



Early Years Policy

2023-2025

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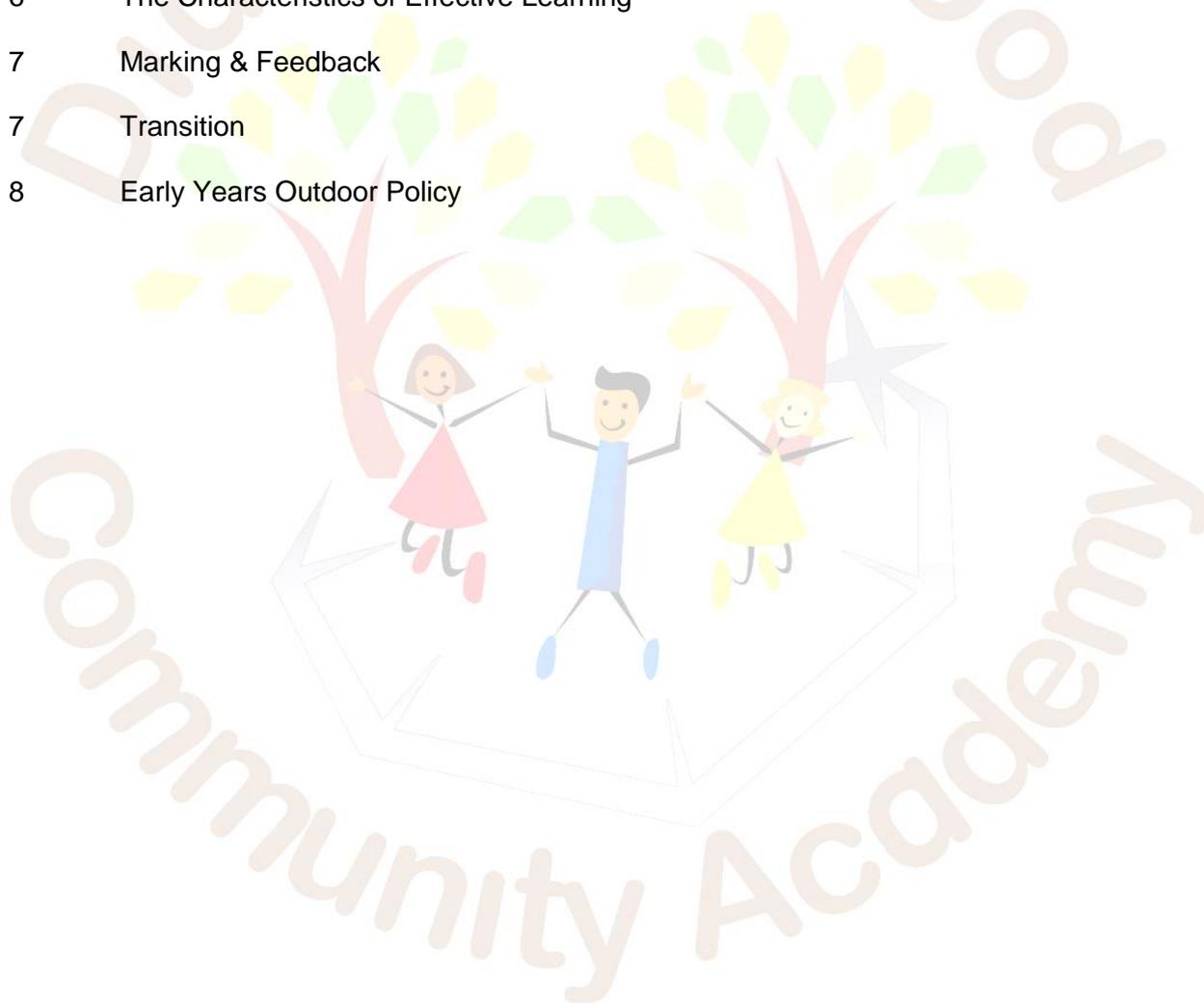
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The Early Years Foundation Stage

Is based upon four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with Teachers & Support from Adults
- Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, 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, 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 children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Diamond Wood Community Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all, 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. Speech and language is developed through speech, language and communication work in school and working closely with outside agencies. Assessments and monitoring are conducted half-termly.

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.
- Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scale than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Positive Relationships

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. Young children are eager learners and all adults have an important role in sustaining that eagerness. We hope parents/carers and staff working together will be the most valuable way of encouraging children to develop positively. We value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start in our school, through visiting the child at home.
- Transition opportunities.
- Parental questionnaires about home experiences.
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in the Foundation Stage before starting Nursery or Reception.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before they start Nursery or Reception.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents with any queries.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year in Nursery and Reception.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Nursery and Reception.
- Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.
- Sharing learning throughout the day and at school via Tapestry observations.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them:

- Class workshops with the School Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer.
- S2R parent/carers and child outdoor workshops
- Toddler Group.
- Open events in Nursery

Key Person in Nursery

The key person approach in Nursery is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners. A key person is:

- A named member of staff who has more contact than others with the child
- Someone to build relationships with the child and parents
- Someone who helps the child become familiar with the provision
- Someone who meets children's individual needs and care needs
- Someone who responds sensitively to children's feelings, ideas and behaviour
- The person who acts as a point of contact with parents
- Holds focused activities with children in their group (i.e. workbooks etc)
- Identifies any additional needs of the child.
- Provides resources so suit the individual needs of the child.
- Adds Tapestry observations to each child's profile.
- Monitors and assesses a child's development.
- Reports on progress.

In Reception, the key person is the class teacher. Their role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. They will of course work in close partnership with the class teaching assistants.

Links with Pre-School Providers

The school maintains a strong relationship with other local childcare providers. Our staff have provided support to local settings, to ensure consistency of teaching on their arrival at school.

Members of the 'Early Years Team' represent the school at local 'Early Years' network meetings and training activities. They also visit the feeder settings to meet prospective Reception children during the summer terms.

- Working with the local Community Centre Nursery to deliver the same phonics scheme, giving children the best start to their education, ready for when they start school.
- Distributing the "Moving On" transition booklet.
- Sharing Tapestry observations.
- Regular meetings and updates with

Enabling Environments with Teachers & Support from Adults

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Early Years Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning.

These observations then lead the direction of the observation session. The staff use the children's interests to plan for themes for which the staff draw up medium term plans. In addition to this the children lead the short term activity planning on a day to day basis. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

The Planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations and this involves the key person, teachers and other adults as appropriate. (See EYFS Assessment and Marking Policy) At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals and sent to Kirklees Local Authority at the end of the Reception school year.

The Learning Environment

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc and where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Nursery and Reception have their own outdoor classroom areas and outdoor shed, where they have access to their own resources. The outdoor areas were developed following advice from Early Excellence and Early Years Network meetings.

Learning and Development

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas

The Prime areas of learning and development are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Self-regulation, managing self, building relationships)
- Communication and Language (listening, attention and understanding, speaking)
- Physical Development (gross motor skills, fine motor skills)

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas

- Literacy (comprehension, word reading, writing)
- Mathematics (number, numerical patter)
- Understanding of the world (past and present, people, culture and communities)

- Expressive arts and design (creating with materials, being imaginative and expressive)

We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. All Areas of Learning and Development are embedded in the Continuous Provision, both indoor and outdoor.

Early Reading and Phonics

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum at Diamond Wood Community Academy. Teaching a child to read is the greatest gift that we can give a child in our school. Because of this, we see it as a core purpose of our curriculum. From Nursery we ensure that our children not only learn the skills and knowledge to enable them to read, but also begin to develop positive life-long dispositions and attitudes towards reading – that will take our children through junior school and beyond.

Teaching children to 'decode' or 'read' in its most basic form is a key driver for our Early Years curriculum. Once children can 'read', through a robust and systematic approach, the world opens up to them. It is our duty to ensure that our children are ready to embrace both the literary and wider world. At Diamond Wood we focus on the Read Write Inc systematic phonic approach. This is taught from Nursery.

Within our broader English Curriculum planning, our intent for reading is clear: rich key texts will be the central driver to the English curriculum – promoting a love of reading, excellent models of language, cultural broadening and confidence.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level.”

Playing and Exploring

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand 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.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts.

Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Marking & Feedback in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the early years, marking and feedback strategies include:

- Verbal Praise/Feedback given to the children.
- Tapestry Ipad observations are carried out regularly and parents have access to these.
- When objectives are achieved, they are highlighted in green and areas to develop are highlighted in pink.
- Feedback at planning meetings to discuss gaps/targets for selected children/groups in order to plan activities to aid observations. Discuss behaviours and attitudes to learning.
- Half termly assessments.

Monitoring & Review

It is the responsibility of Early Years Staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for early years. This Governor will discuss early years practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole Governing Board, raising any issues that require discussion.

SLT, Nursery Teacher and Reception Year Group Leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Transition

From Nursery to Reception

In Nursery, individual children's learning is recorded on Tapestry and in Literacy / Maths books. Assessments are recorded on Integris. These assessments form a 'profile' of the experience and achievement of each child as they move through Nursery. Parents voice record will continue into Reception. This information is passed on as the children move on to their Reception class. We work with other settings to ensure a positive transition to Diamond Wood Community Academy. New parents' meetings are held along with stay and play sessions and home visits and welcome packs are distributed.

From Reception to Year 1

The transition between the EYFS and Year 1 should be seamless. Year 1 teachers will also be given a copy of the completed EYFS Profile report and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. This will support a smooth transition to key stage 1 by informing a professional dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development, learning needs and the child's approach to learning. The learning characteristic narratives must be included in the transition dialogue. It will help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and an appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. It is important that Year 1 builds on the successful principles and approach encapsulated in the EYFS. It is

crucial that EYFS practitioners and Year 1 teachers are allocated time to discuss and expand on the information presented in the EYFS Profile. Year 1 teachers will be involved in EYFS Profile moderation in order for them to understand the judgements made by the EYFS team.

Early Years Outdoor Policy

“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is in the open air” Margaret Macmillan

Aims

At Diamond Wood Community Academy Outdoor Area we believe that:

- The outdoors should be an environment where adults interact with the children to extend their knowledge and promote thought and wonder.
- Children should be provided with open ended equipment and resources.
- Children are able to adapt and enhance their environment.
- Children thrive on the natural environment and carry out tasks on a large scale, which could not be developed inside.
- Children should be questioned and question their surroundings

Role of the Adult

- To challenge and extend through open ended higher order questioning
- To demonstrate / model
- To resource and monitor
- To extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- To support and Encourage
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and record next steps
- To supervise and risk assess

Planning and delivery for the Outdoor Area

There will be planned activities in the outdoors on a two-weekly basis. These will be enhanced by the adults questioning and provocation skills.

Weekly planning meetings with teachers supporting to discuss activities and children's next steps. All key areas of the curriculum will be incorporated into the planning of the outdoors. We agree that as a team we are all responsible for setting up and clearing away the equipment

Safety

We must all be aware of the children's safety:

- A security and safety check of the outdoor play area must be completed before children go out. This will be performed by the first member/s of staff using the Reception outdoor area.
- Two adults must be in the outdoor area at all times.
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully for safety purposes.
- Water will be provided for children on hot days.

- All equipment must be stored away clean and in a suitable condition to use the following day.
- Children must wear suitable footwear and all-in-one suits when using the mud kitchen.
- If a child is injured, he / she should be taken to the nearest First Aider.
- Adults need to wear the correct footwear and clothing to be able to access all areas in the outdoors, including wellingtons when working with groups in the mud kitchen digging area.

We will encourage children to be confident in the outdoor play area but we agree that the children will set and discover their own limitations in their own time.

