

| EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY | |
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| Committees | Local Governing Body |
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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

1. Our Academy is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. We are committed to our Academy being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. We all work for our Academy to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected and all children enjoy their educational journey and make excellent progress.
2. The curriculum at Discovery Academy is based on the three principles of discovery, adventure and exploration. The EYFS Curriculum is included at Appendix A.
3. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS is based upon four principles;
 - a. **A Unique Child:** At Discovery Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.
 - b. **Positive Relationships:** We recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.
 - c. **Enabling Environments:** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.
 - d. **The Learning Environment:** The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently.
4. The Foundation Stage staff work as part of a team and we work as a unit. EYFS staff plan and work together to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related activities to suit all our children. Children are also taught within their own class groups, they are taught in a variety of ways; in whole class groups, small group work, pairs and individually. We are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and education to those children in our care. We are also committed to providing personalised learning informed by assessment of children's abilities and ensuring at all times that children are offered at an appropriate level for their development.
5. Staff are fully qualified, have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with

and educating children. The Staff are committed to professional development and attend up to date training courses and have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development.

6. The Foundation Stage effects a smooth transition from home to the Academy and offers stability for the younger child. In all classes children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through planned play and talking, young children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop personal, social and emotional skills and develop confidence.
7. In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises. Our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. We make the children feel valued and give them the confidence to become active learners. Our teaching of the basic skills through Literacy, Numeracy and phonics is delivered through relatively formal, direct teaching sessions. In addition to these adult led teaching sessions we offer activities which provide first hand experiences through play and discussion where children are encouraged to interact with others, to move about and explore a wide variety of learning situations. There are well-planned areas of provision in the wide range of activities, resources and materials available. Opportunities are provided for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen activities. It is important to us that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

EYFS AREAS OF LEARNING

8. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate the learning opportunities on the seven areas of learning (3 Prime and 4 Specific) which are;
 1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 2. Physical Development
 3. Communication and Language
 1. Literacy
 2. Mathematics
 3. Understanding of the World
 4. Expressive Arts and Design
9. 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. Through play and practical experiences children 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 our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Formal Teaching Sessions

10. We believe that basic skills and knowledge are best delivered to children through teacher led sessions where there is an initial input and then children have the opportunity to practise the skills taught. The children will carry out their learning activities in small groups with differentiated tasks which may be carried out independently or with the support of an adult.

Play

11. We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which young children learn. Play can be enjoyed and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways.
12. Sometimes, their play will be physical, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.
13. In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to,
 - Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
 - Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
 - Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
 - Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk to rehearse their feelings
 - Take risks and make mistakes
 - Think creatively and imaginatively
 - Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
 - Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations
14. Adults in the setting will support play by:
 - Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
 - Supporting children's learning through planned play
 - Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
 - Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play
 - Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning
 - Narrating children's play
 - Asking questions about children's play

Progression

15. There are clear expectations for progression. Children working within the later phases of the Early Years Outcomes work for longer periods on more formal adult led activities and they work in larger groups than the children working within the earlier phase of the Early Years Outcomes. The children working in the later stages are expected to play and learn with less adult support than that of the children working at the earlier stages.
16. All pupils' individual abilities are taken into consideration and they are offered activities that are at an appropriate level to meet their developmental needs.

Concluding Statement

17. **Our aim for all pupils during their time in EYFS is for them to develop personally as much as possible, to make maximum progress academically and to thoroughly enjoy their learning experiences along the way.**
18. **Our overall aim is that by the end of Reception we facilitate 'school readiness' for every child ensuring that as they enter Year 1 they are in the best position possible to access the teaching and learning of the National Curriculum.**

Appendix A: The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Academy fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children's centres and local businesses in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image and strong self-esteem.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources. They also learn how to care for themselves in terms of dressing and hygiene.

COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together. Additional support is provided where necessary for the development of speech and language and several nurture groups take place each week to develop skills in this area in a small, comfortable setting.

LITERACY

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently and they also take part in teacher-led sessions which ensure maximum progression in reading and writing skills. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and cursive letter formation. Children always have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given many opportunities to listen to stories told by the staff.

MATHEMATICS

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Pre-number work is covered through nursery rhymes and number activities. Through direct teaching sessions children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS and DESIGN

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming

colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching through various times during the year children are given the opportunity to participate in Academy productions and assemblies.

OUTSIDE

We have an outside learning space which children have access to each day. We have all weather clothing and footwear available so children are protected and there are no barriers to learning. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In this area EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices. Where possible, links are made between indoor and outdoor learning.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN

Please see separate Assessment Policy

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed / videoed during their time at the Academy. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual record books and on the Academy website.

PARENTS/CARERS AS PARTNERS

We value the involvement of parents in the Academy. Parental involvement with the Academy begins even before children start Nursery or Reception with an invitation to visit the Academy and meet their child's teacher and to join in 'play and learn' sessions. Parents consultation meetings are held in the Autumn and Spring Term at which parents are invited to discuss their child's progress. A report is sent out at the end of the Summer term and parents are invited into the Academy to discuss this report if they wish. It is important to stress that if parents are concerned in any way about their child they should telephone or call into the Academy to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the class teacher or Early Years Foundation Stage Lead or the Deputy Principal. Parents are informed of news and events via notices on the windows and by regular newsletters. Parents are invited to various assemblies and functions throughout the year.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The Academy takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Please see our separate Safeguarding Policy for details of how we fulfil our duty of care to our pupils.

EQUALITIES and DISABILITIES

All pupils in this Academy are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender and social circumstances. Both gifted, talented and able children and those with additional or special educational needs are considered and the curriculum adapted to suit all levels of ability.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Nursery age onwards. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the Academy as necessary. We have links with various external agencies and their involvement may be required to support certain children as appropriate. Parents / carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. Please also see our separate Special Educational Needs policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in the Academy. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the Academy and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before after school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. Please also see our separate Health and Safety Policy.

ALLERGIES

Parents / carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods

they do not wish their child to eat.

MEDICAL NEEDS

We keep a note of any medical needs which children have and where necessary Care Plans are agreed with parents.

SNACK TIMES

We see snack time as a social event, a time where the children enjoy a drink of milk, piece of fruit and/or a light snack together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation with their peers as they sit together.