

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

An Daras Multi Academy Trust

The An Daras Multi Academy Trust (ADMAT) Company

An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee

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Purpose and Directions of the EYFS Policy

Rationale and Aims

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up”.

“The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

(Department for Education 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Within the Trust, we cater for children from 2-5 years with the addition of our pre-schools/ nurseries. Our pre-schools/nurseries offer funded and paid provision for 2, 3- and 4-year olds. In the Foundation Stage most children join us, full time, in September but are required by law to do so in the term following their fifth birthday.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

(Department for Education 2021)

The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on these four guiding themes. They provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. This policy outlines how we meet the four themes.

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth 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 practitioners; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our schools.

We provide children with opportunities to achieve their full potential. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning 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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend their knowledge, experiences and interests whilst developing their confidence and self-esteem;
- 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 learn effectively;
- working in small groups to ensure all children can access 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;
- monitoring children's progress and providing support as necessary;
- providing opportunities to explore different cultures, customs and lifestyles;
- supporting and developing an inclusive curriculum.

It is important to us that all children in our schools are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all our children. (*See ADMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*).

Welfare

We believe that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. Their learning thrives when they have their individual needs met and they have positive relationships within the school environment.

We are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the *Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage* (September 2021).

We fulfil this by:

- promoting the welfare of children;

- promoting good health, good hygiene and take appropriate action when children are ill;
- managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensuring staffing arrangements are organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children;
- ensuring visitors and parent helpers wear appropriate ID badges;
- ensuring outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, are safe and suitable for their purpose;
- ensuring that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences which are tailored to meet their needs;
- maintaining records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children. We endeavour to meet all these requirements by:
- adhering to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- providing parents/carers with an updated early years booklet containing all required information;
- having secure premises;
- requesting parents/carers complete a written permission form for local visits and school trips;
- adhering to the school's SEN policy;
- having qualified first aiders on site at all times;
- providing children with fresh drinking water and a healthy snack;
- ensuring our premises are smoke free;
- adhering to the school's behaviour policy;
- having any one who works directly with children DBS checked;
- following the staff: child ratios set out in the statutory framework;
- carrying out appropriate risk assessments and management;
- planning to meet children's needs;
- keeping up-to-date records of children in our setting;
- adhering to the school's Educational Visits policy.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role, and future role, that parents/carers play in educating their children.

We do this through:

- conducting a pre-school/nursery visit or professional discussion for every child prior to them starting school;
- carrying out a home visit/ other prior to a child starting school;
- providing information sessions and meetings for parents/carers before the start of a new academic year;
- offering parents/carers opportunities to discuss their child's progress, including parent consultations each term;

- providing parents/carers with a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each academic year;
- facilitating a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between a child, school and parents/carers. Examples include celebration assemblies, class assemblies, sports day, trips, enrichments and educational workshops to support parents when helping their child at home;
- sending curriculum information to parents/carers;
- sending photos and/or comments to parents detailing their child's learning and development;
- providing information to parents about how they can support and develop their child's learning at home.

All staff involved within the EYFS aim to develop secure relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In our schools, the class teacher in the Foundation Stage acts as the 'Key Person' to all children in their class and they are supported by the learning support assistants (LSA's). In our pre-schools, a child is assigned a Key Person on entry who tracks their learning and development (see Key Person Guidelines).

Professionals as Partners

We recognise the importance of working closely alongside other professionals in order to fully support our children and their families from birth. Examples include speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, school nurses and services such as the 'Early Help Hub'.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending a child's development. By observing the children in our settings, we can assess their interests and skills, before planning challenging, but achievable, activities and experiences to enhance their learning and development.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Long-term and medium-term planning is based around the interests and needs of the child. These plans are then used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for short term planning. Planning includes Continuous provision where children demonstrate their knowledge and skills through play as part of child-initiated learning.

Planning in our Foundation classes includes Phonics, English and Maths. We endeavour to ensure that our planning has a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities which cover all seven areas of learning. Enhancements are regularly added to the children's continuous provision, allowing them to further develop their knowledge and skills.

In our pre-schools/nurseries the planning is objective led. This means the learning intention is taken to the child and delivered at their level, through play, to maintain their interest and motivation, rather than the child being removed from their play to learn in a different setting.

We make regular assessments of children's progress and achievements. We use this information to inform our future planning, ensuring that it reflects the children's needs. We use the EYFS Profile to track and monitor children's learning throughout the EYFS, as well as using it to inform the Year 1 teacher of each child's strengths and areas of development.

We assess formatively by using narrative observations, anecdotal notes, photographs and samples of learning. These assessments involve the teacher and all other adults who engage with the child, for example, LSA's, parents, students and volunteers.

Early Years Outcomes (2021) include age band descriptors which are 0-3, 3-4, Reception and Early Learning Goal (ELG).

As practitioners, we need to assess whether children are demonstrating a few, some or the majority of the learning and development statements and apply a '*best fit*' principle. We assess whether pupils are 'on track'. As outlined in the Development Matters, 'children develop at their own rates and in their own ways.' The statements are not prescriptive of the development of individual children and as practitioners we avoid assessing a tick list of statements.

In the Trust, our schools, can use electronic systems or paper-based systems to support any need to collect and record evidence of children's learning. In turn, this helps us to build a picture of the child against the EYFS Profile. Each child's progress is recorded within the seven key areas of the Early Years curriculum. We use, the assessment and reporting system, I-Track to report an attainment judgement each term in all 7 areas of learning. We consider the breadth and depth of a child's knowledge and apply a 'best fit' principle when reporting our judgements on I-Track. Additional information is kept within a child's learning journey and teacher information files.

As required, schools conduct the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. In the final term of the Foundation year, we report a child's progress against the Early Learning Goals (ELG's). We provide opportunities throughout the year for parents/carers to discuss and review these judgements with the EYFS teacher before the final assessments are made. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners indicate whether the child is meeting expected levels of development, or if they have not yet reached expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

As part of Transition, Year One Teachers are given a copy of the report. This helps to inform a dialogue between the reception and year 1 teacher about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in year 1.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely.

Equipment and resources are clearly labelled and accessible to children and there are areas where they can be active or quiet. Each class has access to an outdoor area. Being outdoors offers children the opportunity to learn in different ways, using various resources, that help support their development in all 7 areas of learning. It provides an environment in which children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Play

"Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support, and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally." (*'Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage'*- 2008)

Through play our children explore and develop knowledge and understanding which helps them make sense of the world. They practise new skills, build upon ideas and learn how to adjust their behaviour within the boundaries and expectations set. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as independently. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Our timetable ensures that there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities.

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.”
(*Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)*)

Active learning often occurs when children are motivated and interested and they have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop in confidence, they learn to make decisions and they become empowered as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and Thinking Critically

“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.” (*Learning, Playing and Interacting: Good Practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage* - *The National Strategies*).

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of their learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. Children access resources freely and are permitted to move them around the classroom to extend their learning, if they so wish.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

The **Prime Areas** are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The **Specific Areas** are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All **seven areas** of learning and development outlined above are important and inter-connected. The areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. Within each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that summarise the knowledge, understanding and skills that children should have gained by the end of the EYFS.