



Early Years Policy

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Intent

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children within our Nursery and Reception settings.

“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.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, September 2021

Early Years education must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The Early Years of a child’s education is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life.

Aims and Principles

- Early Years practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children’s learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing communication and language skills.
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children’s imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- Practitioners must provide opportunities throughout the learning environment and curriculum that promotes independence and supports an interest and desire for future learning.
- Involve parents and carers.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- **Unique Child** - Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** - 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.
- **Learning and Development** - Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

A Unique Child

At Norwich Road Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are heavily influenced by the messages they receive in their early years at school, so we make it our aim to praise the children's successes and help them develop a love of learning. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Early Years we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Positive Relationships

At Norwich Road Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners:

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Hosting a New Parents' Meeting before their child starts school.
- Families are invited to several 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Summer Term before they start school.
- Talking to parents about their child in early September, before they start full-time.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Sharing regularly learning experiences through 'Class Dojo.'
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation stage.

Enabling Environments

At Norwich Road Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences. Enabling environments encourage children to play because they feel relaxed, comfortable and 'at home' in them. When children feel emotionally

safe and secure they are able to explore and find out about the place they are in and the things they can see, touch, manoeuvre or manipulate.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. 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.

Prime Areas:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Knowledge of the world
- Expressive art and design

At Norwich Road Academy, we deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Implementation

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Norwich Road Academy we ensure that our environments and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have ago'.

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

‘Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.’

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

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

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

The EYFS curriculum follows a range of whole school teaching schemes and styles including:

- Talk 4 Writing
- The Primary Knowledge Curriculum
- Little Wandle – Teaching to read through Phonics / Letters and Sounds (Nursery)
- Maths Mastery

The Learning Environment

At Norwich Road Academy our Early Years classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The Nursery and Reception classrooms all have their own outdoor classroom area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We use aspects of the Early Excellence approach to our continuous provision and environment set up providing pupils with a range of high-quality resources for them to use independently.

Role of the Adult

It is the adult's role to teach, support, stimulate and extend children's learning through initiating and extending experiences and interacting skilfully and sensitively with children to scaffold,

support and enhance learning. Effective communication and language are key to adult and child interactions and how they engage with each other in a purposeful way. At Norwich Road Academy, strong relationships are built with all pupils as adults immerse themselves in pupils play, encouraging problem solving and imaginative skills whilst asking open ended questions to develop language and communication skills.

Community Links

At Norwich Road Academy we strongly believe in the importance of community links. Throughout our curriculum we have a wide range of visitors from the local community and opportunities for children to visit and experience the local area. This includes a range of visitors the Police, dental practice and local organisations. The children will have the opportunity to visit facilities including the town library and local allotments.

Impact

Observation, Assessment and Planning:

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for their knowledge of a child, their starting point and to measure progress. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. Staff also review work samples produced by the children and use appropriate assessments tasks, for example 'End of Unit, Little Wandle Assessments.'

Staff plan activities and experiences that enable pupils to develop and learn effectively. Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Community Links

The Induction Process

The transition from pre-school to school is hugely important and can set the tone for future attitudes and achievements. The following list provides an overview of practical activities planned to ensure that entry in to school is positive and enjoyable:

- Liaison with previous settings, through records or in person depending on need.
- Open mornings for parents – to allow parents to meet each other and for us to give parents information to help them and their child 'be ready' for school.
- Children's visits – children are invited to come in to school for three afternoons to help them feel confident in the classroom setting.
- Communication via class dojo and individual messages to and from parents.
- Half days for the first week to help the children become confident in school before attending for lunchtimes.

Links with Parents

After 'induction', links with parents are maintained in the following ways:

- Termly story cafes for all of the family to attend.
- Regular newsletters informing parents of events taking place in school.
- We have a Class Dojo which all parents are invited to use. We use this to outline key learning and notices for the week.
- A phonics workshop for the parents is held in the Autumn term and a Maths workshop for parents in the Spring term.
- Twice a year parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress in detail with the teacher at parent's evenings.
- A full written report is sent home annually.
- We have an open door policy at Norwich Road Academy and talk regularly with parents.
Parents are always welcome to chat with their child's teacher before or after school. They can make an appointment if they feel they need more time to discuss a particular concern. The teachers will do their best to accommodate them.
- Parents can access the school website for relevant information.
- Various parental engagement events take place across the year including European Day of Languages, singing events and 'crafternoons'.

Links with the Wider Community

We are in touch with other pre-school providers in the community and are able to discuss issues with them where necessary. When it is appropriate to the topic the class is following, we may invite to the school members of the community to talk to the children, e.g. fire brigade, nurses, residents.

Opportunities for the children to learn about their local environment are planned in to topics where relevant.

We have contact with a range of support services:

- School health and health visiting
- Speech therapy
- Education welfare
- Social services
- School psychological services

Safeguarding & 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.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Norwich Road Academy, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Early Years at Norwich Road Academy.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in the Early Years to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Principal and EYFS Lead will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.