



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy - AST

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Contents

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy	3
The Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Introduction	3
Curriculum	4
Teaching and Learning	4
The Learning Environment	5
Outdoor Play	5
Observation and Assessment	6
Monitoring and review	6
Inclusion/ Special Educational Needs	7
Welfare	8
Health and Safety	8
Parents as Partners	9
Transition	9

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The School believes that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to achieve their full potential. Children develop quickly in the Early Years and their experiences at this stage can have significant impact on their future learning. We aim to create a safe, secure and happy learning environment, developing and nurturing strong positive attitudes for children to become active and engaged learners.

Introduction

Using the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)' as a building block for our curriculum we will cultivate learning experiences for children to become independent, collaborative and innovative learners.

We aim to provide teaching and learning experiences of the highest quality to help our children make good progress towards and, where appropriate, beyond the early learning goals. While following this curriculum we also aim to respond to the individual needs of our children, their families and the community to secure foundations on which future learning can be built.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what children already know and can do;
- It ensures that all children are included regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special education needs, disability, gender or ability;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and provision that enhances opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides an equal balance of adult-led and child initiated learning.

The principles which guide the work of all Early Years practitioners are grouped into four themes:

A Unique Child - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships - children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and a key person.

Enabling Environments - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

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

We aim to ensure that children are provided with the knowledge and skills needed to become lifelong learners.

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum provides a range of activities and experiences through which children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, manipulate objects and materials and use language for a variety of purposes while receiving appropriate adult support and guidance. There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are 'prime areas' and four are 'specific areas'.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

Teaching and Learning

The need and interests of the children, the environment and the time of year are reflected in our planning. We organise the curriculum into topic areas and make connections to all seven areas of learning where possible. The children feel listened to and valued because they contribute to the planning process, which gives them ownership and improves their learning experience. Through play, children are encouraged to become independent learners as they access the different areas of learning. It is important at this early stage that children are provided with the skills necessary to identify and communicate their needs and wants, look after themselves and their belongings and make choices. This independence helps children to make sense of the world around them and provides them with opportunities to create, investigate and communicate.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we recognise the features of quality teaching and learning:

- The presence of strong partnerships between teachers and parents
- Teachers understand how children develop and learn and how these variations affect their teaching
- A well planned curriculum which helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals
- Teachers give clear explanations and have clear expectations
- Teachers plan appropriate interventions
- All practitioners facilitate progression in learning through effective scaffolding.
- A well thought out environment, which allows children to feel safe and confident to communicate/talk about their learning and to develop as independent learners.

- Consistent assessment for Learning
- An underlying ethos of high expectations, praise and encouragement
- Embed the ethos and values of Avanti Schools Trust

The Learning Environment

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to enable children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, creative and quiet. Each classroom has got clearly defined learning areas where children are able to locate equipment and resources independently. We deliver learning experiences through purposeful play with a balance of adult initiated and child initiated activities.

Outdoor Play

Children will have the opportunity to play outside on a daily basis throughout the year in all kinds of weather. Provision outside should allow children to have the freedom of the outdoors and offer children the opportunity to move on a larger scale, to be active, noisy and messy and to use all their senses with their whole body. Therefore, carefully planned outdoor play experiences will help all children to find out about themselves and their capabilities. Outdoor play helps develop self- confidence, independence and lays the foundations for a healthy life. We will ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities delivered through indoor and outdoor play. We will monitor equipment so that outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, must be safe and suitable for their purpose with appropriate risk assessments carried out.

The role of the lead practitioner outside is crucial in:

- Supporting children's learning through outdoor planned play activity.
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment
- Developing children's language and communication in their play
- Observing children and adapting provision
- Rotas/structures clearly show who is responsible for the setting up and clearing away of outdoor resources
- Practitioners should demonstrate an enjoyment of being outside with the children.
- The provisions outside should show clear links to the planned indoor curriculum and build on children's interests. Weather conditions should be viewed as an opportunity to develop children's learning.
- Children are encourage to assist in tidying up after the morning and afternoon session.
- The outdoor focus practitioners plays imaginatively with children supporting their spontaneous play, talk and exploration.

Observation and Assessment

Formative assessment is at the heart of our Early Years practice. All adults and children will play a key role in the development of a Learning Journey that will record each child's personal learning story.

The evidence collected will not only inform assessment and future planning but will be an invaluable keepsake for our families.

Observations are recorded in a variety of ways; photographs, written notes (short and long observations), children's learning, parent observations and are used to inform teacher assessment which will be shared with parents at different stages of the year. At the end of Reception, a child's Learning Journey will be used to provide evidence for the assessment of whether they are working at a stage which is emerging, expected or exceeding in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) for the seven areas of learning and development.

Summative reports are given out to parents for their child in both Nursery and Reception at the end of the year to show progress in all seven areas of learning. Characteristics of learning are included in Reception children, which describes the processes of how a child learns in the three main areas: Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically.

In Reception teachers use the following codes to mark children's work using a green pen, which also includes short observations. Children are given opportunities to respond to their own work either independently or with the support of an adult. Children will have opportunities to self assess their own learning by using the smiley face system.

Active Learning- children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and they enjoy achieving. 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.

Playing and Exploring- children investigate and experience in a variety of contexts and they are willing to 'have a go'. Children explore and develop learning experiences through play, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

Creating and thinking critically- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between those ideas and develop strategies for doing things independently. Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning.

Monitoring and review

The Principal, Early Years Foundation Stage Progress Leader, and Subject leaders monitor through observations, learning walks and discussions as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Inclusion/ Special Educational Needs

All children and their families are valued at the School. Children are treated as individuals and they all have equal access to our daily provision. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best. The broad and differentiated nature of our planning means our plans are flexible enough to meet the needs of all children regardless of disability, ability, race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or social background. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of that child. Concerns are always discussed with parents at an early stage and the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or Inclusion Manager is called upon for further information and advice.

In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning style, lessons will be planned, wherever possible, in a multi-sensory way so that the various activities will cater for all pupils in the spirit of inclusion.

Key Person System:

A key person is a member of staff in an Early Years Foundation Stage who has special responsibility for the education and welfare of a particular group of children during their time at the centre. Every child attending the School is assigned a key person. The primary aim of the key person system is to provide close relationships between the practitioner and the child for whom the key person is responsible for, and the parents of those children in order to assist the development of the children.

Key person:

- Develop secure trusting relationships with key children and their parents/carers.
- Provide a secure base for your key children by supporting their interests and explorations away from you.
- Provide a secure base for your key children by being physically and emotionally available to them.
- Comfort distressed children by acknowledging their feelings, offering explanations and reassurances calmly and gently.
- Acknowledge and allow children to express a range of feelings.
- Settle new key children into the setting.
- Settle key children and where possible eat with them in small groups.

Key person responsibilities include:

- Keeping records of your key children's developmental progress, contributing observations to records kept by colleagues and sharing records with parents.
- Observing your key children and analyzing the information gathered through observation.
- Planning experiences for individual children based on your observations of their interests and developmental stages.

- Writing individual education plans for your key children with special educational needs.
- Contributing to writing reports for parents/carers and holding regular meetings to discuss progress.
- Admissions are phased so that children settle into the EYFS well.
- Communicating with parents on a daily basis wherever possible.
- Planning and evaluation of key group times.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children at the School are safe in their environment. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits to help them understand their purpose. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be taught to recognise and avoid hazards and be allowed to take measured risks. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Health and Safety

We have clear procedures for assessing risk, which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for many aspects of the environment, or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, appropriate risk assessments are conducted in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The School undertakes:

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist.
- First Aid training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent or carer. All medicine that is administered is recorded.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Each classroom has a snack and sink area, where healthy snacks and drinks are available throughout the day.
- A first aid room is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries are kept in the First Aid book.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- All staff are safeguard trained
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff's own personal use.

Parents as Partners

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents from the outset as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate in their child's education and care as parents are children's first and most enduring educators. At the School we develop longstanding caring, respectful, professional relationships with our children and their families.

There are many opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning. Early Years staff will communicate with parents regularly to ensure that all parties are kept informed and included.

- We meet with parents prior to their child commencing school via Home Visits.
- We invite parents for Open Evenings during the Summer term in the Foundation Stage before commencing school
- We send out an information pack for EYFS joiners' parents during the first week of their child starting at school.

Transition

Across the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a staggered intake this supports children with their Personal, Social and Emotional development. This is to also ensure the Well-being and Involvement of each child according to the Leuven Scale is catered for so that there is effective and accurate baseline assessment.

Transitions are carefully planned for acknowledging the child's needs. We aim to establish effective partnerships with those involved with each child in order to provide the best support.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Reception staff to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition into Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.