

Askern Littlemoor Infant Academy



Early Years Foundation Policy including Teaching & Learning

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Askern Littlemoor Infant Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy including Teaching and Learning

In Askern Littlemoor Infant Academy, we fully support that:

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.' Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021,

Our intention is that our children feel safe and secure at all times, developing creative thinking, independence, high levels of engagement and perseverance. We strive to ensure that every child has a high level of well-being and develops a desire to learn and a love of learning that will stay with them for their entire lives.

Our children are provided with the basic skills needed in order to be confident communicators, readers, writers and mathematicians.

We celebrate the world in which we live, developing children's understanding and awareness of other cultures, beliefs and identities. Most importantly, we teach our children to have respect for themselves and for others.

Inclusion

Our school and the early years setting embrace and promote inclusion. We respect and recognise the strengths and abilities of all our children. We give the children every opportunity to achieve their full potential, setting realistic but challenging expectations in order to meet the needs of every unique child. We strive to remove any barriers to learning to ensure that all children regardless of background or ability succeed in everything they do.

To promote inclusion we provide:

- A learning environment where all children's interests and ideas are valued
- A safe and stimulating environment of discovery to ensure that learning is effective and purposeful
- Resources which reflect diversity and are free from stereotyping and discrimination
- Activities which are inviting and exciting yet challenging enough for all children

We closely monitor the progress and development of all the children in our setting to ensure that support is provided when necessary. We liaise with our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and seek support from outside agencies if support is required.

All about the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021 (EYFS Framework)

The EYFS is guided by four main principles which underpin everything we do:

- The unique child – developing capable, resilient, confident and self-assured learners
- Positive relationships – working together to support children to be strong and independent learners
- Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers of the child

- Learning and development – an acknowledgment that children all learn in different ways and at different rates

We adhere to the EYFS Statutory Framework, which separates the seven areas of learning into three 'prime areas' and four 'specific areas'.

The prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The Prime Areas:

Communication and Language

We provide children with a language rich, poetry rich, rhyme rich, music rich and story rich environment to enable them to fully develop their communication, speaking, understanding and listening skills. We understand that children's back and forth interactions from an early age lay the foundations of language and cognitive development. The number of and the quality of conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language rich environment are crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in and doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, our practitioners build on children's language effectively.

Adults in the setting understand that their role is vital. The quality of language which children hear and engage with matters more than the quantity. We support children's language development effectively giving opportunities for communication and language within the daily routine and throughout the environment and resourcing.

Children identified as needing additional support with their communication and language skills participate in the NELI programme. This is a research-based intervention designed to improve the children's narrative, vocabulary and listening skills through small group and one-to-one sessions with a trained teacher or teaching assistant.

We carefully plan weekly for deep word learning. Words and concepts are chosen from the core texts that we are using, or related to other planned activities and experiences. When we have introduced new words, to support further learning, we then explicitly teach the meanings of them and re-introduce the meanings of new words through our adult interactions in all contexts throughout the learning day. These new and 'interesting words' are displayed in the setting. Key vocabulary is visible throughout the whole setting linked to the area of learning. This vocabulary supports the practitioners in using the correct dialogue when interacting with children and reinforces the children's language acquisition.

Teachers plan for small group opportunities to talk. Regular opportunities for structured conversations with adults are timetabled into our curriculum through a daily 'talk time'. In a small group context, children have more opportunities to engage in back-and-forth

conversations. This allows adults to be actively scaffolding children's communication, language and conversations. We try to include children with mixed language levels in our groups. We use Blank's levels of questioning throughout the EYFS as a tool to support comprehension and ensure questions are appropriately challenging. Rich and varied activities and experiences are planned for to promote communication. We plan activities and learning opportunities which follow on from books, stories and songs. We encourage visitors to come to the school to talk to the children about their jobs/professions to extend the children's knowledge and use of language.

Physical Development

We recognise the positive impact on emotional well-being and brain development promoted by physical development. We understand that the fine motor control required to write letters develops first through the coordination of larger muscle movements. This happens in the early year's areas of physical development and expressive arts and design and as children play. Children are still developing their gross motor control and major muscle groups and need lots of opportunities to strengthen their bodies. Children are continually encouraged to be active and also to understand the importance of this for their health.

Supporting good oral health is a key element of our EYFS curriculum. We use an educational programme called 'Dental Buddy' from the Oral Health Foundation to explicitly teach our children the importance of a healthy mouth. We work closely with parents delivering each aspect of the programme which is revisited every term including; how to brush your teeth and how often, the importance of a balanced diet and the impact of sugary foods and drinks and what to expect when visiting the dentist. We liaise with the school nurse and other agencies for support and resources and invite visits from dental professionals. Every classroom has an interactive display with resources and books supporting good oral health for the children to explore.

In Nursery and Reception children have open access to the outside area for movement and active learning with some planned sessions for movement play. Provision is in place indoors and outdoors to encourage the children to develop their core muscle strength, gross motor and fine motor control.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Executive Function and Self-Regulation

We understand that the vital role of our adults is about being there for the child, being compassionate and being accepting.

We encourage children to interact respectfully with all adults and other children to improve their confidence and ability to form positive relationships. An important part of our role is teaching children strategies to manage their emotions. Children are always encouraged to respect others, develop social skills, manage their feelings and behave appropriately. This is supported in everything we do, with the practitioners acting as role models. We have clear boundaries and high expectations and talk to the children about always making the right choices.

We understand that high quality early years provision will help the children to develop their executive function and self-regulation skills. Executive function includes the child's ability to: hold information in their mind, focus their attention, regulate their behaviour and plan what to do next. These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate which

involves focussing their thinking, monitor what they are doing and adapt, regulate strong feelings, be patient for what they want and bounce back when things get difficult. We aim to ensure that the children develop these essential skills in their learning for healthy development through practitioner scaffolding and careful interactions. Scaffolding might involve recognising the child's feelings and talking this through with them, breaking a task down into smaller components, modelling how to complete a task and attend to it in a systematic way with a goal in mind and rehearse how to focus their attention.

Literacy

In our EYFS setting we understand that literacy builds on oral language, vocabulary, narrative skills, emergent reading and emergent writing. We support the development of oral narrative skills through stories, poems, rhymes, drama (helicopter stories) and play. Narrative skills develop further through engaging in conversations with peers and adults, the use of high-quality small world play, carefully chosen core texts and pretend play. The day-to-day routines in our settings also provide children with opportunities to sequence and retell events.

Children are given direct teaching to develop a vocabulary of basic and more high utility words. In the planning of our curriculum, we embed the teaching of different types of words across subjects providing repeated opportunities to use and hear words.

We help children to foster a love of books. The children have a comfortable and inviting area within the setting with access to a range of non-fiction and fiction books, comics and books differentiated based on the developmental needs of the child.

Supporting the development of phonological awareness is an essential component of our curriculum. Our curriculum planning is carefully linked to the 'progression in pre-phonics' document. In Nursery, weekly small group directed teaching allows for the children to progress through the model through carefully planned activities developing auditory discrimination and memory, visual discrimination and memory, listening and attention and phonological awareness moving towards phonemic awareness and early reading as they progress through the EYFS. Provision for our settings is planned for weekly with clear phonics progression links in mind. Inset and picture puzzles, look and find books, spot the difference games, matching games, sound games and looking for similarities and differences in everyday things are always readily available for children to access with sensitive adult interactions taking place.

We understand that fine motor control required to write letters begins and developed first through the coordination of larger muscle groups (see Physical Development). We support early interactions with print by providing lots of opportunities to make marks using a variety of tools and media.

Reception children have a daily literacy input which involves writing linked to their core text at least three days a week with guided reading and story sequencing on the other two. They also have daily handwriting sessions where adults support children with their letter formation. These sessions develop the children's knowledge and love of books, develop vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The children also have a daily phonics session, following the Read Write Inc. synthetic phonics scheme. The children are streamed across reception and are closely monitored and assessed to ensure they make the best possible progress. The children are not asked to read or write beyond their current phonics ability

encouraging them to be independent and to feel successful in reading and writing. All reception children take home a quality picture book to share with an adult at home. Once they can read the red ditty books, they take home a RWI phonics book at the appropriate level.

Children in Nursery and Reception take a high-quality picture book home to share with their parents/carers which is then changed every week. Where possible, reading and writing take place within a meaningful context, often linked to interests and current themes.

Mathematical Development

Maths is strongly interwoven into every aspect of our daily routines, environment and resources. We use storybooks to promote high quality mathematical talk. In Nursery, we provide children with a balance of adult led group sessions and also time to independently explore numbers, shape, measure and patterns. Our EYFS curriculum has a strong emphasis on understanding number and its properties. Provision areas are set up so that children have opportunities to use their mathematical skills in a real context. Every area of the EYFS setting is carefully planned for to ensure that provision encourages all aspects of mathematical development. In Reception the children have a daily maths session. We use and adapt the White Rose maths scheme. We focus on embedding the foundation skills in maths such as the counting principles and subitising. We use a mixture of whole class, small group and 1-1 sessions to support the children in their mathematical development.

Understanding the World

We understand that understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. It is carefully interwoven into all aspects of our curriculum. We use the Focus Education Programme to support our curriculum by using a broad selection of stories, non-fiction books and carefully chosen topic themes to ensure the children are developing an understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

We encourage the children to freely explore and learn about the natural world. We understand that early learning in understanding the world will give children the foundational concepts and vocabulary to help them learn subjects such as Geography, History and Science when they are older.

We provide a richly resourced, stimulating environment where learning opportunities are planned for to help children develop early scientific skills in observation, and their early understanding of key concepts and vocabulary. The role of the adult is crucial. We aim to build on the children's natural curiosity through planning for open ended exploration of the world and different materials.

Guided play is planned for weekly where the adult leads and models play, which motivates children to find solutions to problems and learn scientific ideas along the way.

Sustainability is central to the children's whole learning experience and we start this journey of teaching children about sustainability through basic everyday activities for example, exploring water conservation through turning the taps off. We introduce plants and gardening through our daily activities.

Children meaningfully explore the past, places and the world we live in through books, stories, poems and rhymes with diversity in mind. Learning opportunities are planned for

through walks, small trips, simple timelines, photos, maps and repeated discussion of information of interest.

We understand the importance of teaching the children to develop positive attitudes about diversity and difference. Practitioners encourage children's curiosity as they notice and talk about differences. We celebrate racial and cultural diversity through our attitudes and selection of books.

We follow the Doncaster standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) programme so children develop a good understanding of the different religious festivals that are celebrated throughout the year, including a planned daily quiet reflection time.

Expressive Arts and Design

We support the development of the children's artistic and cultural awareness and our aim is to nurture their creativity.

We have designed a broad and balanced arts curriculum with clear links to the Focus Education Programme which values both spontaneous and guided learning. We provide the children with opportunities to explore and play with a wide range of media and open-ended materials, supporting creative thinking and problem-solving. We promote the use of free, found, natural and recycled materials to ensure that children develop an understanding about how to care for the wider environment, acting as responsible citizens of the future.

The children are given relaxed time to investigate the properties of materials as well as creating and making. Our curriculum has been designed to allow the children to be introduced to different cultures, artefacts and artists.

Children's curiosity is stimulated as they are encouraged to look closely during observational artwork. In addition, they have opportunities to experience a range of music, dance, art and role-play and helicopter stories through weekly adult led group sessions. The children have a diet rich in songs with a core list of songs and rhymes which are planned for.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

We provide a balance in our space for adult interaction, adult instruction and play; including free play, group play and parallel play. We acknowledge that play is a vehicle for learning, where our children are able to express themselves in a developmentally appropriate way. The provision we create and our teaching and interactions allow for exploration. We provide lots of opportunities for children to explore, investigate, interpret and be curious.

The characteristics of effective learning are:

- Playing and exploring– children investigate, experience things and 'have a go'.
- Active learning– children concentrate and persevere when they encounter a problem.
- Creating and thinking critically– children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Structure in our EYFS Unit

The Nursery has 78 places available for children aged three and above. Where a child accesses 30 hour provision, this would take up two places. Nursery places are offered with five optional sessions. Parents and carers can request the following sessions for their child:

- 30 hour provision - full time place (subject to application through GOV.UK for working parents)
- 15 hour morning session only (8.45am – 11.45am)
- 15 hour afternoon session only (12.30pm – 3.30pm)
- 15 hour Monday to Wednesday sessions (half day from 8.45am – 11.45am on the Wednesday)
- 15 hour Wednesday to Friday session (half day from 12.30pm – 3.30pm on the Wednesday)

There are two full-time Reception classes each with 30 places. The school day begins at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm.

Our EYFS Curriculum

All EYFS practitioners adhere to The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which sets the standards to ensure that all children are given the optimum opportunity to progress and develop, in a safe and healthy environment. We have chosen to use Development Matters as our non-statutory curriculum guidance.

The curriculum is our top-level plan of everything that we want our children to learn. We believe that the child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every EYFS practitioner in our setting. Our curriculum is carefully sequenced to enable children to build on their learning over time. We understand that young children's learning is most powerful when it is driven by their interests so our planning is flexible. We understand that depth in early learning is much more important than planning lots of things in a superficial way.

Our Early Year's curriculum planning begins with the child and their experiences within their family and immediate environment so learning is meaningful. Our curriculum is designed to help to ensure that every child keeps up. It is led from high quality texts supported by high quality continuous provision. Communication and language enrichment is at the core of our curriculum. It also ensures that children take part in additional rich, challenging and open-ended activities. Some children will experience curriculum content at a greater depth. Other children will experience carefully planned and regular extra targeted intervention so they don't fall behind the majority.

We understand that young children benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum which includes teaching that has been planned ahead and also allows for spontaneous learning. In Nursery, children have well planned daily adult led group times with specific learning opportunities for mathematics, literacy, pre-phonics, music, PSED, oral health and helicopter stories. In Reception, additional to the children's daily literacy, maths and phonics sessions the children have PSED sessions following the JIGSAW programme, helicopter stories to develop their communication and language and narrative skills, weekly RE and music sessions and handwriting sessions.

Our five themes which run throughout the year ensure that children have a broad and balanced curriculum. The themes are as follows;

The Changing Year – observing seasonal changes, Colours Around Us – experimenting with and learning about colour.

Colours Around Us – experimenting with and learning about colour,

All About Me – learning about ourselves, how to express our interests and fascinations.

The Natural World – developing a love of nature and learning how to care for and be responsible for the environment.

Let's Celebrate – celebrating many different religious festivals and cultural events throughout the year.

We also carefully select high quality core texts which encompass all the topics and themes we feel are essential to the children's learning and development which are carefully sequenced with the KS1 staff to ensure progression. In addition to this, the children have a weekly poem/rhyme which they learn to support them in building their early literacy skills by hearing how words can be moved and stretched to rhyme.

The core texts are read to the children every day over a two-week period and vocabulary is specifically chosen from them, teaching children the meanings of these new words and modelling how to use them in context in the EYFS setting. ***For further information, see our EYFS curriculum maps for nursery and reception.***

Our EYFS Pedagogy

We believe that with sustained shared thinking the EYFS practitioners are required to firstly design our own curriculum content (what we want our children to learn) and then consider our pedagogy (the skilful techniques we use to engage our children to help their development).

Our pedagogy has a clear balance of planned adult led whole group teaching, adult led small group teaching, adult led modelling for independent learning, child led adult supported learning and child led independent learning.

Everything starts with the child, their immediate environment and what information we gather from the parents. We provide a safe, ordered and nurturing environment that encourages independence and self-directed learning. We promote a calm, homely and neutral environment to prevent over stimulation and where all resources, including natural and open-ended resources are accessible at all times. Practitioners provide the right materials for children to explore at the right point in their development with sensitive adult interactions to fire the children's imaginations. Children have clear rules, routines and boundaries. The weekly timetable is flexible based on the children's engagement. All practitioners model calm, respectful behaviour with communication and language enrichment at the core of everything we do. We encourage independent thinkers who explore the environment with joy and curiosity.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that it is important for parents and carers and the adults in our early years setting to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in early years. This involves listening to our parents and carers, giving them clear information about their child's progress.

We understand that the help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on the child's learning.

We support this through:

- Talking to parents/carers during home visits prior to the child starting school

- Our core texts are read by the teachers and regularly uploaded on our school app 'Seesaw' for children and parents to enjoy at home including a list of the activities that the children will be engaging in each week with photographs for the parents and children to see.
- Giving the children an opportunity to spend time with their teacher during visits/stay and play sessions before starting in our school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before the child starts in our school. This involves information on how we aim to work with their child, particularly in relation to how we support children's learning and development in the prime and specific areas.
- Parents are regularly encouraged to look at the school Twitter page @littlemooracad where weekly photographs are uploaded to show the children engaged in their learning. We also encourage parents/carers to use the school Seesaw app which shows an online journal of the weekly activities, key words we are learning and a recording of the core text being read by one of the teachers. This also allows parents/carers to communicate and share directly with us progress and achievements their child has achieved at home.
- In Nursery, parents/carers are sent a letter home every term inviting them to have a telephone conversation to discuss how their child is progressing in all seven areas of development and to discuss what their next steps will be. The meetings are organised and led by the class teacher. They are also encouraged to share with us what their child has been doing at home, building a more rounded assessment of the child. We use this opportunity to provide the parents/carers with the opportunity to celebrate their child's learning with us which is then used to inform further planning and provision. We also support the parent/carers in ways in which they can support their child's development at home with a strong emphasis on language enrichment and reading stories.
- We arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g., sharing the learning days, stay and play sessions, stay and read together sessions and EYFS celebrations and performances. We also encourage our parents to visit if they have a profession that links to the children's interests to talk with them about it.
- We ensure that a quiet and confidential area of the setting is available for meeting with parents/carers and also to support them if they need to discuss any issues regarding their child.
- Increasing the knowledge of parents/carers to support them and their child at home in areas of development such as phonics, early maths and reading.
- In Reception the parents are invited to termly parent's evenings where they can talk in detail to their child's teacher about their achievements and progress and how they can support this at home.
- Parents/carers are invited to 'stay and play' sessions regularly to celebrate their children's learning.
- A Curriculum Newsletter is sent home and uploaded on Seesaw every term which captures all aspects of learning in the seven areas of development with suggestions on how parents/carers can further support their children at home.
- The Curriculum Maps for Nursery and Reception are uploaded on the school access for parent/carer access.

Key person systems

In Nursery, we understand that every child has a need for attachment and warm, responsive care. It is important to us that the child knows there is a special person in the team of adults who knows them very well. All EYFS practitioners are assigned their key children with the responsibility of helping them to settle into the environment and to form positive and caring relationships with their allocated key children and their parents/carers. The key person will help the child to progress through the seven areas of development through careful interactions and steering them to achieve their next steps in progression. Every half term, every child has a carefully designed skilled progression document for all the seven areas of development where practitioners will highlight their key child's on-going progress to inform them of their next steps. The class teacher will monitor and review every child's progress and the key person is aware to alert class teachers if any concerns arise.

In Reception, 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 every child.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

We start the year by observing children in their play and communicating with parents/carers to make assessments in all areas of development linked to the skills and outcomes from Development Matters.

Every child has a skills progression document for all seven areas of development where outcomes achieved are highlighted every half term to monitor and assess progress. This then informs our next steps for the child. We consider how to extend the child's learning the following term and which interventions are required. Appropriate activities are then planned, ensuring that there are opportunities to support the characteristics of effective learning. We then look at the core skills linked to each of the seven areas of development and with shared thinking we decide as a team what we would like the children to learn. These outcomes are then displayed alongside a list of our key person and their key children to monitor progress the following term. This allows the EYFS practitioners to always be aware of the children's next step to support them towards achieving their next outcome.

In Nursery, we concentrate initially on the prime areas to ensure that children have strong foundations in their learning. We focus on the child's communication and language development, offering extra support and targeted intervention where needed. We work with parents/carers to support their child in having good oral health and we give them our full support with toilet training and hand washing to foster independence in relation to self-care skills. We build on these firm foundations in Reception developing the children's reading, writing and maths skills as well as their knowledge of the world.

During independent play, both indoors and outdoors, children are supported by high quality interactions from adults in order to extend their learning. This may be through facilitating a process, modelling the correct use of language or using open ended questioning. The practitioners also use floor books as a tool for the children's self-reflection and to capture their dialogue with photographs and annotated captions to capture the children's on going and previous learning. In Nursery every child has their own individual display board where their wow moments and achievements are celebrated. This includes mark making, paintings, collages, photographs and dialogue recorded.

A summative assessment is recorded on 'O'Track' for each child, in all the seven areas of learning to carefully monitor and track the children's progression from baseline to the Early Learning Goals. We update our data half termly in order to establish progress, strengths and areas for development. In response to this data we plan support and interventions to the children that need to catch up. This varies from year to year depending on the cohort and individual needs. In depth analysis is carried out towards the end of the year to analyse progress and attainment of individuals and key groups. Pupil progress meetings are held in order to ensure that every child's needs are being met and that their progress and attainment is closely tracked to inform next steps.

Individual reports are written for all children that will be leaving Nursery and Reception at the end of each academic year. Parents/carers are invited to discuss the report. At the end of the Reception year, the EYFSP is completed, clearly stating if the child has met the ELG or is not yet meeting the ELG. This, along with the report, is used to provide transition information for the next teacher.

Transition to Nursery and Reception

When a child sets off for their first day at school, we believe 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.

We understand that 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 make 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 that are familiar to them 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.

References

*Julian Grenier and Caroline Vollans (2023) *Putting the EYFS Curriculum into Practice*

*Julian Grenier (2021) *Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice*

This policy will be reviewed annually.