

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust

"Life - Transforming - Learning"

Policy Title:	Early Years Foundation Stage.
Responsibility:	Head of EYFS
Review Body:	Primary Education Director
Date:	November 2020
Review:	November 2022

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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.'

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

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. The academies in the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the 'Trust') greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

We aim for quality and consistency in our settings. Building a partnership between parents and settings and provide equality of opportunity for every child. We strive to create a welcoming, safe and happy environment and an enriching curriculum which both challenges and supports pupils to achieve their potential and to become independent, confident learners.

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- 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. - Children develop and **learn in different ways and at different rates**.

(Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, April 2017)

A unique child

Academies in the Trust 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. Academies focus on children's attitudes to learning, using praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The Aquinas trust values all children and their families. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEN.

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 effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using 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

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from positive and secure relationships. We aim to develop caring and respectful relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Supporting children through the transition from pre-school to Reception.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before starting Reception in order to detail how we aim to work with their child, particularly in relation to reading and phonics.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term.
 - Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: celebration collective worships, school visits and volunteering to collaborate in lessons.
- Ensuring all parents know their child's teacher and teaching assistant and how to contact them.

Enabling Environments

Academies in the Trust 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. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by teachers. Teachers will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

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
 - Expressive arts and design

Through careful assessments and observations of children’s development levels are assessed. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part in children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Safeguarding and Welfare

All Early Years settings in the Trust aim to keep children safe by adopting the highest possible standards and taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm. We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework, legal requirements. If a member of staff has a concern about a particular pupil, they should follow the school’s normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Trust recognises the responsibilities of all staff in the Early Years settings to safeguard children. All staff, including volunteers and students and service providers, have an active part protecting children from harm.

Academies in the Trust are responsible for:

- . ensuring that all Early Years staff receive regular child protection training
- . ensuring that all staff who have access to children are suitable to do so and have a valid and satisfactory CRB check
- . providing systematic means of monitoring children known to be at risk of harm.

Risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor environments and particular activities are carried out on a regular basis.

Complaints Procedure

If a parent has a concern or complaint school policy will be followed. Any complaints are treated seriously and are investigated.

Data Protection

As a result of the Trust’s statutory responsibility, the Trust will receive personal data, some of which will be sensitive personal data. The Trust processes personal data in accordance with the data protection principles embodied in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The Trust complies with the requirements of the data protection legislation as detailed in the Trust data protection Policy.

All staff are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Trust safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust’s data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Trust and the relevant academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.

We recognise that our pupils bring with them a wide variety of behaviours influenced by life experiences outside school. We aim to respond to each case professionally, objectively and compassionately. We are sensitive when working with children and families with specific needs and experiences and we continuously seek ways to promote successful partnerships. The basis of differentiation will vary dependant on the needs of each case but we will take into account the views of Parents/carers and families, colleagues and external agencies together with any Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan. We will also ensure compliance with the trust's Equality Policy taking into account pupils with protected characteristics and making reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Both the school and trust respects the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. By following the trust's Equality Policy, the school seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by such legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Equality Policy