



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024/5

The Link Academy Trust (the Trust) is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Department for Education (DfE). All Members of the Board of Trustees are also Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Trust with an Early Years Foundation Stage.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to five years of age. At the Trust, we operate a Foundation Stage made up of two key groups: Pre-school and Reception in most of our academies. In a minority of academies, the pre-school operates daily on a site situated either within or away from the main school. Children are admitted to the pre-school at either age two or three, depending on the school's registration, preferably toilet trained. Children in pre-school can apply for a place in Reception through Devon Admissions.

The Foundation Stage staff work as a team, the children have opportunities to work together during free-flow sessions, accessing continuous provision. Early Years staff plan and work together to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related activities to suit all our children. Children are also taught within their own key groups.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

As a Multi Academy Trust we want to be nationally recognised for putting our pupils first by:

- Delivering educational excellence underpinned by strong moral values.
- Each learner reaching their potential in a quality learning environment.
- Highly motivated, research-led, passionate teaching.
- Schools being at the heart of and an integral part of their community.
- Being a partner of choice.

Our mission is to deliver the best for our children, families and communities through:

- Innovative approaches to learning.
- The development of partnership and collaborative working to promote excellence for all.

An uncompromising approach to health, safety, nurturing and inclusion. We will achieve this by investment in:

- High quality provision for staff and their pathways to success.
- School environments that provide stimulating learning spaces.
- Strong business planning to maximise the Trust's geographical range and collective expertise.

Overarching Principles

The Early Years experiences we offer our children are based on the following overarching principles:

- Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- Learning and Development

Unique Child

At the Trust, we give every child the opportunity to achieve their best. We have realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all, children with disabilities, and children with additional educational needs, children with medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests.
- planning opportunities to develop their well-being, self-esteem and confidence, including experiences that provide risk and challenge.
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- providing a secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued.
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination or stereotyping.
- planning challenging and appropriate experiences for higher achieving children.
- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support when identified.
- using age-appropriate ways to seek the views of all children through observing, listening and sensitive discussion.
- seeking advice from specialist agencies where appropriate.

Positive Relationships

At the Trust, we believe that the positive relationships we build are the key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents, carers and families. Each child has a key person, i.e., the person with whom they form a special attachment. The key person is responsible for ensuring that the child feels safe and cared for, in order to develop a positive sense of well-being and achievement. Where a school has an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit, it is led by a qualified teacher.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- Working with parents / carers right from the start to find out about their child's needs, feelings and interests.
- Developing effective partnerships with families throughout the year by offering regular opportunities for them to talk about their child's progress.
- Encouraging families to talk to their child's key person, as well as other staff members to foster two-way communication with parents / carers and families.
- Recognising that some children starting school and working with parents and carers to ensure this happens sensitively. Those children and parents who have not been through our pre-schools have opportunities prior to their September start to integrate

with peers and staff. These could be through home visits, stay and play sessions and welcome meetings.

- Helping parents to support children's learning and development.
- Recognising that friendships and relationships are an important part of a child's development from birth.

Enabling Environments

At the Trust, we 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. These observations are recorded in the children's online learning journals. These are always available for parents/carers to look at and our Tapestry Policy can be referred to for further detail. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- Encouraging children to communicate and talk about their experiences.
- Developing children's independence and decision making by providing an environment where children can freely access resources and select from the experiences on offer.
- Using the outdoor environment on a regular / daily basis to enhance learning and development.
- Analysing children's responses to different situations and identifying their future learning needs.
- Using materials and equipment that reflects both the community that the children come from and the wider world.
- Encouraging a positive attitude to learning by ensuring our planning begins by observing the children in order to consider their current interests, developmental stage and learning style.
- Plan to build on what the children know, understand and can do.

Observations and recordings are used by the EY staff to inform planning and assessments. These observations may take the form of typed notes on the school's online journal, information from parents or others, photographs and videos or annotated work.

Teaching and Learning

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning." (EYFS Statutory Framework, 2024)

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we plan and guide what children learn and reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust our practice appropriately. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They are encouraged

to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Our Educational Programmes as outlined in the Statutory Framework 2024, provide experiences across all areas of learning with Communication and Language woven into them all.

The EYFS is made up of three Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

And four Specific Areas:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design.

All of the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led (child working with the adult) and child-initiated (child chosen) activities, both indoors and outdoors.

At the Trust, we ensure that the requirements of the EYFS are met through all seven areas of learning and development, in order for children to make progress towards the early learning goals, which are the established expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Assessment

Assessment ensures that all adults involved with a child understand their needs and areas of development. Knowledge of the children in our setting is gained through observation, discussion and interaction during different activities and experiences with a range of adults involved with each individual child. Assessment should be based upon children's ability to demonstrate learning, knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts when they are not reliant on adult support. Some observations are planned, and others are spontaneous, they all help to capture valuable information which builds up our picture of each child.

We use ongoing (formative) assessment to understand a child's progress, knowledge, needs and plan lessons and activities around their level of achievement and interests.

"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers, and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. This section

sets out the assessment requirements group and school-based providers must meet, as well as guidance on assessment.” (EYFS Statutory Framework, 2024)

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) will be carried out within the first six weeks of the child starting in Reception.

At the end of the child’s time in the Early Years Foundation Stage the children’s progress is charted against the Early Learning Goals and culminates the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). The profile provides information on the child’s knowledge, understanding, ability, readiness for year one and attainment against the expected levels.

At the Trust, we work in partnership with parents / carers, other settings, other professionals and with individuals and groups in the community to support children’s learning and development.

As children move from the Foundation Stage One (Pre-school) to Foundation Stage Two (Reception), a transition document is completed of the child’s current attainment picture. This document, along with information from parents/carers, the child, and the EYFS Teacher’s own observations, as well as those of other adults, is explicitly used to inform the teacher’s planning and form the basis of the child’s ‘on entry’ attainment on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). It is also shared with parents/carers and the child.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staffing:

The overall running of the Foundation Stage Unit is undertaken by the Executive/Academy Heads and CEO.

All documentation, policies and procedures are maintained by the office and are available there; parents and staff are aware of this.

The daily running of the Early Years Foundation Stage is overseen by the Early Years Leader, who has responsibility for this provision. If appropriate to the setting, they liaise with the Pre-school Leader on a daily basis. It is their responsibility to monitor the daily running of the Early Years provision and to review staff performance in that respect.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is responsible for overseeing the planning and delivery of the sessions, including the direction of support staff and informing the administration of any changes, information related to children and parents/carers attending and any other issues around the building and site, especially about health and safety.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued in the Trust. 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. 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 the school’s SENDCO is called upon for further information and advice.

Staff Qualifications, Training, support and skills.

All staff receive regular training to ensure they are able to offer a quality learning experience for children that continually improves and increases the potential of all children within the setting.

We ensure that all staff employed in the Trust Early Years settings looking after children, are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. There are effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children are suitable.

We obtain enhanced DBS checks in respect of every person aged 16 and over who:

- Work directly with children;
- Lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided; and/or
- Works on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present).

All staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, the provider's equality policy, and health and safety issues.

"At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. The certificate must be for a full course and must be renewed every three Years." (EYFS Statutory Framework, 2024)

Staffing ratios

We ensure that children are adequately supervised and deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met. Children are usually within sight *and* hearing of staff and always within sight *or* hearing.

For children aged two:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every five children.
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification.

For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in free schools and academies), where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, an instructor, or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, is working directly with the children:

- For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of five or older within the school year, there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children.
- For all other classes there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children.
- At least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.

For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in academies), where there is no person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, no instructor, and no suitably qualified overseas trained

teacher, working directly with the children:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every eight children.
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification

All Trust Policies are applicable to the Foundation Stage Unit- in particular:

- Health and Safety and all policies applying to Health & Safety-including
- Administration of Medicines, Security, and those linked with the Premises
- Safeguarding
- Healthy Eating
- Behaviour Management
- Educational Visits
- Equal Opportunities
- Information and data
- Complaints

A comprehensive list and hard copy of all policies are held in the main office at Landscope School House and the policies are available on request.

Monitoring and Review (Schools)

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to understand and adhere to the principles stated in this policy. The Executive/Academy Head will monitor implementation of this policy as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Policy Owner: EIT

This Policy is reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum committee and approved by the Board of Trustees on a two-yearly cycle.

Reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee: 25th November 2022

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 5th December 2022

Reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee: 5th February 2025

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 10th February 2025