



# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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*'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.'*

(Early Years Statutory Framework, 2026)

## Statement of Intent

Our mission is to promote a love of learning in order to maximise the life chances of every child in our Trust. Through nurturing, high expectations and skilled teaching, we will have a lasting and positive impact on our local and wider community.

## Our Vision

The TEACH Trust supports our children to become empowered citizens that make a meaningful contribution to society. Our curriculum reflects our locality and all it offers and aims to educate all children in matters which affect humanity in the wider world: these include all matters that relate to the climate and the world around us, such as climate change; the importance of respecting and celebrating the importance of equality and diversity; and being responsible global citizens.

We have the highest aspirations for our children: the broad and balanced curriculum promotes learning, develops cultural capital and supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Rights Respecting Gold awards and Anti Bullying awards reflect some of many ways in which education for character are integral to the work of our schools and highlights our focus on the children's personal development.

We aim to inspire our children to be socially conscious individuals who make a difference to the world. All our children secure the key learning and skills they will need to become lifelong learners and gain employment. Our ultimate aim is to improve all our children's life chances and prepare them to thrive in their future lives.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Act which came into force in April 2011, the Trust has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate our philosophy, aims, principles and ethos in the Early Years Foundation Stage at TEACH Trust. Our philosophy is based on nurturing life-long learners by valuing the individual child and supporting them in developing their creativity and social skills. We believe that a child with high self-esteem will flourish in education and thrive in life.

## Aims and Principles

At TEACH Trust, we are determined to create the right environment for children when they first start school. We carefully plan every aspect of the school year with the following aims in mind:

- To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To deliver an Early Years curriculum that educates the whole child so that they are life long learners.
- To ensure that no child should be excluded or disadvantaged.
- To ensure that early years experiences build upon what children know and can already do.
- To ensure that parent(s)/carer(s) and practitioners work together.
- To create a happy purposeful atmosphere, based on a spirit of co-operation between members of staff, children and parent(s)/carer(s).
- To be concerned with the exploration of the world through senses, feelings and experiences, allowing young children to learn through explicit teaching time, carefully planned activities and opportunities for child-initiated play.
- To provide active learning experiences, giving children opportunities to explore practical activities, make decisions independently, and develop problem-solving skills.
- To provide structured teaching activities, which start from the child's knowledge and understanding.
- To promote independence, confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- To provide well organised, rich and stimulating experiences.
- To encourage children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.
- To ensure that we provide high quality care and education.
- To ensure that we work in partnership with children and parent(s)/carer(s), building an honest and open relationship.

In the Early Years at the TEACH Trust, we believe that every pupil is unique. We ensure all children have the opportunity to develop and learn in a safe and nurturing environment where play and learning is combined. Through practical learning experiences, we strive to equip children with a love

of learning and a natural curiosity. We are committed to giving our pupils the best possible start to their school life, teaching those skills that ensure their well-being now and success in the future.

## Intent

Our intent is to:

- Establish a nurturing, welcoming and exciting environment that offers interesting and challenging activities in which learning can take place.
- Respond to children's interests and use them to develop planning.
- Deliver a curriculum based on entitlement for all, that considers each child's existing knowledge, and where the children can engage in first hand experiences.
- Give children opportunities to practise, revise and extend knowledge and skills in a consistent and stable environment.
- Enable children to develop characteristics of effective learning, which will allow them to become independent, resourceful and resilient learners now and throughout their education.
- Provide learning opportunities that form the foundations of a well-sequenced progression which continues through Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Facilitate effective transition from EYFS into Key Stage 1 learning through carefully planned provisions for curriculum content and character development.

## Concepts:

Our curriculum is designed to develop the characteristics of effective learning:

- **Creating and thinking critically** – pupils have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.
- **Active learning** – pupils keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- **Playing and exploring** – pupils investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.

## Implementation

In order to implement our intent, we provide:

- A curriculum that is broad and balanced, which builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils, from their own individual starting points.
- A curriculum that uses a combination of topic themes and enriched opportunities.
- Meaningful learning experiences that develop each pupil's characteristics of learning.
- High quality interactions with adults, which have a direct impact on the progress of all pupils.
- Opportunities for assessment through careful observation, teacher judgment and frequent formative assessment tracking. Recording of 'wow' moments are also evidenced in the children's learning journals throughout the year.
- An effective and engaging environment in which pupils can access all areas of learning, both inside and outside, at any one time.
- Home learning opportunities that allow children to build on their school experiences at home.
- A carefully planned timetable that provides a balance of both adult and child-initiated activities alongside direct teaching.
- Opportunities for children to work individually, in groups or as a whole class.

- Daily adaptive phonics lessons alongside the continuous provision where phonics, reading and writing activities are available for children to consolidate and extend their phonic skills and knowledge.
- High quality professional development for staff to deliver our curriculum to the highest standard.
- An Early Years leader who monitors teaching and learning to improve standards and outcomes alongside the support of other Senior Leadership Team members.
- Regular opportunities for parent(s)/carer(s) to attend sessions to support learning at home, celebrate achievements and be involved in school life in a variety of ways.
- A growth mindset approach to promote positive attitudes towards learning, which reflect the values and skills needed to promote responsibility for learning and future success.
- An evidence-informed approach to support children to make progress by knowing more and remembering more.
- Embedding evidence-informed approaches that support personal development of the whole child, including Forest School provision, Trickbox and Stormbreak.

## Impact

Through implementing the above;

- All children make good or better progress socially, emotionally, academically, creatively and physically, from their varied starting points.
- We strive for every child to reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception, or in some cases, to reach their own individual targets.
- Evidence of children's achievements are recorded in writing books and physical Learning Journey documents.
- Class teachers make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all pupils build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace.
- Judgements are moderated regularly, both within school and externally with local schools, including between partner schools within TEACH Trust.
- Children become fantastic role models and are happy, keen to learn and feel safe to try new things.
- Individuality is valued and each child has the opportunity to achieve and excel, based upon their own personal strengths and interests.
- Children are ready to transition from the Early Years curriculum to the TEACH Curriculum in Year 1.
- Children demonstrate curiosity, independence, resilience and other characteristics of effective learning as well as our Teach Trust values of **trust, excellence, aspiration, collaboration and honesty**.

## Entitlement and Equal Opportunities

- All children start at TEACH Trust in the September of the year in which they will be 5 years old, unless their parent(s)/carer(s) wish to appeal to defer entry.
- All children are provided with equal access to the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum regardless of their protected characteristics. (Also see TEACH Trust Equalities policy)

- The children work at their own level, progressing through the developmental stages, leading to the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).
- At TEACH Trust, we adopt an inclusive approach to education where the needs of children with SEND, EAL or higher attaining pupils are carefully met. (Also see TEACH Trust Inclusion policy)

## The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching and learning in Early Years at TEACH Trust is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory framework and the four guiding principles that shape practice within the Early Years. The four guiding principles provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children.

- 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. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There are seven main areas of learning, ensuring there is breadth and balance to the curriculum. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected. There are three prime areas of learning and these 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 areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

There are four specific areas of learning and these areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

At TEACH Trust, we plan an integrated curriculum in line with the rest of the school. We ensure every area of learning is delivered in a stimulating and relevant way for the children. When planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and we support children using the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These 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.

## Active Learning through Play

We are committed to child-initiated learning and believe in children learning through well-considered play opportunities. We ensure the children have a balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated play in their week through a varied timetable.

*'Children at play are able to stay flexible, respond to events and changing situations, be sensitive to people, to adapt, think on their feet, and keep altering what they do in a fast-moving scene. When the process of play is rich, it can lead children into creating rich products in their stories, paintings, dances, music making, drawings, sculptures and constructions, or in the solving of scientific and mathematical problems.'*  
(Bruce, 2001, p.46)

We recognise that very young children learn most effectively through play. This is because it is a vehicle that provides children with vital feedback in a non-threatening way. *"The games children play are their means for exploring the world's intricacies. And when enmeshed in such play, children have no ends in mind, no goals, no limitations."* ('Learning with the Body in Mind' Eric Jensen). Intrinsic learning thrives in an environment of low threat, high feedback and lots of fun, where many chances to learn are inherent. We aim to encourage children to learn from the mistakes they make without facing the fear of failure. Effective play allows children to take charge over events and conquer fears. We also feel that it is particularly important as a tool for developing good social behaviours and prompting the use of critical and creative thinking.

At TEACH Trust, play in EYFS is an integral part of learning. When planned effectively, we believe that it helps to develop the whole person, motivation is intrinsic and children experience high levels of success.

The types of play offered will be appropriate to the individual children's needs and include:

- Adult led – adult interacts with the play to influence and guide its outcome
- Adult initiated – where the child engages in activities set up by the adult
- Child led – where the child makes their own decisions about the kind of play and the outcome of the play from a given range
- Child initiated – where the child has complete decision making and directional control of the play

## Teaching and Learning

Teaching methods in Early Years Foundation Stage will accommodate the different ways children learn by planning for the same learning objective in a range of different ways. These include:

- A curriculum that is led by the children's interests.
- A multi-sensory practical approach as a starting point, building on the concrete rather than the abstract.
- Praise and encouragement to establish an ethos in which individual efforts are valued.
- A balance of groupings to include whole class, small collaborative groups, peer partner, individual, attainment and mixed attainment as appropriate.
- A balance of child led and adult led activities and direct teaching, which includes modelling expectations.
- A daily timetable, which allows time for each child to engage with a key person.
- Classroom assistants or other adults (when available) will be planned for to support groups and/or individuals where appropriate, and to enable an increased number of high-quality interactions.
- The EYFS builds on what children already know, understand and can do. It aims to provide learning based on first hand experiences and values parent(s)/carer(s) as the child's continuing educator.
- It enables the teachers to meet the needs of all children, including those working at a level that exceeds the requirements of the ELGs.

## Assessment

A statutory 'on entry assessment' is completed for each child within the first few weeks of entering school. This, coupled with teachers' observations and interactions with each child, provides a secure assessment of individual's developmental stages to enable appropriate teaching and learning to be planned for all learners.

Throughout the year, assessment is completed alongside the EYFS Curriculum. The children are observed both in their play and focused activities and notes are made about their achievements. Mid-year progress is tracked against the Developmental Checkpoints set out in the EYFS. These are updated and learning is tracked until the final profile assessment in June. At the end of the year, the children's EYFS Profile will be shared with parents/carers.

Our careful and thorough planning and assessment in the EYFS ensure we fully fulfil the teaching and learning requirements of the EYFS. Our tracking system ensures the different needs of individuals are addressed quickly and effectively.

## Health and Safety

The health and safeguarding of all the children in our care is of paramount importance at TEACH Trust and we have many stringent policies and procedures in place to ensure high standards of care are met. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks.

## Safer Eating

In EYFS, children's safety is prioritised during mealtimes and activities involving food. Children eat under the supervision of staff, with a Paediatric First Aider present at all mealtimes. Food is prepared appropriately to reduce the risk of choking, for example by cutting foods into suitable sizes and shapes for children. To minimise potential choking hazards, messy play activities will not include foods such

as jelly cubes, popcorn or marshmallows. Any choking incidents will be recorded in the school's accident records and parents/carers will be informed.

### Personal Care

At TEACH Trust, children's wellbeing and dignity are promoted during toileting and personal care routines. Staff follow agreed procedures to support children appropriately whilst maintaining their privacy, encouraging independence and ensuring safeguarding considerations are met. Personal care is delivered sensitively and respectfully, taking account of each child's individual needs and stage of development.

Please refer to our Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equality Policy, Off Site Policy, School Prospectus and Behaviour Policies for further detail.

### Safer Sleep

If a child falls asleep while at school, they will be monitored by an adult at all times. A parent or carer will be contacted to inform them, and a member of staff will safely and gently attempt to rouse the child. School staff will also monitor the child for any signs of illness, such as a raised temperature, rash or changes in their usual behaviour, particularly in the period leading up to them falling asleep. If the child is too tired to resume their usual school activities, a decision may be made for them to go home. If a child regularly falls asleep at school, an individual plan will be put in place to ensure they are able to sleep in a safe, comfortable and appropriate space.

## Admission/Induction Arrangements and Partnership with Parent (s)/Carer(s)

Admissions to our school are completed following the guidelines published by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority. The children begin school in September in the academic year of their fifth birthday.

The opportunities below are given to allow children and parent(s)/carer(s) to become familiar with their new school and teacher.

### About Our School

Open days/evenings and stay and plays are held in the year before the child starts school. Our Trust mission and values are outlined, as well as admissions procedures and information on the curriculum. There is a detailed tour of the EYFS base and all other areas in school. Parent(s)/carer(s) are given the opportunity to ask questions about admissions, our school philosophy etc. Admission forms and a school prospectus are available on request.

### Liaison with Pre-School Settings

Meetings and conversations are held between pre-school leaders and the Early Years Foundation Stage leaders at TEACH Trust. During these meetings general practise is discussed as well as the needs of children currently in Early Years Foundation Stage and those due to start school in September. Children from our main feeder pre-schools may also be invited to attend performances hosted by the school, to aid familiarisation with the school setting.

In the term before the children start school, many of the pre-schools are visited by the Early Years Foundation Stage Leaders.

## Welcome to Early Years

Parent (s)/carer(s) receive a 'Welcome to Early Years' pack, including a letter informing them of which class their child will be in and who their teacher will be.

## Initial Visits

Children and parent(s)/carer(s) are invited to visit the school for two mornings. Senior members of staff meet with the parent(s)/carer(s), giving them the opportunity to discuss important information about their child and any worries or concerns they may have. The children go with their new teacher and teaching assistant to their new classroom.

The children are given the opportunity to work in small groups exploring their classroom environment. The teacher and teaching assistant carry out informal observations and discussions with the children.

During the visits, children and parent(s)/carer(s) are introduced to some of our school routines, particularly how we end the school day and greet parent(s)/carer(s) in the Early Years playground.

## Staggered visits

During the first full school week in September, for one morning only, the children attend school in small groups of ten children. Over the course of the morning, the children are given a brief tour of the Early Years Foundation Stage base, the school hall, office and a visit to the Head Teacher's office. The teachers and teaching assistants use this morning to carry out some of the 'On entry' assessment observations. During the week, a staggered entry continues so that routines are gradually introduced and the children can begin to form relationships in a safe, secure environment. In the second week of term, all children attend full time.

## Home/School Partnership

At TEACH Trust we value the contribution of all the adults involved in a child's life and strive to establish positive relationships with them, as highlighted in the EYFS Framework. We believe a good relationship with parent(s)/carer(s) is vital in the development of all children. We recognise that parent(s)/carer(s) are the children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We establish a positive relationship and recognise the role that parent(s)/carer(s) play through:

- A home visit by each child's key adult(s) from the school before the children begin in September.
- Before the children start school in September, parents/carers(s) and children are invited to watch a video about starting at the school, who the key adults are and what their classrooms look like.
- Running curriculum workshops where we explain how we teach Phonics and Mathematics and how they can support their child at home.
- Providing a curriculum newsletter at the beginning of each half-term and a curriculum map of the year on the school website.

- Holding formal parent(s)/carer(s) evening in October and July.
- Encouraging parent(s)/carer(s) to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Reporting on children's progress and attainment formally each term.
- Arranging activities throughout the year to invite parent(s)/carer(s) into school to celebrate their child's learning, e.g. performances, 'Fab finishes' for our topics.
- Parent(s)/carer(s) share learning at home through 'Learning News' and 'Wow Stars' in their home learning folders. Children are also given a show and tell book that they can fill with pictures and writing to present to their friends. Every parent(s)/carer(s) is invited to share their child's achievements and talents during celebration assemblies.
- Written contact through the home school reading records as well as the acknowledgement that parent(s)/carer(s) can ring/email school to contact staff.

## Home School Learning

The children are encouraged to discuss the learning they do at home with parent (s)/carer(s) to develop their thought processes.

The children take home story books from the library to share with their parent(s)/carer(s). The children also take home a Home Learning and Sound folder. Parent (s)/carer(s) are informed of how they can support their children as a result of meetings held with the class teacher and letters of intent included within each resource. As soon as it is felt appropriate, the children take home 'Home Learning Challenges' where they can complete a fun activity directly linked to what they have been learning about in the week. Parent(s)/carer(s) are given suggestions and tips on how to complete the weekend challenge. As soon as it is appropriate, children will take home a book band book to read at home.

## Newsletters

Half-termly curriculum newsletters identify key areas of learning for the following term, as well as some activities the children will carry out. Long, medium and short-term plans are readily available to parent(s) on request.

Regular letters are sent home informing parent(s)/carer(s) of events and how they can become involved.

All letters are also uploaded on the TEACH Trust school websites:

<http://www.adastra.poole.sch.uk>

<http://www.chis.poole.sch.uk>

## Learning Environment

The learning environment, both indoors and out, is of crucial importance in stimulating and encouraging active learning and thinking. Within the classroom, resources are clearly labelled with words and pictures in order to promote the children's independence. The classrooms are organised into key areas including Communication, Language and literacy, maths, creative, exploring and investigating.

Systems and routines are in place to provide safety and security and to develop confidence, high self-esteem, knowledge and understanding. (See Health and Safety policy).

## Outdoors

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework emphasises the importance of using the outside environment as a tool for learning. At each TEACH Trust infant school, there is a fenced Early Years area for the children to use at various times of the day, for their adult and child-initiated learning. Part of this area has a canopy enabling the children to access the outside area in all weathers. The outdoor resources are rotated regularly to ensure the children have a variety of opportunities to extend their learning and skills through play. Damaged resources are reported to the school site team and carefully disposed of or repaired to a safe standard.

Policy updated: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

## Equality Impact Assessment EYFS

| Question                                                                                    | Response                         |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Which relevant groups and stakeholders have been consulted with in relation to this policy? |                                  | Please tick |
|                                                                                             | Pupils                           |             |
|                                                                                             | Trustees                         | ✓           |
|                                                                                             | Staff                            | ✓           |
|                                                                                             | Parents/Carers                   |             |
|                                                                                             | Local Authority                  |             |
|                                                                                             | Trade Unions                     |             |
|                                                                                             | Other Advisors<br>(give details) |             |
| What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy?     | Termly                           |             |
|                                                                                             | Annually                         | ✓           |
|                                                                                             | When applied                     |             |
|                                                                                             | If legislation changes           | ✓           |
|                                                                                             | If a formal complaint            | ✓           |

|                                                                                               |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Does the policy affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:</i> | <i>Y/N</i> |
| <i>Disability</i>                                                                             | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Gender reassignment</i>                                                                    | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Marriage or civil partnership</i>                                                          | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Pregnancy and maternity</i>                                                                | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Race</i>                                                                                   | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Religion or belief</i>                                                                     | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Sexual orientation</i>                                                                     | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Sex (gender)</i>                                                                           | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Age</i>                                                                                    | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>SEN</i>                                                                                    | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Vulnerable</i>                                                                             | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>Traveller, migrant, refugees and people seeking asylum</i>                                 | <i>N</i>   |
| <i>EAL</i>                                                                                    | <i>N</i>   |

|                                                                                                             | <i>Y/N</i> | <i>Comments/Actions</i> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?</i>                                     | <i>N</i>   |                         |
| <i>If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?</i> | <i>NA</i>  |                         |
| <i>Is the impact of the policy likely to be negative?</i>                                                   | <i>N</i>   |                         |
| <i>If yes, can the impact be mitigated by taking different action?</i>                                      | <i>NA</i>  |                         |