



LATCHMERE
ACADEMY TRUST

EYFS Policy

Status	Curriculum
Review Cycle	Annual
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NB: Throughout this document Latchmere Academy Trust may be abbreviated to "LAT"

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives, with high quality education being crucial for the next stage of children's learning and for life-long learning.

At Latchmere Academy Trust learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Aims:

At Latchmere Academy Trust we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We understand that early communication and language skills have a significant influence on children's achievement at school and other later outcomes, including employability and mental health, and therefore our 'communication and language curriculum' is deliberately prioritised. Alongside this, we aim to create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We also encourage our children to value themselves and the cultures, religions and languages of others. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

We aim to ensure:

- All children develop their communication and language through the use of nursery rhymes, inside out books and high-quality interactions between children and adults.
- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024

At Latchmere Academy Trust we follow the 'Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2024'. Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- 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;
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Use 'Development Matters' to identify which children are on track to achieve the expected standard in communication and language and deliberately target children to accelerate their acquisition of vocabulary and language structures.
- Train adults in research-based strategies, including the teaching and modelling of vocabulary and language, high quality interactions and interactive reading, for example.
- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported, including direct teaching of literacy maths and other areas of learning when this is the most effective approach to teach a skill, concept of knowledge.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the best outcomes possible.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected, however we prioritise communication and language by planning 'core books', nursery rhymes and poems to expose children to tier 2 vocabulary and by identifying the knowledge, understanding and tier 3 vocabulary we want children to learn across specific areas of learning. All adults prioritise high quality interactions alongside purposeful experiences and regularly monitor those interactions to increase children's acquisition of vocabulary and language structures. This will also increase their 'cultural capital' over time.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

Throughout their time in Nursery and Reception our children experience an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs) The descriptors for these can be found in the appendix.

The curriculum is informed by research and our knowledge of child development, including the fact that although knowledge and skills may often be learned in a linear way, with essential skills typically being built upon others, children's learning is now known to be more 'web-like' in nature and may follow different pathways. We consider progress to be characterised by children knowing more and remembering more. Therefore, our curriculum, environment and approaches to teaching and learning are carefully planned to ensure that children have frequent opportunities to revisit and practise the knowledge and skills they have been taught. In this way, they are able to move information from their short-term memory to their long-term memory, which secures their learning. We also recognise the importance of being flexible to enable us to respond to children's interests and needs both 'in the moment' and when planning.

Threading throughout the curriculum at Latchmere Academy Trust are the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

Work is continuing on building progression in the curriculum from Nursery through to Reception and into Year 1 to support children's readiness for the next stage of their learning and to support smooth transitions at each stage. This work is informed by research and continued professional development and includes a commitment to reducing cognitive load by creating calm environments and familiar routines and expectations across the Foundation Stage.

Planning

Because 'communication and language' underpins all other areas of learning, we carefully plan for children to learn one 'inside out' story and two 'core' nursery rhymes each half term. We select the tier two vocabulary we want children to learn and each story, rhyme and their related key vocabulary will then be revisited through other planned activities in the following weeks. Children will learn the different story structures, key vocabulary and language patterns they need to build their future language and literacy learning on, as well as developing a love of books, stories and words. High quality interactions are planned for daily, including the use of sentence stems to support children to learn correct language structures.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences through which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. Staff plan opportunities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children initially focus on the three prime areas as these form the basis for all other learning.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required and refer children to the Inclusion lead who observes children in the setting. The Inclusion lead makes recommendations and links to relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

We create medium term plans based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. Plans remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's personalised learning needs are met. We also think about how the experiences we provide for children in the EYFS feed into their future learning.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

Teaching

At the forefront of our teaching is the knowledge that children make progress by knowing more and remembering more and that our approaches to teaching must give children regular opportunities to recall and remember the knowledge, concepts and vocabulary they have been taught. In this way, they can build on what they already know and make connections in their learning, leading to automaticity over time and a deeper understanding of the concepts they learn.

Our teaching also considers the importance of reducing cognitive load by employing familiar routines, careful use of language and visuals to minimise distractions and make the learning clear.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children learn by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions to stretch and challenge them further. We recognise the importance of explicit teaching in the learning process, which happens in whole class or small group 'playful teaching' situations.

Children learn in the indoor and outdoor learning environment, both of which provide opportunities for children to select their own resources for learning and to make decisions

about how they use them. Adults set up learning opportunities in the environment to support planned learning.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for the next stage of their learning in year 1.

Reading

Systematic synthetic phonics is taught using the 'Little Wandle Hub' phonics scheme in Reception. Whole-class teaching takes place daily with regular opportunities for children to engage in group reading throughout the week and to practise and revisit their phonics learning regularly. Phase 1 phonics, which focuses on speaking and listening skills and vocabulary development through games, is taught continuously throughout EYFS, starting in Nursery. Children in Nursery and Reception learn 'core' nursery rhymes through daily rhyme time.

Children move through Phase 2 to Phase 5 phonics during their Reception year, applying their phonic skills to reading and writing. Children's progress is monitored closely to enable early intervention, which supports children to 'keep up' and make further progress where necessary.

Maths

In Reception, Maths is explicitly taught daily as short whole class sessions and followed up with practical opportunities within the environment. Maths mastery is taught through the use of 'White Rose Maths' and 'NCTEM Maths', using the following approach:

Concrete – Pictorial – Abstract

Concrete – children use concrete objects and manipulatives to help them understand what they are doing.

Pictorial – children build on this concrete approach by using pictorial representations. These representations can then be used to reason and solve problems.

Abstract – with the foundations firmly laid, children move to an abstract approach using numbers and key concepts with confidence.

Children in nursery are introduced to 'manipulatives' such as 'five frames' and 'Numicon' to support their understanding of 'early number'. Early number concepts are also taught through direct teaching, daily routines and through organising resources in the environment.

Assessment

At Latchmere Academy Trust, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning behaviours. These observations are used to shape future planning and to ensure that interventions are put in place quickly for children who need them. We recognise that progress is about children knowing and remembering more and children who need further support to reach milestones in the curriculum are given regular and repeated practise to progress their learning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and carers to gain a full picture of each child.

On entry

Using 'Development Matters' and our knowledge of child development, Nursery and Reception staff make a 'best fit' judgement about each child's development in the prime areas within the first two weeks. This highlights the areas in which a child is progressing

well and the areas in which additional support is needed. Those children who are not on track are identified and deliberately targeted to receive daily, direct teaching sessions to accelerate their learning, both as individuals, in small groups and through quality first teaching. Research based strategies are used to achieve this.

Within the first 6 weeks of a child **starting Reception**, staff administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which is a government requirement. Data from this baseline assessment will be used to measure the progress of the cohort of children from Reception to Year 6.

The progress of each child is tracked throughout the year using teacher's professional judgement supported by reference to 'Development Matters 2021', our knowledge of child development and our expectations for children's progress through the curriculum. This information is brought together at three points during the year and is shared with the Senior Leadership Team to monitor children's progress and to identify any areas of the curriculum where adjustments need to be made. Children's attainment and progress is tracked using 'Insight' which is an online pupil assessment tracking solution.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers for their child through their annual record of achievement which celebrates the progress and attainment of each child. It helps to provide parents and carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and learning. Nursery parents also receive an annual record of achievement. The profile is moderated internally (referring to 'Development Matters 2021' and the Early Learning Goals) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with Parents

We know that building positive, warm and caring relationships with children is essential for their development of self-confidence, resilience, independence and capability. Each child is assigned a key person who will come to know them well and helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs in order to achieve their full potential. Teachers are the 'key person' for children in their class, with all staff building warm, positive and caring relationships with the children in their care. We also recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff, parents and carers.

The key person supports parents and carers in guiding their child's development at home and also helps families to engage with more specialist support through referring children to the Inclusion lead, if appropriate.

Parents are kept informed of the learning that happens in school through teams posting information, planning and newsletters posted on the school website and through weekly 'Curriculum Highlights' being posted outside classrooms. Nursery and Reception parents receive weekly posts on 'Seesaw' to inform them of current learning. Parents are also encouraged to support their children's learning through home learning activities, including regular support for phonics through parent videos and online resources.

Parents are encouraged to come into classrooms to work with children as 'parent helpers' and to support early reading.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2024' which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general by talking to children about different ways of keeping their bodies healthy through eating a balanced diet, having daily exercise, getting lots of sleep and the importance of looking after our teeth by brushing them regularly. Children have daily opportunities to be active through climbing, playing ball games and through building and construction activities on a large scale and through free-flow learning.

Online Safety Practices

We recognise that online safety is part of our setting's safeguarding responsibilities and report any online safety concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads who record concerns and act to address them.

Children are encouraged to share any concerns they have about what they have seen online, with a trusted adult.

Staff understand and follow our settings safeguarding policies which include information, best practice and procedures to follow regarding online safety concerns.

These policies cover:

- Safe and appropriate use of personal devices, wearable technology, mobile phones and cameras.
- Acceptable and appropriate use of technology within the setting
- Expectations regarding professional boundaries/behaviour of staff, including communication via social media.

Staff have easy access to policies and procedures via the school server and parents can view them on the school website and be given hard copies on request.

EYFS staff receive annual training on online safety practices and parents are provided with an 'Acceptable use of ICT' agreement at the beginning of each academic year.

Infrastructure and Technology

Children use technology purposefully in their learning and under adult supervision, with adults ensuring that children access age-appropriate online resources, apps and software when using the smart TVs or Ipads. Adults also model safe practices when using technology with children.

Children receive age appropriate online safety education throughout the curriculum. For example, adults' model safe use of the internet, IT resources and tools and children learn about internet safety as part of the computing curriculum.

Parents are signposted to age-appropriate resources to support with online safety at home and are encouraged to access support from school if they have online safety concerns.

The personal data of children and their families is managed securely online, in accordance with the statutory requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and

Data Protection legislation. For example, parents are invited to view their child's learning on 'Seesaw', an online learning platform, and are requested to give permission before photos of their child's learning can be viewed by other families. Staff and parent helpers keep personal mobile phones in classroom cupboards during class session times.

Please refer to the following whole school policies which also apply to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safeguarding practices and procedures:

Latchmere School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

LAT Online Safety Policy

Other important policies:

LAT Intimate Care Policy – this policy details the procedures and practices followed when staff support children with their intimate care in nursery and reception classes.

All whole school policies which also apply to procedures and practices in EYFS can be found on the [Latchmere Academy Trust Website](#).

