



# Woodhall Primary School

## Unity Schools Partnership

### Early Years Policy

**“Around here, we don’t look backwards for very long....we keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things because we’re curious....and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths”**

**Walt Disney**

The research is clear: a child’s early education lasts a lifetime. An excellent early education is the foundation for later success. At Unity Schools Partnership we provide a high quality education to give every child the best possible start and we are aspirational for **ALL** pupils.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) across Unity Schools Partnership.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the individual academy EYFS settings, including both teaching and non-teaching staff. It is the responsibility of the SLT to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

#### **Aims**

Unity EYFS settings strive to provide:

**Quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;

**A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;

**Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and carers;

**Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

**Confident, motivated and happy learners**, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.

#### **Principles**

**“Think and wonder, wonder and think”**      **Dr Seuss**

Within Early Years education we offer our children learning that is based on the following principles:

- Build on what each child already knows and can do;
- Inclusivity to all groups of learners and individuals, taking into account children's backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, EAL and SEND;
- Provide a rich and stimulating environment, including challenging, exciting and imaginative indoor and outdoor learning environments;
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for independent learning, adult directed learning, adult-led learning and child-initiated learning;
- Encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning;
- Provide a positive, supportive environment where children feel safe and secure to learn;
- Develop positive attitudes towards learning from an early age;
- Provide knowledge based on the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of learning;
- Provide an extensive range of opportunities for assessment in well thought out and detailed planning;

### **Admissions**

**Nursery** - Application forms for admissions are available from each Academy office.

**Reception** - Parents of children who require a Reception place will apply online to their Local Authority. Please see the school admissions department of your home local authority, the academy website and/or academy Admission Policy for details. All prospective parents are invited to visit the academies and are taken on an informal tour.

### **Legislation**

#### **Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Teaching in the EYFS in each Unity Schools Partnership setting is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document, 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2017).

### **Curriculum**

**"You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so...get on your way!"**

**Dr Seuss**

#### **Areas of Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in Unity Schools Partnership 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.

**These three prime areas, are:**

**Communication and language**

**Physical development**

**Personal, social and emotional development**

Settings also support children in **four specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the world**

**Expressive arts and design**

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

**Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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.

**The Leuven scales are used to measure children's emotional well-being and involvement to assess learning, development and progress of children.**

### **Teaching & Learning**

***"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn"***

***Benjamin Franklin***

Practitioners will consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and will use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. Practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

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

There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. At Unity Schools Partnership we emphasise rigour and structure in all activities to ensure meaningful educational and developmental outcomes for every child. This is reflected in our Unity Schools Partnership **Minimum Expectations** and **Termly Milestones**. In Unity Schools Partnership Reception classes, daily teaching of literacy and maths is from the outset and is a key part of our curriculum.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults.

Children have daily access to well-planned stimulating learning environments, indoors and outdoors. These environments give children opportunities to be active and physical and also quiet and reflective. Forest Schools is a philosophy close to our hearts, boasting extensive facilities for all children. There will be periods of time regularly in the Summer term when children will sit and learn independently at a table with up to 5 other children. By the end of the Summer term, all children would have trialed a full Maths Mastery lesson.

Both the 'Success for All' and the 'Maths Mastery' curriculums are used to provide clear structure and progression within teaching and learning. These also provide a consistency of approach with both Key Stage One and later, Key Stage Two.

Current research and trends are suitably utilised to support and enrich the curriculum, initiatives such as 'The Curiosity Approach', 'Deconstructed Role Plays', 'Loose Parts' and to a fuller extent, 'Forest Schools'.

### **Assessment**

In accordance with all schools nationally, each child will complete a reception baseline assessment during their first half term in reception. It is a task based, age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language and is completed by reception staff. The assessment takes approximately twenty minutes and is delivered in English. Staff may also complete their own assessments using other resources, for example speaking and listening assessments such as Wellcomm and NELI.

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are involved in making daily observations and assessments throughout the Reception year; they include child-initiated tasks and teacher-led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs are examples of ways staff will collect information. Evidence is compiled and tracked on EExAT.

In the Summer term of Reception, the EYFS Profile will be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well- rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents/carers and any other adults whom the teacher, parent/carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development will be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners will indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development ('Expected') or are working towards the expected levels ('Emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile. Reception staff will moderate children to ensure consistency with the judgements. They will also assess whether any children are reaching higher levels ('Exceeding') expectations and are therefore working towards the Year 1 curriculum.

Year 1 teachers will be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These will inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Academies will share the results of the profile with parents and carers and explain when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it.

The Profile will be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities will be made as appropriate. Children will have differing levels of skills and abilities across the Profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development, to inform plans for future activities and to identify any additional support needs.

Unity Schools Partnership academies complete a Reception Phonics Screening in the Summer term with data being passed onto Year 1.

### **Transition to Nursery**

**“It’s about the journey as much as the outcome”                      Anon**

We understand that starting nursery is an exciting time for children, but it can also be a challenging and anxious time for both children and their parents/carers. At Unity Schools Partnership we are committed to putting the needs of the child first whilst working with each other, with parents/carers and with other professionals to make transitions as smooth as possible for all concerned.

We provide “settling in sessions” for children before their start date. This could be a “stay and play” session where the parent/carer would stay with their child so that they become familiar with the environment, the routines and the members of staff. This is also a good time to get to know their child’s key person and go over any specific needs, basic home routines, sleep time, likes/dislikes etc.

After a couple of settling in sessions staff would recommend leaving the child in the setting, and inviting the parent / carer to stay on the premises if appropriate. Parents are regularly offered the opportunity to ask any questions they may have during the transition process.

An up to date progress report on the child will be completed by the child’s key person and handed over to the Reception staff prior to the child moving over. This information will contain a child’s individual routine, likes, dislikes, any additional needs, the child’s developmental goals and next steps.

### **Induction/Transition to Reception**

A Parent information meeting is held in the Summer for parents of the prospective Reception group. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to the school, to disseminate important information about routines and the curriculum, to encourage discussion and to emphasize the vital importance of home-school co-operation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all of our children. [TBC]

Several events (school specific) take place during the second half of the summer term prior to the child's admission in September; these include activities such as ‘stay and play’ settling sessions.

Links will be made with the pre-school settings and where practicable the class teacher will make a visit in July. Unity Schools Partnership academies may offer home visits if required, especially if there are special circumstances surrounding a particular child.

### **Transition to Year 1**

Towards the end of the Reception year, the teachers will begin to prepare the children for Year 1.

We do this in all Unity Schools Partnership academies by:

- Gradually moving the timetable in the Summer term to one more similar to that of Year 1 for seamless transition.
- Allowing the children to spend time in the Year 1 classrooms with Year 1 staff – more frequently for those children with special needs.
- Scheduling a ‘Meet the Teacher’ day, when all classes will spend part of the day with their new teacher in their new classroom.
- Presenting to parents the expectations for a child in Year 1, the differences in timetable, homework and learning.
- Allowing time for the teachers of the existing classes to ‘handover’ to the Year 1 teachers, giving information on family background, learning styles, friendship groups, academic ability, progress achieved through the year etc.
- Ensuring we have an open-door policy for any concerns the parents and/or children may have.

### Inclusion

**“Every child deserves a champion-an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can be”**

**Rita Pierson**

In Unity Schools Partnership we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child’s special educational need(s), disability, gender or ethnicity. Consequently, we aim to be fully inclusive schools - as described in USP’s Equality Policy. We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in order to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's communication needs, any disability and their range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. This is outlined in school Accessibility Plans, which is an annually revised document outlining how each school intends to meet the needs for all children to access learning.

### Parents

**“Together may we give our children the roots to grow and the wings to fly”**

**Anon**

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their children. We therefore recognise their role by:

- Teacher visits to children’s nurseries prior to them starting school;
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through an open-door policy and through Parent/Teacher meetings;
- Sending home weekly Dojo’s entailing the curriculum content and intended learning for that week and posting provocations on Instagram.
- Encouraging them to support their child in home learning activities, ‘Watch me/Catch me’;
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;

- Offering a range of activities supported by each school's PTA, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and home;
- Providing various activities that involve parents and carers such as inviting them to curriculum meetings and share sessions, as well as SEND meetings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking in class and how they can continue to work with their child at home;
- Holding regular parents evenings, discussing individual next steps and progress;
- Sharing progress at school through photographs and observations including the Learning Journey Wall in Reception and Floor Books in Nursery;
- Sending home an annual written report to parents/carers on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

### **Safeguarding/Welfare of Pupils**

The class teacher is responsible for the pastoral care of each child as well as the academic side of school life.

Named members of each school's Early Years teaching team are qualified in Paediatric First Aid.

Medication will be kept well out of reach of pupils and administered in accordance with the Medicines in School Policy.

A school behaviour policy is in place and followed on entry to Early Years.

All safeguarding and child protection concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and procedures followed in accordance with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored and will be reviewed b-annually.

**Date of Policy: February 2021**

**Date to be reviewed: February 2023**