

Promoting Ambition for Change

TEMPLE LEARNING ACADEMY



EARLY YEARS POLICY

2016 - 2017

Introduction

“Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them.

Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.”

Development Matters in the Foundation Stage

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles: “Early Years Foundation Stage Profile” Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

- **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 learning area 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. Our academy is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Temple Learning Academy we greatly value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the Early Years Foundation Stage as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage for children is from birth to five years of age. 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 a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and carers, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well being. The overarching aim of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Temple Learning Academy, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the learner including learners with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each learner can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each learner to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- Provide opportunities whereby learners experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all learners, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into **three prime areas** of learning:

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

Additionally there are **four specific areas** of learning:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring.
- Active learning.
- Creating and thinking critically.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

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

Effective learning builds on and extends what learners know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the learners, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All the staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the Early Years Foundation Stage is based around the learner's interests. These plans are used by the Early Years Foundation Stage team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the learner.

We make regular assessments of learner's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded and used to inform the Senior Leadership Team with regards to progress and attainment. The parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage Team each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the learner's early learning goals to parents and carers.

Learning Through Play

At Temple Learning Academy, we do not make a distinction between learning and play. Learners learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when learner-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

The Induction Process

During the Summer Term prior to starting school the following September the following visits are conducted:

- Foundation staff will visit pre-school settings from which September's intake will be taken.
- Each child and their parents and carers will be invited to spend some time at Temple Learning Academy in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the foundation learning environment.

When children join the Academy in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first week, it is likely that learners will attend for one full day only.
- During the second week, learners will attend full time, every day.

Home and School Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the Academy and parents and carers to work closely in the Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms and learning environments. This can have a very positive impact on a learner's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

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

- We will outline the Academy's expectations.
- We will hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a learner is settling into the Academy's learning environment.
- We will send home an "All About Me" book designed to enable Foundation staff and parents to share individual information about the learner and their interests.
- We will publish a theme topic leaflet detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term or 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 the Reception staff have concerns about the progress of a learner, 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 the Academy 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 learner's results and overall progress.
- There will be opportunities for parents and carers to visit the Academy on a volunteer basis to assist with the learner's learning.
- At the end of term, we will invite parents and guardians to visit the Academy informally in order to fully appreciate the learning that has taken place in that term.

Intimate Care

Please see Intimate Care Policy guidelines.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Learners with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes learners that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those learners who require additional support commensurate with the academy's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy. The academy's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents/carers and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the Academy's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all learners, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of Academy life to ensure that every learner is valued as an individual. All the staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.