



Early Years Policy including Teaching and Learning

**Askern Littlemoor Infant
Academy**

February 2020

ASKERN LITTLEMOOR INFANT ACADEMY
TEACHING & LEARNING IN THE
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

AIMS

At Askern Littlemoor Infant Academy, our aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are to support children to make a planned, confident transition from home to school, providing a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning. Learning experiences are planned that meet the individual needs and interests of the children through a balanced provision of adult led and child initiated opportunities. Children are supported to become competent and confident learners so they are able to reach their full potential. We provide a broad and balanced high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance, fostering positive home school links with parents and other care providers.

Intent

In an effective setting, engagement is the key indicator. Our vision is to ensure that the majority of the children display deep levels of engagement for the majority of the time. We use the characteristics of effective learning (**playing and exploring, learning actively and creating and thinking critically**) to reflect on different ways that children learn and then allow this to influence practice. We promote learning through play and plan around the needs and interests of children giving them the opportunity to learn about the world around them. The indoor and outdoor learning environments support children to be fully engaged in purposeful play of their own choice and interest. Outdoor areas for learning should offer opportunities which cannot be provided indoors.

Implementation

We follow The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (2017) as detailed below. This framework is a means of ensuring high standards of early education and care that will reassure parents that their child's development is being fully supported. It underpins all future learning by supporting and fostering the children's personal, social and emotional wellbeing. It encourages positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning in the children and promotes learning through play.

The framework includes seven areas of learning and development.

The three prime areas are as follows:

Communication and language

Listening and attention: children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear

with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

Understanding: children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Speaking: children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Physical development

Moving and handling: children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

Health and self-care: children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

Personal, social and emotional development

Self-confidence and self-awareness: children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help.

Managing feelings and behaviour: children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.

Making relationships: children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

The four specific areas of learning are outlined below:

Literacy

Reading: children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read (at the bottom of this page is a link to a site which can help you practise phonics).

Writing: children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write

simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Mathematics

Numbers: children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

Shape, space and measures: children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

Understanding the world

People and communities: children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

The world: children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

Technology: children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Expressive arts and design

Exploring and using media and materials: children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

Being imaginative: children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.

We use the characteristics of effective learning (**playing and exploring, learning actively and creating and thinking critically**) to reflect on different ways that children learn and then allow this to influence practice when planning for child-initiated play and adult-led and adult enhancing activities.

Three Characteristics of Effective Learning (EYFS Framework-2017)

Playing and Exploring – do they investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'?

Learning Actively – do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?

Creating and Thinking Critically – do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We promote learning through play and plan around the needs and interests of the children, giving them the opportunity to learn about the world around them. Children have rich and stimulating learning experiences through our well planned and well Organised learning environment.

The children choose where to go and what to do; initiating their own learning, with adults joining them and supporting them.

In order to support genuine choice we have a workshop style environment set up within our learning environment. The resources are available and accessible to the children at all times. The areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of each session.

The tables and carpet areas are free of equipment but the resources are available next to these areas. This allows the children to be in control of their learning. They are able to: select the area in which to play, choose the resources to use in that area and decide what to do with them. Obviously, their choices are limited by the areas and resources available and it is therefore crucial to have appropriate areas with varied, high quality, open-ended resources.

We introduce a quality key text for a two week period and enhance areas based on the theme of the story, together with the interests and needs of the children. We combine the creative area and the 'writing' area. Young children combine their different types of mark-making, eg they make a card and write a message; they draw a picture and write a story they create a robot and label the controls.

An enabling indoor environment:

The environment supports children to be fully engaged in purposeful play of their own choice and interest. the indoor area allows for learning in all areas of development, but the two areas do not mirror each other. This is the ideal place for children to be calm and quiet (and we reinforce this requirement firmly and consistently), pursuing activities which require small equipment and using resources that will not survive the outdoor elements.

In the EYFS classes, the children choose where to go and what to do – they initiate their own learning and adults join them and support them in their pursuits. In order to support genuine choice we have a workshop style environment setup in classes.

In all areas, the resources are available and accessible to the children at all times. The areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of the day.

The tables and carpet areas are free of equipment but the resources are available next to these areas. This allows the children to be in control of their learning. They are able to select the area in which to play, the resources to use in that area and what to do with them. Obviously their choices are limited by the areas and resources available and it is therefore crucial to have appropriate areas with varied, high quality, open-ended resources. It is also vital that the areas are well stocked, tidy, shadowed and arranged to allow optimum access. We constantly review and reflect on the environment to see which areas are proving productive and which need altering. Shadowing resources helps children to be independent when tidying up.

The resources (as well as the areas) are assessed and reviewed constantly with 'enhancements' made as necessary. We have a two week story turnover where we loosely enhance areas based on the theme of the story and the interests and needs of the children. We combine the creative area and the 'writing' area. Young children combine their different types of mark-making – they make a card and write a message; they draw a picture and write a story; they create a robot and add labelled controls. In many cases, they need creative equipment and writing implements – we therefore store them all in one area, as well as providing mark-making equipment in all areas.

Children experience **maths** in almost all areas of the indoor classroom and we ensure that there is equipment (including numicon) in all areas to facilitate this. Because the children select and access resources themselves, they know where they are from and they know where to put them back when they have finished using them or at the end of the session.

We review our provision in terms of levels of involvement. If an area or a resource is not engaging children in purposeful play, then we remove it or change it. Areas that deliver the highest levels of involvement are the role play areas, creative area (including sewing), small blocks, sand, water, playdough and small world equipment (including cars and dinosaurs). With regard to role play, we ensure that there is always a "home corner" (either indoors or outside) as this is what is familiar to the children – this is where they can practise being the adults that they know (and in doing so, develop the vital life skill of empathy). Other role play is set up as and when an interest emerges.

We have ipads, digital cameras, CD players and interactive white boards readily available to support and record learning. We ensure that our book areas are as inviting as possible. We have cushions, puppets and props to make the experience engaging. We also have books in numerous areas of the indoor classroom reflecting the children's interests and the areas they are learning in.

Outdoor environment:

Our outdoor areas are designed to support all areas of the children's development. The resources available are traditional sand toys, as well as natural shells, sticks, stones, etc. and cooking utensils, plates, cups, cutlery etc. to support a variety of play ideas. A water supply is essential, this allows for cooking, chemistry, cement mixing etc. There are lots of opportunities for risk – climbing frame, slide, trim trail and PE equipment for the children to set up, trikes and scooters. Again the crucial induction period ensures that the children know how to use equipment and are encouraged to think about the risks themselves.

'In the moment' planning

"Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all the areas of learning and development." (Revised EYFS)

Our practitioners continually plan "in the moment". Each time they interact with a child, they are observing, assessing, planning for, and responding to, that individual child. The traditional cycle of observation, assessment and planning is recommended in numerous documents including Development Matters and The National Strategies document "Learning, Playing and Interacting".

In this document we wish to highlight the section that states: - "Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the 'teachable moment' – that the skilful adult makes a difference.

By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment)."

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From National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 – 23

The aim is to organise the setting - including the time, the resources and the adults - to ensure that the majority of the children display deep levels of engagement for the

majority of the time. If that happens, then we can be confident that they are making good progress.

When deeply engaged, their brains will be “lit up”, adults will notice when support is needed, and interactions will ensure that obstacles are overcome or that new directions and possibilities are available and learning will be meaningful and fun! As mentioned, an enabling environment is critical. The doors to the outside are open immediately.

From day one, the children are supported to explore the environment to see what is available, to select the resources they would like, to use them appropriately and to tidy the area when they have finished. Tidy up time is very short – most areas have been tidied during the session. Because the children have got the resources out themselves, they know where to return them to. The induction period is always critical – even more so when the children have so much autonomy and choice.

The key role of the adult:

The most valuable resource in any setting is the group of adults. The adults are there to teach, they do this through observing and interacting.

We ensure that our adults receive training so that they can spot a ‘teachable moment’ while the children are engaged, they know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level for each unique child.

Generally, the adults go to the children. The children become involved in activities of their choice. The adults observe the children carefully, join them, when appropriate, and engage in quality interactions (teaching) to move the learning on, they “teach” through modelling, suggesting, providing vocabulary or resources, explaining or encouraging. In this way, if a child encounters a challenge, then they will not give up. Rather they will be supported to persevere, overcome the challenge and move forward in their learning. In summary, any area or resource can be evaluated by assessing the levels of involvement that the children display.

Children display the highest levels of involvement when they are pursuing their own interests in an environment that allows them to take risks and challenge themselves in their endeavours. The physical environment needs to be well laid out and equipped with high quality, open-ended, varied resources. The adults are key in creating the emotional environment that supports them in this – ensuring that they feel confident and independent, ready to try new things in the knowledge that the adults will help them if necessary, without taking over. We support our children by creating an enabling environment including enabling adults.

Relationships and routines:

The sessions are organised to maximise the amount of “free-flow” time available. Just making this one change in the behaviour of staff can bring about a complete shift in emphasis and focus. **The children become the focus** instead of a particular activity that the adult has planned. Midway through the session we have a short group time where the children engage in Maths, Helicopter stories, PSED, letters and sounds and music. About 10 minutes before the end of the session, the children tidy up and come together for about 15 minutes before lunch and/or home time. This time is used for discussion, story time, action rhymes and singing.

In F2, the sessions are organised to ensure that the children have access to child-initiated learning both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. Each day the children will access phonics, literacy and maths group sessions. Throughout the week they will also participate in a guided teacher led task in literacy and maths. Children are encouraged to follow their own interests during ‘free flow’ and adults are available during this time to support and extend the children’s learning.

Observation of the children informs future planning and resources, this ensures high quality provision and engagement. Planning is based on a two week cycle based loosely around the focus story. High quality books are chosen which appeal to the children and provide opportunities for learning in all areas of the curriculum.

As the year progresses the F2 children will participate in more group sessions such as Jigsaw (PSED) and music (Charanga). At the end of each day the children listen to and perform stories, rhymes and songs.

Key person systems:

The teacher is the key person, supported by other members of staff. It is ultimately the teacher’s responsibility to maintain the paperwork and to take ownership of the class and the progress of ALL the children. Any group times should be shared and rotated between the teacher and support staff so that all children achieve a consistent quality of teaching.

Clear and consistent expectations:

Ground rules are essential when so much freedom is given – all the children need to feel safe. Clear and consistent expectations are key. For example, indoors the children will walk and use quieter voices – running and shouting can be done outside. Children must learn to always make ‘good choices’ and tidy away resources when finished with them.

Impact

Assessment

Assessment in Nursery and Reception is carried out in line with the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' and staff observe the children to create a 'learning journey' which evidences the child's progress through the Foundation Stage. Parents in Nursery are invited in every term at the end of their child's 'Special Week' to see the journey and to add their own comments.

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Focus Observations and weekly parents meetings:

IN F1, the weekly organisation is as follows: - Each Friday 3/4 children are selected who will be the "focus children" for the following week. These children are given a letter to send home to their parents to invite them in for a chat with their class teacher about how their child is progressing. Parents are encouraged to share observations and photographs of their child's learning in their home environment. On Monday an A3 "Learning Journey" sheet for each of the focus children is put on the planning board. These sheets are blank (except for a couple of words to indicate areas that the staff or parents would like to try and capture). During the week any adult who has a productive interaction with a focus child records the event on the learning journey. It is important that the whole cycle is recorded – i.e. the initial observation, the assessment, the planning, teaching and the outcome. An example of such an entry might read: "Jude was standing by the climbing frame watching another child climbing up. I joined him and he said 'I want a turn on there!' I encouraged him to repeat the phrase 'Can I have a turn please?' After a few minutes Jude approached the boy and said 'Can I have a turn please?' Jude and the other child played for a long period taking turns independently." Quality interactions should, and usually do, lead to progress. In the example above, the "plan" was formulated and delivered "in the moment". Entries on the learning journeys are often accompanied by a photo. The sheets are gradually filled up over the course of the week and become a wonderful collection of records that will go in each child's individual learning journey. This special file is accessible to parents on request at any time. Teachers meet with the parents of the focus children in the week following their focus week – they therefore do 3/4 parent meetings each week throughout the

year. The discussion revolves around the completed learning journey – a truly individual picture of the child's experience. Parents then have an opportunity to give written feedback which the teaching staff will read and reflect on.

It is particularly important that the adults' input is recorded. The symbol "T" indicates "adult". Adult input (teaching impact) is highlighted in yellow: - "T suggests .. encourages ...models ...asks ponders ...helps ... offers resources .. etc."

In F2, the teacher selects three children each week as 'focus children'. All adults are aware of who these children are. Staff will then ensure that they interact, observe and support these children in their learning. At the end of the week these observations are then filled in the children's learning Journeys. Throughout each half term, each child should be a 'Focus child'. The information collected during these weeks then informs future planning and assessment. Although these children are the focus children all other children are still observed and interacted with. This system ensures that all children are being observed and no child goes 'under the radar'. In F2 the parents have two open evenings with the class teacher in the autumn and spring term. The parents will then receive a report on their child in the summer term and a copy of the child's attainment in all areas of learning.

So, **"What about all the other children?"** Well they too are pursuing their own learning, in the same environment, supported by the same adults. However, their journey is not recorded in such a detailed way, except when they are a focus child. Any "Wow!" moments are recorded for individual children and added to individual records – whether focus children or not. In addition staff complete another sheet which is really a group learning journey to record any significant events that occur in the class and that involve a group of children and essentially it contains the same observation cycle – observation, assessment, planning, observation. In almost all cases, the "next step" is completed immediately.' "In the moment" planning is a very simple idea – observing and interacting with children as they pursue their own interests and also assessing and moving the learning on in that moment. The written account of these interactions becomes a learning journey. This approach leads to deep level learning and wonderful surprises occur daily. We work in this way because high level involvement occurs in child initiated activity. When children show high levels of involvement, that is when there is progress and development occurring – when the brain is at its most active. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment, supported by skilful staff. Planning in the moment helps to make this possible.

Transition to Nursery and Reception:

When a child sets off for their first day at school, they should be full of positive emotions – excitement, confidence and happiness. This happens if they know exactly where they are going, who will be there, what they will be able to do when they get there and how long they will be staying there. A successful transition means the child settles quickly into school, learning and developing from day one. Practitioners

welcome a class of children and these children are settled, confident and ready to learn.

Transition will be successful if:

1. Practitioners know each child, including their interests and needs
2. The school is able to meet these interests and needs
3. Practitioners have formed a relationship with each family
4. Children know the practitioners
5. Children are familiar and happy with their new school environment, its routines and expectations.
6. Children have met and made friends with some of the other children who will be in their class.

Play sessions and transition meetings in school: EYFS staff organise for children from our Nursery to visit Reception and play for an hour at a time during the final summer term. We also have regular 'story swap' sessions to help the children to become more familiar with their new teachers yet feel comfortable in their current environment. For children from outside the school, we invite them (with a parent) to come and join in with a free-flow session in Reception. This allows the children a chance to explore their new class and to meet some of the staff and children that will be coming to school with them. EYFS staff meet to discuss each child in detail and discuss their individual needs. Extra arrangements are also made for our SEND children.

Home visits: At the end of each term staff carry out home visits and making final preparations to the class environment. This visit is crucial as the starting point for building a relationship with the families, a time to exchange information and a further opportunity to gain a better understanding of the children. Staff work with previous settings where possible to gain information about the child. We also work together with parents, previous settings and staff for our SEND children ensuring a smooth transition into our setting.

Preparing the environment: Staff prepare the environment to ensure that every child will have a wide choice of activities and also that routines and expectations are established from day one. For example, coat pegs, self-registration, resource storage and labels must all be ready so that routines are established from the first day.

Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 – 23

Ofsted Inspection Handbook, May 2019

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Our Foundation Curriculum

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