



Early Years Policy

Newbury Academy Trust

March 2018

Early Years Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. "Academy", "Academy Trust" all refer to Newbury Academy Trust, Love Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2DU. School refers to one of the three schools within the Newbury Academy Trust, Trinity School, Love Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2DU; Fir Tree School, Fir Tree Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2RA; Speenhamland School, Pelican Lane, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1NU.
- 1.2. The term Governor refers to both Full Governing Body Trustees and Local Governing Body Governors.

2. Aims

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

3. The Curriculum

3.1. The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical** – Moving and Handling and Self Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making relationships, Managing Feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

3.2. The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for the children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- **Understanding the World** – People and communities, The world and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative.

3.3. The Early Years Curriculum is based on the seven areas of learning and development outlined in the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage:

Children will learn through a variety of teaching strategies including;

- Working independently, in pairs or groups and as a whole class.
- Opportunities to experiment and explore their learning and development through play.
- Appropriate adult support to provide challenging and stimulating learning opportunities.
- Opportunities to develop social skills such as communication, negotiation, cooperation and support the formation of positive relationships.
- Presenting ideas and suggestion both orally and in written form.
- Using Information Communication Technology to support learning.
- Establishing routines and appropriate structure to enable pupils to feel secure and confident in their learning behaviours.

4. Characteristics of Effective Learning

4.1. Learning opportunities within the EYFS focus upon the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Reception teachers plan activities with these in mind and they are regularly recorded and noted through observations. It is important that parents, as the child's first educators, are aware of their child's learning behaviours. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

4.2. The three characteristics 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.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

4.3. Planning covers the seven areas of Learning and Development as the child progresses through the Early Learning Goals and towards the first levels of the National Curriculum. Planning supports making links and connections in the children's learning.

5. Play

5.1. Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experience that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills,

build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

6. Teaching

- 6.1. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us. This is part of teaching in the Early Years. Whole class and group work is a part of the children's daily routine and is significant in ensuring the children are ready for the transition into school and into year one.

7. Observation and Assessment

- 7.1. Ongoing assessment information is gathered by the class teachers from observations of children's self-initiated activities, talking to the children, completed activities (e.g. written work, drawings), photographs and discussions with parents. In addition, and to support their transition into Year One, children will use a topic book in which they will complete Numeracy and Literacy work on an alternate weekly basis. An Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be completed for each child at the end of their F2 year. In addition, teachers also have to consider how each child learns using the three 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'. These are – playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. The revised EYFS profile requires practitioners to assess children against a set of 17 early learning goals (ELGs). Parents will legally need to be informed whether their child has reached the expected level, is emerging towards it or has exceeded it in all 17 ELGs.

8. Transition

- 8.1. Opening mornings are offered during the Autumn term allowing prospective parents to tour the school before they make their decision as to which school their child will attend. We develop strong links with local pre-schools; Early Years staff visit regularly and attend transition meetings each term. We contact prospective parents/carers to invite them to events. During the summer term parents are invited to an induction meeting where they receive key information about the school, routines and expectations for their child starting school. Children are invited to several induction afternoons where they will meet the Early Years Team and their peers. The school also holds a taster morning where the children visit and join in with a 'typical' morning. The children start full time from day 1 in the Autumn term.

9. The Role of Parents

- 9.1. The school acknowledges parents as a child's first and most enduring educators – working together we will have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. A successful partnership needs a two way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. The school will work hard to develop this. All parents are welcomed into the Reception class and valued for the contribution they make to their child's education;

parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey. We will use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage will have reading and phonics activities to complete with their parents and carers to consolidate their learning at home.

10. Inclusion

10.1. We offer equal opportunities to all children regardless of gender, race, religion, language, or special educational needs.

11. Photographing Children

- 11.1. A main assessment activity in the Foundation Stage is the photographing or filming of children however it is important that this information is shared carefully and always in the best interest of the child. All photographic evidence is only used within school, for assessment purposes.
- 11.2. We understand that parents like to take photos of or video record their children in the school production, or at sports day, or school presentations. This is a normal part of family life, and we will not discourage parents from celebrating their child's successes. However, if there are Health and Safety issues associated with this (e.g. the use of a flash when taking photos could distract or dazzle the child, causing an accident), we will encourage parents to use film or settings on their camera that do not require flash. We will not allow other people including staff to photograph or film pupils during a school activity without parental permission. This includes the use of cameras on mobile phones or any other device.
- 11.3. We will not allow images of pupils to be used on school websites, publicity, or press releases, including social networking sites, without express permission from the parent.
- 11.4. The school cannot however be held accountable for the use of photographs or video footage taken by parents or members of the public at school functions where parental permission has been given.

12. Monitoring

12.1. The Headteacher will be responsible for the overall monitoring of this policy, as identified in the Governors Schedule.

Authorised by	Resolution of the Board of Trustees
Date	14 th March 2018
Effective Date of the Policy	14 th March 2018
Effective Date for Review	March 2020

