

Early Years Policy

Reviewed June 2021



The Stour Academy Trust

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Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- A safe, secure and caring environment is created in which children become independent active learners.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#)

Structure of the EYFS

The Nursery offers provision for 2- 4-year olds. The hours that are available are as follows

Morning Sessions (AM)
Monday-Friday 8.30am – 11.30am
Afternoon Sessions (PM)
Monday-Friday 12.30pm – 3.30pm
5 All Day Sessions
Monday – Friday 8.30am – 3.30pm

In Reception, children enter school in the year in which they turn five. Children will attend part time for the first week. If a child is not ready for full-time then part-time education will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the class teacher and senior leaders.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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



The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage – is based upon 4 overarching principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

These emphasise that each child is unique and develops in different ways and the importance of strong relationships between early years professionals, children and families. Enabling environments allow children to thrive and learn through quality-based provision, which is enhanced and adapted to encourage children to develop as independent learners. There are 7 areas of Learning and Development in the Early Years curriculum, which are all connected and cannot be delivered in isolation.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. The development of children's spoken language and vocabulary underpins the planning of teaching and learning.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. 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, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice to enable all children to make progress.

There is a long-term plan for termly topics which provide powerful experiences for children to enjoy and build their cultural capital. The topics are broad to allow for themes and mini topics to develop throughout the year which build upon children's interests, the natural world and their local environment.

The curriculum is planned and sequenced to help children build their learning over time. In Reception, discrete phonics, maths, writing and reading teaching are planned for based on the Development Matters stages of development, White Rose maths scheme the Trust reading guidance and the science long term plan. Short term planning takes the form of daily plans which are adapted in the light of children's interests and assessment for learning.



Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led, adult initiated and child-initiated activities across the day. The day includes time for children to be taught in small groups when practitioners guide their learning and significant periods of time when children learn through play. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Enabling environments, indoors and outside, foster high- quality play where children can direct their own learning and practitioners can join in sensitively to support and extend children's learning. Children are encouraged to use resources in the indoor and outdoor environments independently. The well-planned environment and the interactions of adults develop the characteristics of effective learning and develop learners that are confident to explore, be independent, problem solve and think creatively and critically.

The children are 'taught' through **modelling, asking, questioning, explaining, guiding, showing, suggesting, challenging and encouraging.**

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning.

Practitioners use the online assessment and observation tool, Tapestry, to capture significant moments of new learning (WOW moments) so that formative assessment is useful and not taking practitioners away from the children for long periods of time. It is used regularly to gather evidence of children's achievements and adult observations, photos and capturing child's voice using the iPad. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers by using the online platform of Tapestry.

In the Spring term, practitioners review children's progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Summative assessment takes the form of speech link and language link assessments, term 1 baseline, concepts of print , regular phonics assessments and 60 word checks to match texts to children's phonic knowledge.

When a child is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This '2-year progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.



The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other schools in the Trust, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. Parents are offered regular opportunities to contribute to pupil's learning journeys using Tapestry.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Term 2: Parents Evening

Term 3: Written Report- Prime Areas

Term 4: Parents Evening

Term 5: Parents Calls

Term 6: Written Report – Unique Child

Early Years classes have an open-door policy where families bring their children into the classroom each day and are able to have informal discussions with the adults who teach them. If they require a more formal discussion, they are able to make an appointment to speak to the Class Teacher after school.

Families are kept informed about school activities and events through Weduc, Facebook and Tapestry, informing them about key events relevant to their class, including the topic and curriculum coverage for that term. Children also have individual reading records and a home learning book so that there is a partnership between home and school to support children's learning.

Children have a profile that builds up a holistic picture of their progress and development over the year. Observations in the profile will capture "wow" moments in all areas of learning and will focus on what the child can do rather than what they can't do.

Families are informed of their child's progress through a summary of the "Unique Story" report in the Spring term and at the end of the school year.

Each child at nursery is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Safeguarding and Welfare requirements

The safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#) ensure that we create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. Appendix 1 outlines the policies of the school that support our commitment to meeting the providing high quality care for our young children.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We follow [statutory guidance](#) for safety around supervised tooth brushing.

We know that starting school and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for young children and have procedures in place to ensure smooth transitions and to provide developmentally sensitive curriculums.



Transition to Nursery

The nursery staff work with parents to provide a personalised induction plan for each child.

- Once families accept a place at the nursery they are invited to attend a number of stay and play sessions with their child. This is a chance for children to explore and play in their new nursery classroom and join in with singing and story time.
- Staff hold individual induction meetings with all families before they start. Families are encouraged to share information with the Nursery about their child's interests, developing skills and personal care needs.
- In term 6 a Nursery Information session is held. This is an opportunity for new and existing parents to find out more about the ethos of our nursery, how the Nursery supports children's learning and the day to day routines.
- Staff run weekly 'Singing and Story Sessions' for children age 0-3. These are a fun activity for the local community and also provide an opportunity for families who may choose to join the nursery to come and meet the team and learn more about the nursery.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

Entry to Reception is in accordance with Kent Admissions procedures with children starting in September following their 4th birthday.

- Rising 4's sessions are designed to support both families and children with the September transition to primary school. The Rising 4's is held in the Reception class where families and children can meet staff and participate in a variety of fun activities. This gives children the opportunity to become familiar with the school setting; build new friendships and increase confidence and understanding of school life.

All Rising 4's and their families are welcome to attend regardless of their September choice.

Children and families are invited to visit the school several times in the summer term before they start.

- In term 6, families are invited in for an information evening led by the EYFS Lead and the Headteacher about what to expect from the Reception year.
- Families are invited to 1-1 consultations with the Reception teacher to gather important information regarding the child that the family feel is important for the teacher to know.
- In the summer term the Reception teachers visit the new entrants in their nursery/pre-school settings and documentation is passed on so that detailed information is gathered to ensure that the teachers have a full picture of individual children and the class as a whole. Each child is also given a transition booklet about their new school.

Transition from Year R to Year 1

The Stour Academy Trust has a written policy with clear strategies to ensure that this transition is smooth and that children continue successfully on their learning journey into the Year 1 with a developmentally sensitive curriculum.

- In term 6 the Year 1 teachers spend time observing early years teaching and learning. They observe pupils in their Reception class setting.
- Meetings between teachers are held so that documentation can be passed on and detailed information gathered by new teachers to ensure that they have a full picture of individual children and the class as a whole.
- Year 1 teachers are clear about which pupils need to carry on the Early Years Curriculum and which pupils can access the Year 1 programme of study.
- SEN transition meetings are held about individual children so that provision maps are in place immediately at the beginning of the school year.
- Families are invited in at the end of term 6 to hear about the Year 1 curriculum and expectations and to see the new classroom and teacher.



Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed Mrs Annette Bevan, Trust Early Years Lead every two years

The Board of Directors reviews and approves this policy every two years. It may, however, review this policy earlier than this if the Government produces new regulations, or if it receives recommendation on how this policy might be improved.

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

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework. Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Staff Hub and website
Child Protection policy and procedures	Staff Hub and website
EYFS camera and mobile phone policy	Staff Hub and website
Acceptable User Policy	Staff Hub and website
Online and Social Networking Policy	Staff Hub and website
Administration of Medicines Policy	Staff Hub and website
Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessments	Staff Hub and website School Risk Assessments
Well-being, Health and Involvement Policy	Staff Hub and website
Transition Policy	Staff Hub
Complaints Policy	Staff Hub and website





