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# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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# Introduction

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.

At Mayflower Community Academy we work in accordance with The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This sets the standards that we 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. The Foundation Unit seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed 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.

The **learning and development requirements** cover:

- the *areas of learning and development* which shape our activities and experiences (*educational programmes*) for children in the Foundation Unit;
- the *early learning goals* that we must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five); and
- *assessment arrangements* for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

## Overarching principles

Four guiding principles shape our practice in the Foundation Unit. These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and

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- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in our Foundation Unit. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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. These five areas, the prime areas, are:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.  
**Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

We also support children in two specific areas, through which the five prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, roleplay, and design and technology.

At Mayflower Community Academy we consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of every child in the Foundation Unit, and we use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

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For children whose home language is not English, we take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. We also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during their time in the Foundation Unit: ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. We as practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

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

Each child in the Foundation Unit is assigned a key person. These are shared with the parents in their child's first term at school. The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person also seeks to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home and offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

A quality learning experience for children requires a quality workforce. In the Foundation Unit we are a wellqualified, skilled staff who constantly strive to improve own skills. This allows us to strongly increase the potential of our Foundation Unit to deliver the best possible outcomes for children.

The level of progress children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals set out below.

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# The early learning goals

## The prime areas

### 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.

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## 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.

**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.

## The specific areas

### 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.

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## 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.

## Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves us observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

## Safeguarding and welfare

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. In the Foundation Unit we pride ourselves in providing a provision which is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. The Foundation Unit take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.

## Child protection

(Please see Mayflower Community Academy – Child Protection Policy).

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# Health

## Medicines

The Foundation Unit have and implement a policy, and procedures, for administering medicines (in accordance with Mayflower Community Academy Policy). It includes systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicines, and for keeping this information up-to-date. Medicines must not usually be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor).

Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) will only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. We keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child, and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

## Food and drink

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they are healthy, balanced and nutritious, in accordance with our 'Healthy Schools' Award. Before a child is admitted to our setting we obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times; each child is asked to bring their own water bottle each day. We record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.

## Accident or injury

In the Foundation Unit we ensure there is a first aid box accessible at all times with appropriate content for use with children. We keep a record of accidents or injuries and first aid treatment. We will inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any first aid treatment given.

## Special educational needs

(Please see Mayflower Community Academy – Inclusion Policy).