

Zouch Academy



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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.

When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”

“Early Years Foundation Stage Profile” Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the ‘reception year’ (FS2). In our school, all children join our FS1 settings part time, in the term after their third birthday. They then transfer into FS2 classes in our or other local feeder schools at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through an holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A unique child. 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 and 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 and develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships. We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development. 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 locate equipment and resources independently.

A unique child

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children in our settings are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our settings.

We believe that all our children matter. We 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.

In the EYFS we set realistic and 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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that 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;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn and develop effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using 'real-life' resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Our settings are supported by a team of multi-agency professionals as shown in the list below. Procedures are in place to ensure parents and practitioners are aware of the guidelines. Safeguarding training is given to all staff and a register is maintained centrally at Zouch Academy.

Those who can help and support includes:

- Speech and language
- Health visitor
- Paediatrician
- Children's Centre
- Social welfare

Welfare

“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.”

Within our settings we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2008. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

In our settings we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are a child’s first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child’s development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will provide each nursery family with a Key Person, who will develop a close working relationship with them.
- We will outline the school’s expectations in a Learning Contract.
- We will hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- We will send home a “WOW” book designed to enable Foundation staff and parents or guardians to record outstanding achievements.

- We will publish a theme topic leaflet detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term.
- We will operate an “open door” policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
 - We will conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
 - We will conduct a further parent consultation late in the term to inform parents and carers formally of a child’s results and overall progress.
 - We will encourage parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children’s learning by sharing their interests and skills.
 - We will invite parents and guardians to visit the school regularly in order to fully appreciate what their child does during each session.

Key Person

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and their families, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

In our settings all our practitioners are regarded as key people; a keyperson is responsible for the collation of Learning Journeys and developing a close working relationship. Parents are encouraged to work closely with their child’s keyperson as we recognise that parents and families are central to a child’s wellbeing and practitioners should support this important relationship by sharing information and offering support to learning in the home.

Opportunities will be made to share information about a child’s learning and development. Where a child receives care from more than one setting (childminders, after school club etc), we aim to forge links.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children’s interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children’s individual Learning Journeys. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current

interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process. The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, they may alter these in response to the needs of the children. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Parents and guardians are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage Team regularly and provided with a written summary in relation to their child's early learning three times a year.

Teaching and Learning

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our settings. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching across the school. Please refer to the EYFS features in the Teaching and Learning Policy of Zouch Academy.

Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

Although these are presented as separate areas, it is important to remember that for children everything links and nothing is compartmentalised.

Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. (See Safeguarding policy.)

Active Learning

Children are actively encouraged to make decisions on their choice of play through 'plan, do, and review'. This also supports creativity and critical thinking. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control

over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all EYFS Practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Principal, Vice Principal and FS teachers will carry out monitoring and evaluation on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule, meeting on a regular basis to review as necessary.