




Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

November 2017

Signed (Chair of the Local Governing Body):	
Date:	November 2017
Date of Review:	November 2018

The Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. This document is also available in other formats e.g. e-mail and enlarged print version, on request to the School Offices and is displayed on the schools' websites.

1. Introduction

This policy document reflects the aims and vision of our teaching and learning within the Foundation Stage. It provides a framework within which all staff work and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment in line with current EYFS structure.

This Foundation Stage policy applies to children from two years of age to the end of their Reception year (those of compulsory school age).

- *Children becoming 5 years old between 1 January and 31 March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1 April.*
- *Children becoming 5 years old between 1 April and 31 August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1 September.*
- *Children becoming 5 years old between 1 September and 31 December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1 January.*

The services we offer are:

Two Year Old Provision; where children can start within the setting from the day of their second birthday;

Nursery; where children can start after their third birthday and a September intake for children joining Reception.

The Foundation Stage is vital in ensuring children receive the best start in life, leaving confident learners that are prepared for later schooling and adulthood. The Early Learning Goals outline developmental steps typically achieved within each age bracket for children in the Foundation Stage.

The early years education we provide is founded on the themes “A Unique Child”, “Positive Relationships”, “Enabling Environments”, “Learning and Development” and the principles that inform each theme. In addition:

- it builds on prior learning with baseline assessments of our children being carried out in order to obtain a clear understanding of our learners and quickly identify what they already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- it offers a structure for learning from a range of starting points;
- it provides content that matches the needs of young children attending our setting;
- it offers activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

2. Aims of the Foundation Stage

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing skills and understanding across the prime and specific areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Physical development;
- Communication and language;
- Literacy;
- Mathematics;

- Understanding of the world;
- Expressive arts and design

3. Teaching and Learning

3.1 Our policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our setting. These features apply to teaching and learning across the entire Early Years Foundation Stage.

3.2 Important features of practice in our Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- effective partnerships between practitioners and parents/carers to ensure that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- practitioners that have a clear understanding of children and their development and how different styles of teaching support learning of individuals;
- offering a range of first-hand experiences in order to promote active learning and evoke awe and wonder;
- providing clear and age appropriate explanations, making appropriate interventions and extending and developing on play and communication skills;
- a carefully planned curriculum that helps children progress throughout their time in the Foundation Stage;
- provision for children that builds on and extends their interests when playing and exploring;
- opportunities created for children to develop communication and to promote physical and social independence and self-management;
- enabling learning with opportunities for creating and thinking critically within an accessible indoor and outdoor space and through the facilities and equipment provided;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our nursery and the settings that our children experience prior to joining and as they move on to new things;
- the clear aims for our work and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

4. Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world and develop ideas for child-initiated activities. The environment and expectations within the setting encourage the children to learn how to control themselves and develop an understanding of 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.

5. Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

5.1 In our setting we believe that every child matters. We give our children every opportunity to achieve to their full potential. We plan to ensure that each individual's needs and requirements are met and take into consideration life experiences of all learners (see our policies on Inclusion and Two Year Old Provision).

5.2 In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children and enable them to achieve to their full potential. Children that progress beyond the expectation of the Foundation Stage curriculum are extended and challenged through a breadth of study. We plan 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.

5.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experiences 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, scaffold and extend learning;
- 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;
- precise and timely monitoring of children's progress and taking action to provide support to enable or extend children as necessary. (This may involve speech and language therapy, speaking and listening groups, motor development groups).

6. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

6.1 Four guiding principles that shape our early years practice are:

- 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/carers;
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

Our curriculum covers the education and care of all children in early years, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

These four principles underpin our effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children within our setting. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

6.2 The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Practitioners in our setting use the national schemes of work where appropriate to support the planning for individual children. Our medium term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals and for those exceeding the national expectations for children in the Foundation Stage.

6.3 Throughout the Reception Year in our setting, the children have daily Literacy and Mathematics lessons. Practitioners initially address the requirements in a flexible way but as part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, children who are demonstrating

extended independence and express eagerness to work more regularly are offered the opportunity to work daily; particularly towards the end of the Academic Year.

- 6.4 Daily synthetic phonics lessons take place following the Letters and Sounds scheme of work from phase 1 to ensure development and progression in early reading in line with national expectations.

7. Assessment and Tracking

- 7.1 We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation and agreed levelling of independent work, which involves the practitioners and other adults within the setting and across the Trust.
- 7.2 During a child's first half term in the setting, the practitioners will assess the ability of each child using the baseline assessment devised by practitioners across the Trust and in line with age appropriate expectations. (As of September 2015, Baseline Assessment of children as they enter the Reception year has been used by the DfE to develop a cohort measure of progress in order to quantify the work carried out by schools with more challenging intakes and identify how effectively a setting has been able to narrow the gap between learners through the Foundation Stage).
- 7.3 We use SIMS to track attainment and to identify patterns of achievement within the cohort of children. We use this information to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the baseline and other assessment information with parents at the parental consultation meetings.
- 7.4 Each practitioner maintains books that contain children's work, creations, photographic and recorded observations. These books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents/carers during parent consultation meetings and are used to retain evidence of progress.
- 7.5 Parents receive their child's individual targets as they progress throughout the year. Practitioners, parents/carers and children all work in partnership to enable the children to reach their targets and identify next steps for progression and learning. Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on their child's progress across each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

8. The role of Parents/Carers

We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents/carers about their child before they start in our setting (a practitioner from the setting will visit children at their home prior to them starting);
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their practitioner before starting in the setting (Nursery and Two Year old children will be with a settling in period which is agreed prior to them starting in the setting);
- offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress when dropping off and collecting children within our setting;
- encouraging parents/carers to talk to the child's teacher or practitioner if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents/carers each term at which the teacher or key worker and the parents/carers discuss the child's progress in private. Parents/carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress during the Spring term of each academic year;

- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become secure and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- we encourage parents/carers to remain in the setting if any problems arise during the settling in period as we want to ensure that the child becomes confident and familiar with practitioners;
- arranging a variety of activities through the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;
- offering a range of activities that supports the involvement of the parents/carers.

9. Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer as we believe that this encourages independent learning.