

Early Years Policy

Livingstone Academy,
Bournemouth

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Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- Children access a broad and balanced curriculum that provides a range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress.
- Our curriculum includes specific skills for each area of learning to explicitly develop skills, attributes and characteristics of learning.
- To provide quality and consistency in teaching and learning, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- To encourage close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- To enable every child to feel included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Vision

At Livingstone Academy, we aim to provide every child with skills and attributes to become a happy, independent and curious life-long learners. We want our children to learn not just new knowledge, but more importantly to learn and reflect on how they have best learnt, and why processes or strategies have or haven't worked for them. We believe that by developing the knowledge and know-how in our youngest to be creative technologists, will allow all to thrive in the world of employment that is changing rapidly. We want individuals to stand out from the crowd and be able to succeed in their school life and beyond.

Principles

At Livingstone Academy, we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible future life chances. We create a safe

and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences to enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021':

'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.'

Statutory Framework of EYFS

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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** with teaching and support from adults, who **respond to their individual interests and needs** and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a **strong partnership between practitioners and parents** and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. **Children develop and learn at different rates**. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

As part of our practice, we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five 2021'.

Structure of the EYFS

Our Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes.

Our primary school doors open from 8.30 AM until 3.00 PM.

Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and (sometimes) exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

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, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching and planning

Children are each connected with a key practitioner and are delivered a curriculum with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Planning is based on children's interests. At the beginning of each topic the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas to focus on. The long term planning is subject to change according to cohort interests.

Pre-planning sessions with the children are timetabled into the week prior to starting a new learning journey. Activities based on skills may be led by adult facilitators in the classrooms. We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact where appropriate to stretch and challenge our learners further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between indoors and outdoors as far as possible. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves through self-selecting tasks and activities.

Enabling environments

In Early Years at Livingstone Academy, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and

outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated activities reflecting the topic where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc.

We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. The resources are provided to create rich learning opportunities through a range of highly structured, adult led, child led or child initiated learning. Child-initiated activities may be instigated when the child brings something to the setting that might lead to the provision of resources, stories and pictures to support this interest. A whole class focus is linked to activities within the EYFS setting. These are adapted continuously to meet the needs of the unique child.

Play

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework and educational programmes, we create activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning.

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.' (EYFS Statutory Framework 2021)

Children's play reflects their varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Assessment and Tapestry

At Livingstone Academy, ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of our effective early years practice. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways and everyone in class is encouraged to contribute.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and interests. Assessment takes the form of long, short and photographic observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

We use 'Tapestry, an online Journal, as an assessment tracker to capture baseline assessments, ongoing observations and to support data analysis. We will track and analyse children's baseline in the first few weeks of school. This will inform us on the cohort's emotional needs, as well as academic attainment at point of entry. This information will be analysed within our EYFS team as well as being shared with SLT. Parents and carers are also given the opportunity to add to their child's journal to promote positive links between home and school.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development.
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:

- Our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction.
- Our environment enables the child to flourish to their full capacity.
- Our assessments ensure a range of contributors, e.g. parents, peripatetic teachers, other relevant adults.
- Moderation across EYFS team and moderation with pre-school, Year 1 teachers.

See Marking & Feedback policy.

See Assessment Policy.

See Tapestry Online Journal Policy.

Working with parents

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can

have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

A Parent Information Evening is held in July for parents of the prospective Reception group. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to our Livingstone Academy Community, to disseminate important information and to emphasise the vital importance of home-school cooperation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all our children.

Several events take place during the second half of the summer term as part of the children's transition and admission to Reception. We host 'stay and play' sessions and a family picnic is offered for parents and children to attend. Home school visits take place in the first week of September to enable the teachers and practitioners to see the children in their own environments where they are confident and comfortable.

Further communication systems include:

- Tapestry observations are uploaded and shared with parents.
- Daily opportunity for brief updates at the point of dropping off.
- Reading journal and 'Bags of fun' sent home with learning activities.
- Information, progress meetings and workshops will take place throughout each school year. In EYFS this will include the teaching of reading and early maths and phonics skills.
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books.
- Inviting parents into school for 'parent phonics' sessions to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child.

Parent meetings

Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher twice a year in a formal parent meeting and receive a written report on their child's achievements at the end of every term. More informally, we meet with parents throughout the school year as and when necessary to discuss their child's particular needs and their next steps.

Attendance

To be familiar with and follow this policy at all times. To monitor the attendance and punctuality of their key children and ensure a reason is obtained every time a child is absent from reception.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Livingstone Academy. In Reception, we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose.
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety. Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Safety

Aspects of personal safety awareness within the reception year will be identified in the curriculum plan and taught explicitly. Livingstone Academy takes the safety of its pupils very seriously and various related safety policies and procedures are published on our website.

Specifically, the following procedures must be observed:

- At 9.00am the gate to the EYFS area is locked. Security systems operate throughout the day to enable visitors to enter via one main gate and report to the school office. A visitor can only gain access to the teaching parts of the building via the school office and foyer, requiring a staff member to open security doors.
- Similarly the reverse of the above procedure operates from 3.00 pm. to enable prompt collection of children at the end of the day.
- No child will be handed over to the care of any adult other than a parent / carer or person nominated by the parent and known to the Reception class staff and a password is requested from any unknown adult collected.

- No mobile phones / cameras other than the designated school mobile phone and cameras may be used in EYFS. Visitors including parents are expected to respect this. Any visitor or volunteer spending time in Reception will be asked to leave mobile phones in a secure place within the school office.
- The EYFS learning environment is checked frequently for health and safety and this is recorded in a log scrutinised regularly by site manager and risk assessment are in place for areas.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports individuals to learn at their own pace so that children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals.

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions with their parents/carers and also with their nurseries into Reception to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners. Our Reception staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools in return to familiarise themselves with the children.

Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer of a home visit (by the Reception class teacher and LSA). This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data and learning journal books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are

able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a number of sessions towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom with the Year 1 teacher to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Mrs Taylor, the Early Years Lead/Assistant Principal and the Trust every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Regional CEO.

This policy was completed in: April 2021

Review Date: April 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

- Livingstone SEND Policy.
- Livingstone Assessment Policy.
- Livingstone Home Learning Policy.
- Livingstone Attendance Policy.
- Livingstone Tapestry Online Journal Policy.
- Livingstone Marking and Feedback Policy.

The above policies can be found on the Livingstone Academy website.

Link to EYFS Statutory Framework:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

Link to Development Matters:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971620/Development_Matters.pdf