



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Early Years Foundation Stage – Overall Statement



Summer 2024

Review date: Summer 2025

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE – OVERALL STATEMENT

This Policy is a Category 1 Policy (Full Delegation)

This policy is in force until further notice from:	Summer 2024
This policy must be reviewed by no later than*: <i>*this refers to the term in which the Policy must be reviewed by the appropriate Committee for recommendation to the Board.</i>	Summer 2025
Policy Author(s):	Education Director
Date policy reviewed by Committee and Minute reference	Learning, Teaching & Standards Committee: 24.06.24 (Minute reference 108)
Date Policy approved by the Trust Board and Minute reference	23.07.24 (Minute reference 115)
Location of publication of policy:	Governor Hub/ AST Website/ Internal Records and Intranet

Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We also view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The Avanti Way underpins all we do, to ensure our children have the best possible start on their journey to Educational Excellence, Spiritual Insight and Character Formation.

Aim

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners by:

- Providing a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development.
- Providing a broad, balanced and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development.
- Fostering independence and self-confidence in all children.
- Valuing what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Developing strong relationships with parents and carers to build a partnership in supporting their children. We know parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

Curriculum

The early years curriculum we will offer children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

Our curriculum for EYFS is based on the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 (setting the standards for learning, development, and care for

children from birth to five). We use *Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage*; non-statutory guidance material which support the implementation of the statutory requirements of the EYFS. At the end of the Reception year, each child will be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), each one linked to one of the seven areas of learning highlighted in the EYFS curriculum below.

Our EYFS curriculum will focus on the following domains of learning:

Domains of learning	National curriculum areas of learning	
English and Languages	Communication and Language (C&L)	Literacy (Reading & Writing)
Mathematics	Number & Numerical patterns	
Physical development and movement	Physical development (PD)	
Arts, Music and Crafts	Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)	
Philosophy, faith and belief (to include PSED)	Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)	
Nature and the environment, science and technology	Understanding the World (UW)	

These domains of learning and development will shape educational provision in our Early Years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others; staff will take responsibility for ensuring a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Children's development levels are assessed and as the academic year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

The children in the EYFS will also participate in daily phonics sessions, following a nationally recognised programme.

Our learning environment and the delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and exploring – children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

EYFS staff will use observations as the basis for planning; observing children to identify their achievements, interests, and next steps for learning. These observations will direct planning.

Children will have access to both inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors.

Pre-School Provision in AST Schools

To better meet the aspirations of the MAT's vision and purpose the AST Board has recently (November 2023) endorsed a strategic approach to ensure a seamless educational continuum from early childhood through to primary education by focusing on an aligned approach to our pre-school curriculum offer, staffing, leadership structure and admissions.

The rationale for the proposal is as follows:

- Seamless educational continuum: offering pre-school education within the MAT's primary phase schools creates a seamless educational continuum from early childhood through to primary education. This transition can be smoother for children and their families, as they are already familiar with the school environment and its ethos.
- Enhanced school community: providing pre-school education we can build a stronger sense of school community, with parents, teachers, and pupils engaging from an early age. This community integration fosters collaboration and creates a more supportive learning environment.
- Consistency in educational approach: having pre-school provision in all primary phase schools will help ensure consistency in our educational approach and curriculum delivery.
- Improved transition: the transition from pre-school to primary school can be a challenging period for young children. Having pre-school provision within our primary phase schools eases this transition by allowing children to become familiar with the school environment, teachers, and peers, reducing anxiety and promoting a more positive start to their formal education.
- Holistic child development: providing pre-school education will allow us to address not only academic but also social, emotional, and physical aspects of children's development from a young age.
- Early identification and support: pre-schools can help identify developmental issues or learning challenges in children at an early stage. With in-house pre-schools, we can better provide timely interventions and support, which can ultimately lead to better outcomes for students as they progress through the primary phase.

- Curriculum alignment: pre-schools within primary phase schools can be designed to align with the primary school curriculum, ensuring that children are introduced to foundational concepts and skills that will benefit them when they enter primary education.
- Economies of scale: we can achieve cost efficiencies by consolidating resources and expertise for pre-school provision across multiple schools. This can lead to better facilities, more qualified staff, and a broader range of educational resources.

Avanti Schools Trust High Level Pre-school Provision Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This strategy document outlines the approach of Avant Schools Trust (AST) to pre-school provision and the managing of admissions. AST is committed to offering high-quality early childhood education and care services that align with its broader educational objectives.

1.2 Scope

This strategy document covers all aspects related to pre-school provision and admissions within the MAT. It encompasses the MAT's overarching vision, values, and plans for delivering exceptional early childhood education and care.

2. Vision and Mission

2.1 Vision Statement

To create nurturing and stimulating learning environments that foster and promote the holistic development of young children, empowering them to become confident, inquisitive, and compassionate individuals and so grow into adults who will help make the world a better place.

2.2 Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a high-quality pre-school provision that:

- Promotes a love for learning in young children.
- Ensures the well-being, safety, and development of every child.
- Fosters partnerships with parents and the community.
- Upholds inclusivity and diversity in all aspects.
- Adheres to the highest standards of education and care.

3. Core Values

All pre-school provision attached to an Avanti School will prepare children for their respective life-journeys by promoting educational excellence, character

formation and spiritual insight. The MAT's core values, which underpin all aspects of pre-school provision and admissions, include:

- Respect
- Self-discipline
- Courage
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Gratitude

4. Pre-school provision

4.1 Curriculum

- Develop and implement a well-rounded early childhood curriculum that aligns with national standards.
- Foster a child-centred approach to learning, emphasising exploration, creativity, and social development.

4.2 Staffing

- Employ qualified, experienced, and passionate pre-school staff.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Maintain safe staff-to-child ratios to ensure individualised attention.

4.3 Facilities

- Ensure safe and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Regularly maintain and upgrade facilities to meet safety and quality standards.

4.4 Health and Safety

- Prioritise the health and safety of children through robust policies and procedures.
- Implement regular health and safety inspections and training for staff.

4.5 Inclusivity

- Create an inclusive environment that welcomes children of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Provide additional support for children with special educational needs.

4.6 Assessment and Progression

- Implement a system for continuous assessment of children's progress.
- Support smooth transitions from pre-school into primary education.

4.7 Parental Engagement

- Encourage active parental involvement in their child's learning journey.
- Maintain open channels of communication with parents and caregivers.

5. Admissions

5.1 Admissions Criteria

- Define clear and transparent admissions criteria based on age, availability, and community need (see annex 1)
- Give priority to siblings of existing pupils and children within a defined catchment area.

5.2 Application Process

- Establish a streamlined online application process.
- Communicate key dates and requirements to prospective parents.

5.3 Selection and Allocation

- Fairly allocate available pre-school places based on the defined criteria.
- Implement a waiting list system to manage demand.

5.4 Appeals Process

- Provide an appeals process for parents who are not offered a pre-school place.
- Ensure the appeals process is transparent and impartial.

6. Uniform

Each school's website will have a uniform page which outlines the uniform requirements for pre-school children.