

SUNNYSIDE ACADEMY

EARLY YEARS POLICY

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’ (EYFS Framework 2012)

Early Years applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.
In our school, all children join us, full time in the year in which they reach five years.

Early Years is based upon four themes:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

At Sunnyside 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 influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Sunnyside Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. 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 and the level of support necessary to facilitate each child’s learning (See Inclusion Policy).

In Early Years we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. 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.

Welfare

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 these 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.

'Children are safe and happy because of the secure procedures that exist in the Early Years. Adults know the needs of the children well and give them good care and attention.'
(Ofsted Report September 2015)

At Sunnyside Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years.

At Sunnyside Academy we:

- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Sunnyside 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.

'Children's skills are assessed accurately and adults are well deployed to support all children in making good progress. Children develop the skills to work together and are respectful to each other and to adults. Due to good leadership, parents are highly engaged in their children's learning.'
(Ofsted Report September 2015)

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:

- Visiting at home and talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in Early Years before starting school.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents and valuing the ongoing contributions to this from parents.
- 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 Early Years.
- Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

All staff involved with the Early Years aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

We have very strong links with various feeder Pre-schools and Childminders. Early Years staff meet with providers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.

Enabling Environments

At Sunnyside 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.

***'The provision of Early Years is good. Activities are well matched to children's abilities and, as a result, they make good progress.'* (Ofsted Report September 2015)**

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Early years staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning.

Medium Term planning is based around themes and is completed half-termly. In addition to this, short term activity planning is completed on a regular basis.

The Planning objectives within Early Years are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years document. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in Early Years takes the form of both formal and informal observations. At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

The Learning Environment

Early Years classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. Early Years has its 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.

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

Mathematics

Knowledge of the world

Expressive arts and design

We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

'A wide range of activities make a good contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. As a result of good teaching, children's skills develop well, particularly communication and language skills.'

(Ofsted Report September 2015)

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.

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