

Early Years Policy

Reviewed September 2023



The Stour Academy Trust

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Trust Vision

We are:

A Multi Academy Trust at the forefront of providing a 21st century education for children.

We have a vision for education that gives children the necessary skills to thrive in our modern, 21st century world.

Our pedagogical model combined with the intentional deployment of technology will help us deliver personalised learning. Through the innovative use of digital technology we will create a level playing field for all children, irrespective of their language skills, reading ability or any other factors that may present learning challenges.

Technology will accelerate our progress but will not be the driver of our vision. We will develop both the cognitive and social-emotional skills necessary for children to succeed in their personal and professional lives.

There will be no barriers to achievement within our learning community and our teachers will build strong relationships that facilitate the learning of others.

Traditional classrooms will evolve to allow the vision to be fully embraced. Our enabling environments will be child-centred and designed to allow for flexibility, collaboration and independence. The aim is to shape our environment to better reflect a 21st century workspace that promotes social interaction, communication and self-regulation.

Trust Values

We are:



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 nursery, Reception, 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.

We want this policy to foster a harmonious atmosphere which supports and promotes ...

- Self-esteem to build confident individuals who feel proud of themselves.
- Happy individuals who experienced positive relationship.
- Confident communicators who can articulate and express their needs, emotions, and ideas.
- Social communicators who show empathy, kindness, and respect to others.
- Every child as an individual. Helps every child to grow up feeling confident about their own identity, in a spirit of friendship, understanding fairness and the rights of others, valuing diversity.
- Children’s development in all areas of the EYFS so that all children have the foundations in the Prime Areas so that they can be successful in the Specific Areas ready for the next stage of their education.

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 full time from September. 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. Communication and Language underpins all areas of learning.

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

Effective Teaching and Learning in Early Years.

Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.

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.

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. All adults are skilful communicators.

In Nursery, effective teaching includes working face-to-face with a child or small group of children during the session and structuring the learning environment to support children in making progress through child-initiated play.

As children get older the teaching has a balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences.

Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner. Parent involvement is crucial: parent support and a high-quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children.

Practitioners track each child's learning and development to pick up where children are at risk of making poor progress and adapt the programme and their teaching as appropriate.

Early intervention is offered swiftly, so that children get the additional, specialist help that they need .

In Nursery, the core responsibility for teaching and learning rests with the class teacher or lead practitioner. Although many tasks may be delegated to the key person, the class teacher/lead practitioner must support staff to achieve best practice, coach, encourage and model, and monitor the quality of work by each team member. Sometimes staff work with individual children or groups of children, in guided learning activities or observing children at play both inside and outside. All key people are involved in planning and assessing children's work. Key people maintain the records of a group of children assigned to them by their team leader.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. 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.

We will always appropriately modify learning and teaching for children with SEN and/or disabilities.

Scaffolding means that we give a child just enough help to do something which they couldn't do independently. We gradually reduce the help until the child is independent. It's a powerful technique for all children. It helps children with SEND to work towards the same learning goals as other children, with additional help along the way.

We value each child as a unique individual and are familiar with and meet all the requirements of relevant equal opportunities legislation regarding race, gender, and disability. We work closely and in partnership with parents and any other involved agencies to meet the needs of our children through provision that is inclusive to all. Children with identified Special Educational needs and /or disabilities Where children with SEN are making poor progress, further assessment is undertaken, or support sought.

In Reception, 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, foundation of phonics and phonics instruction, maths, writing and reading teaching are planned for based on the Development Matters stages of development, White Rose/Power of Maths scheme, Little Wandle

Phonics Programme, and the Trust Reading Policy. Short term planning takes the form of daily plans which are adapted in the light of children's interests and assessment for learning.

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. Development Matters is used to support planning based on formative and summative assessment and the observations checkpoints support teachers to identify when children are making slower progress.

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 to gather evidence of children's achievements through adult observations, photos and capturing of child's voice. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers through the online platform of Tapestry.

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.

In Reception, formative and summative assessment takes the form of speech link and language link assessments, in school baseline, concepts of print, Foundations of Phonics, Little Wandle assessments to match texts to children's phonic knowledge. Development Matters supports formative and summative assessment.

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

At the end of Reception, the 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 and carers

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 1 – Tapestry update at end of the term
Term 2 – Parents evening – update on PSED/ C&L
Term 3 – Tapestry update
Term 4 – Parents Evening
Term 5 - Tapestry update
Term 6 – End of Year Reports

Early Years classes have an open-door policy where families bring their children into the classroom each day and can have informal discussions with the adults who teach them. If they require a more formal discussion, they can 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.

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 2024](#) 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 [DFE Health Toolkit](#) 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.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, we prioritize online safety as an essential component of our educational approach. We utilize Project Evolve, which aligns with UKCIS (UK Council for Internet Safety) guidelines and is integrated into our online teaching framework. As outlined in our Online and Social Networking Policy, we are committed to fostering a secure online environment for our young learners.

Sleeping

At the Stour Academy Trust, we prioritize the safety and well-being of children aged 2 years and above during rest and sleep times, actively engaging parents and caregivers in understanding and meeting their child's sleep needs. Our procedures and practices ensure that children are provided with sleep mats, their individual sleep requirements are accommodated, and we adhere to guidelines by the [Lullaby Trust](#) to minimize sleep-related risks, with continuous visual monitoring and maintenance of sleep logs. The sleep environment is carefully maintained at 16°C to 20°C with proper ventilation and adjusted lighting for sleep while ensuring supervision visibility, and hygiene standards are upheld with labeled bedding cleaned regularly and stored separately. Trained staff promptly respond to respiratory distress emergencies, and all

sleep-related records are securely stored and maintained, with the Safe Sleep Policy communicated to staff through induction training and displayed in relevant areas, actively involving parents and caregivers in decisions regarding their child's sleep needs and safety. This policy underscores our unwavering commitment to providing a safe environment for children's sleep and rest.

Healthy Eating

All children, in Nursery and Reception, are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of a drink - milk and water. They have access to water at all times. School dinners are provided for free for all children in Reception and menus are available at the office. We have a range of vegetables, fruit and other healthy foods to encourage pupils to try a range of foods.

Eating Times

Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of a member staff. Children to eat in their allocated rooms. The rooms will be organised to ensure that children can be seated appropriately and can maintain good and comfortable posture. Staffing to be arranged so that ratios in the room are still met using staff allocated to the group. Ensure that all children are practising good hygiene and regular handwashing including before meals and snacks. The whole group will access snack and lunch at the same time to ensure a consistent approach to hand washing and cleaning regimes. The member of staff responsible for the group will ensure hand washing is completed appropriately by all children, the team and tables will be cleaned thoroughly before and after eating.

Personal and 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. We actively encourage parents to start helping their children become independent with these tasks before they start Nursery so that they are toilet trained and able to be independent. 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 and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child. More information can be found in our Personal and Intimate Care Policy.

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 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.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

Entry to Reception is in accordance with Kent Admissions procedures with children starting in September following their 5th 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. 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 to the EYFS statutory framework. Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Child Protection policy and procedures	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
Transition Policy	Staff Hub
Complaints Policy	Staff Hub and website
Personal and Intimate Care Policy	Staff Hub and website
Sleep Policy	Staff Hub
Trust Reading Policy	Staff Hub and website
Trust Writing Policy	Staff Hub and website