those who join in F1. Judgments made on pupil's development are based on practitioners' evidence of their behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception (F2).

All children are tracked throughout the Foundation Stage. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about supporting the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children by providing challenging but achievable learning activities and experiences to extend the children's development and progress. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process by completing either formal or incidental observations on a daily basis.

An Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child in the final term of the year in which they reach the age of five (end of F2). This profile is made up of an assessment of a child's outcomes in relation to the 17 early learning goals.

For each ELG, teachers must judge whether a child is:

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); or
- not yet reaching this level (emerging)

This profile reflects on going observations, discussions with parents and carers and any other adults that can offer a useful contribution.

The main purpose of the early years profile at the end of the EYFS is to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and year 1 teachers. This should inform year 1 practitioners about each child's stage of development and learning needs and help them to plan the year 1 curriculum to meet the needs of all the children. The EYFS profile is also used to inform parents about their child's development.

Learning through Play

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading

their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults." (EYFS statutory framework 2021)

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language. Sitting at the forefront of all activities and experiences for our children is their development in the three prime areas, especially in developing language and extending vocabulary.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. When planning and guiding what our children will learn the nursery and reception teachers do so with these in mind. The characteristics 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.

Inclusion

Our whole Trust and school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

Nova Education Trust and our individual schools will give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic but challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential and have an excellent start to their statutory education

We achieve this by planning to meet the needs and interests of different genders, children with special educational needs, children whose home language is not English, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and their development.

Nova Education Trust and our individual schools will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and act to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium

At Nova Education Trust and in our individual schools we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

The Learning Environment

Within all Nova primary schools we aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment that is vocabulary rich which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make the learning environment a place where all children feel secure and confident, are challenged to develop their independence, curiosity and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside environments; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom at stages throughout the school day/session.

Children are encouraged to become independent and curious learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. The exploration of questions is acted upon by all adults within the Foundation Stage.

Role of Parents/Carers

Nova Education Trust and our individual schools strongly believe that developing an effective working partnership with parents/carers has a positive impact on children's development and learning.

We value parents/carers by:

- showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children's first educators
- encouraging parents/carers to share observations of their child's development and any concerns they may have and to provide support for them in partnership where appropriate
- providing a welcoming environment for their child and them
- being approachable and friendly to all parent/carers

- establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence
- inviting parents/carers to regular meetings to share information about their children
- sharing information about their child's progress, development and the curriculum through regular meetings, reports and online platforms, such as tapestry
- inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests
- encouraging home school links through support with reading, early number and exploring the world
- sharing information on how to support their child's development and next steps
- inviting them to assemblies and other whole school events
- being available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents/carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues appointments are usually arranged for meeting at another time that is mutually convenient to allow more privacy.

Community Links

All Nova education Trust primaries strongly promote links with the local area through local visits and by inviting in visitors in, as part of their themed work, in the Foundation Stage.

Admissions and Induction

Our Nova Primaries provides full-time Early Years education for pupils in the Reception Year. This is for pupils who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Schools which also operate a nursery setting have clear information on their websites about a child's entitlement to access 30 hours of provision.

Transition

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of visits during the term prior to their start date for those entering F1 (nursery). The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. They also enable practitioners and families to get to know a little about each other prior to the child starting school, to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

For those entering F2 (reception) all children are offered a series of visits. This is usually in-line with the transition programme for the whole school. If parent/carers or other agencies involved with a child, feel additional visits are required this is arranged on an individual basis and with agreement by all adults involved.

In the summer term all parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the school, the ethos of the setting and expectations is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting detailing school routines and expectations.

Safeguarding and Welfare of children

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the

safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance 2021 and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

Our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Nova Education trust and our primaries will ensure that we:

- Provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- Have an appropriate setting, with furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children. It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'.

We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. 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.

All practitioners that work within the Foundation Stage will be pediatric first aid trained.

Complaints

We are always very happy to talk to parents/carers and listen to any concerns they may have. If you have any worries or concerns about how we are providing for your child, please talk to the teacher in charge of the EYFS setting. If you feel that your concerns are not being responded to, each school has a copy of the Nova Education Trust formal complaints procedure for download on their website.