



Early Years Policy

March 2020

Approved by Chair _____

Review Date _____

General Aims and objectives

At Shine Academies we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

Our overall aims are:

- To make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
- To provide a safe, secure, appropriate, caring, respectful and disciplined learning environment in which all children achieve academically and socially to their full potential.
- To ensure breadth of balance in the curriculum through carefully planned adult input and sensitive interaction using the Developmental Stages while having regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum will demand.
- To encourage parents to become partners with the school in the education of their children.
- To provide a curriculum firmly based on active learning to meet the needs of the individual child.
- To foster a love of learning, enquiring minds and the ability to discuss, adapt and negotiate.
- To prepare and equip children with the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to become responsible adults and citizens of the future.

We recognise that to provide an effective Foundation Stage curriculum, experiences and activities need to be carefully structured and take account of the following:

- Provision for different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can do.
- Planned and purposeful activities that provides opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors.
- A range of activities planned and structured by an adult and those activities that children initiate themselves.

Legislation

- This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).
- This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Rationale

The Early Years Foundation Stage begins from birth. Many children first attend some form of pre-school or Nursery soon after their third birthday. Children may go to several settings during the Foundation Stage, attending part time or full time.

Some children may attend childcare before they are 3 years old and this is also part of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage forms the basis of all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being.
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

As part of our practice at Shine Academies we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider community.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult-led and child-initiated.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Foundation Stage Curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning: three Prime Areas and four Specific Areas.

The three Prime Areas are those which are fundamental, work together, and move through to support all other areas of the curriculum. These are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The four Specific Areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Lessons and activities are planned to excite and engage children based on the assessments of the children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning.

Schools within the trust take objectives from Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012). These objectives are used to inform and guide planning through the appropriate age bands for children within the EYFS. Topics are chosen to pique interest and allow children to fully immerse themselves into their learning.

In Reception, children take part in daily lessons in Literacy and Maths where they learn new skills through whole class, small group and one to one activities. Children will also take part in daily phonics sessions using 'Letters and Sounds' Read Write Inc or Jolly Phonics schemes depending on the needs of the child. Topic lessons covering other areas of the curriculum are included in children's timetables alongside P.E.

In Nursery, children will take part in Literacy, Maths, Topic and P.E lessons throughout the week. Children will work with the class teacher and support staff in their family groups.

Children will explore the curriculum through teacher-led and child-initiated activities with staff supporting to deepen children's learning through targeted questioning. Throughout Nursery and Reception, the curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.'

The Developmental Stages within the EYFS establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage and help them to build secure foundations for future learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage some children will have exceeded the goals, other children will be working towards some or all of them and others will be moving on to the KS1 curriculum.

The learning environment and outdoor spaces

The classroom is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment. Equipment and resources are accessible and can be located and used independently by children. The enclosed outdoor space is secure and offers children the ability to explore a different environment, presenting them with different challenges and experiences. Activities are planned throughout the learning environment to help the children develop in all areas of learning.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Learning objectives are identified within all planning. Activities are planned to address the Learning Objectives from the Early Learning Goals. The assessment of a pupil's progress is made against the Foundation Stage Profile. This is achieved through the direct observation of children's performance in oral work, written work, practical tasks and in consultation with other professionals, staff and parents. Informal assessments are carried out on a half termly basis and are used to group and plan for the children to ensure a curriculum that is tailored to each child's individual needs. The Foundation Stage Profile is used as an ongoing record throughout the Foundation Stage from Nursery to Reception.

All schools within the Academy took part in the Reception Baseline Pilot in September 2019. The reception baseline assessment is a new national assessment that will be administered in Reception classes in all Primary, Infant and First schools in England. It will form the baseline for primary progress measures, allowing schools to receive credit for the progress their pupils make throughout their time in Primary school. It is intended that this will be introduced nationally in Autumn 2020.

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Observations of children's achievements are collated in their Literacy, Maths and Topic books, which are shared with parents.

Once a term, parents are invited to attend a parents' evening and reports are shared with parents twice a year.

Within the final term of Reception, we provide parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of effective

learning. Parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Shine Academies, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies to get a holistic view of the child. The Trust endeavours to meet the needs of children with special needs in line with the SEN code of practice. Parents have regular meetings with the schools allocated SENCO. Class teachers work to set targets which are then discussed with parents whom it is hoped will work in co-operation with school and outside agencies.

Safeguarding

Safety is paramount and all schools within The Trust have robust and effective Safeguarding Policies to ensure the children in our care are protected. Please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Parents as Partners

Parents play a key role in children's development and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with parents and carers to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents to make contributions and share information about their child's learning and development. We also regularly share information on children's progress and next steps in learning. We are always thinking of new ways to involve parents in their child's learning, below are some ways we have involved parents:

- Regular parent consultation afternoons.
- Providing half termly homework projects
- Friends of the Trust meetings.
- Parent workshops.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents such as special assemblies, performances, sports days, etc.
- Providing a range of methods to engage our families in their child's learning. For example, sharing/reading books, phonics workshops, inspire sessions, etc.
- Having an open-door policy to enable parents to come and speak with teachers, should they have any concerns.
- Sending out half termly newsletters with information on topics and curriculum coverage.
- Having informal conversations at the start and end of the day.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition point, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child. The EYFS leaders will visit all the nursery settings to meet the children's practitioners before they come up to Reception and see the children in their learning setting. Parents will also be invited to attend school for a 'Welcome Meeting' where they get the chance to discuss their children and ask any questions they may have. During this welcome meeting, parents will have the opportunity to meet their child's new class teacher and have a tour of the EYFS setting.

Children attend introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They are offered two visits during the Summer Term.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and children on several occasions to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals, in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. These discussions and meetings help the Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. It also provides the staff a chance to build a rapport with their new class. The children will also have numerous opportunities to visit Year 1 and their new classroom setting to ensure the transition from Reception to KS1 is a gradual process for the children. During the Summer Term Reception staff will encourage children to become more independent learners to prepare them for Year 1. The children's first term in Year 1 will still incorporate aspects from their Reception setting to make transition as easy as possible for our children.

Admissions Policy

There is an admissions policy, which is followed by all children admitted to the school. This can be found in the School Handbook. A Pre-Nursery booklet is given to all parents who show an interest in their child attending any school within the academy.

Induction to Little Farmers 2 year old Provision (Lodge Farm)

Little Farmers 2-Year-old provision will follow the same guidelines as set out in the EYFS policy for Nursery and Reception classes within Shine Academies. Additional information can be found below.

Home Visits and Inductions

All children wishing to attend Little Farmers will receive a home visit from staff. This will allow staff to learn vital information regarding children's needs and spend time getting to know children and parents before they begin. Inductions will take place after home visits and children will be supported through their transition into Little Farmers.

Admissions

Admission information can be obtained through Lodge Farm school office. Parents will be provided with a handbook when applications have been completed.

Curriculum

Little Farmers will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum as outlined above. For 2-year olds we focus on the Prime Areas of learning in order to lay the foundations for future learning. The Specific areas will run through a wide variety of activities preparing them for their advancement through school. Little Farmers progress will be recorded using the Early Years Foundation stage profile. This will follow them throughout their time within the Foundation Stage. All children's development will be assessed using a 2 -year progress check within 2-4 weeks of entering nursery.

Clothing

Children should attend Little Farmers in their own clothes. Parents are advised that children will explore a range of activities as part of the EYFS curriculum including: painting, sand, water and messy play. Clothing should be suitable for these activities. Parents are also asked to send in extra clothing every day, should children require changing.

Appropriate clothing should be sent dependent on weather. Children will require winter coats, hats, mittens and wellies for outdoor use. During summer children should be provided with summer hats and sun cream. Staff will apply sun cream as needed, permissions for sun cream application will be signed within admissions application.

Toileting

Children should attend Little Farmers in clean nappies ready for their session. As sessions are 3 hours children will NOT be changed unless needed. Staff will assess changing needs by monitoring nappies. Parents must provide nappies and wipes before children attend. These will remain at Nursery and will be kept in labelled boxes ready for use as needed.

Further details on nappy changing can be found within Lodge Farm Intimate Care policy.

Induction to Nursery (Lodge and Villiers)

All parents of children who have been offered a place in Nursery are informed in writing as soon as possible. Parents and children are then invited into school to attend an introductory meeting. During this session parents are given the opportunity to meet staff and set up home visits. Pre-nursery visits are arranged for all children who are due to attend Nursery.

Induction to Reception (All schools)

All parents of children who have been offered a full-time place are informed in writing by the L.A as soon as possible. Parents and children are then invited into school to attend an introductory meeting with the Head Teacher, Early Years Co-ordinator, School Nurse and the Pastoral team. A presentation will take place and staff will be available to answer any questions and to assist parents with the completion of any necessary paperwork. The following areas are highlighted:

- Curriculum
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Uniform
- Discipline
- Procedures and Routines
- Partnership with parents
- Medical procedures and advice

30 hours Provision

From January 2020 Lodge Farm will be offering 30 hours. All parents will sign a contract agreeing to terms. Children must attend at least two sessions per week.

To be eligible parents must be in work and earning at least £120 per week and no more than £10,000 per year.

Evaluation and Review

This is an ongoing process. The Executive Head teacher, Head teacher's, Senior Leadership Teams and EYFS Leaders will be involved in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Foundation curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Trust EYFS lead.

