



YCAT

Yorkshire Collaborative
Academy Trust

EYFS POLICY

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|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
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| School Level Appendix attached: | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Policy to be published on the YCAT website: | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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This Policy was adopted by

**Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust
on 10/10/2017**

Chair of Trustees: Mr Ian Moore	
Signature:	 IAN MOORE
Frequency of review:	3 years
To be reviewed by:	SILG
Date of next review:	October 2020

REVIEW RECORD

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review

Name :		Signature:	
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on behalf of YCAT Full Board

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Name :		Signature:	
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on behalf of YCAT Full Board

Introduction

Early Years Education forms the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all areas of learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for YCAT. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at each Trust school.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage in YCAT

We believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners nurturing, educating and caring for them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at schools within YCAT is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory documents- Early Years Outcomes- alongside the non-statutory guidance 'Development Matters'. The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Practitioners must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning.

The characteristics of effective learning skills are developed through child initiated play. At YCAT, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and prepares the children for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1 and that the children are prepared for a smooth transition ensuring that they are 'Primary ready'.

Characteristics of Effective Learners

At YCAT we recognise that young children learn best through when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through purposeful play. We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development underpinning all areas of learning are the characteristics of effective learners. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS settings in YCAT schools, practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts.

Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

Assessment and Record Keeping

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS settings within YCAT. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data. The main EYFS assessment method is through 3 practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of

individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, notes, whole class notes and evaluations, photographs, annotated examples of children's work, videos and pupil voice). All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS settings include engaging alongside children in their play, open ended questioning, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

Baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first few weeks upon entering the setting and the schools' tracker systems are updated and moderated by the staff using the development matters age related bands. Judgments made on children's development on the tracker are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

Planning, Development Matters and the Early Years Outcomes provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all areas of learning and effective learning skills are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning is created with all Early Years practitioners involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and outdoors. Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

Parents as Partners

In YCAT schools, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators.

Through termly arranged 'share a session' events, parent consultation evenings, parent and child questionnaires, 'Wow diaries', Happy notes, informal chats at the beginning and end of the day or telephone conversations with parents, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes and achievements). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening and their child's progress in the setting through each school's website, termly reports, parent consultation evenings, regular newsletters, reading records, parent's notice board and informal discussions at the beginning and end of the day. This also provides opportunities to share suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Newsletters are also sent home on a half-termly basis.

Parents are invited to attend parent and teacher consultation meetings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another meeting takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress and a further open evening will take place in the Summer Term to enable parents to meet any new staff, become familiar with other areas in the school and provides an opportunity to ask any further questions or request information.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include Learning Journeys, individual work books, 'Big books', fund raising events, out of school visits where parents may be invited to attend, end of year reports and celebrations or events where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as coffee mornings, festivities or concerts.

Admissions and Induction

YCAT schools provide up to 30 hours free nursery provision across each week. In addition further sessions are offered for an hourly rate. Children who stay for lunch are requested to provide their own packed lunches. All new children are invited to attend 'taster' sessions to meet staff, children and familiarise themselves with the EYFS environment. Children's Centre 'Stay and play' sessions continue throughout the year before they attend our EYFS, although these are now 'off-site'.

Full-time Early Years education is offered in the Reception Year. Reception is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. Before they start in the setting, all children are offered visits during the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits are for the children to meet their new teachers and start to become familiar with the EYFS class environment. The aim of these visits is also to support teachers in developing their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to the school as smooth as possible.

In the summer term parents and children are invited into school to meet the setting's practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chats and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

From September Reception class children attend the setting full-time. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school. (See Admissions Policy for more information).

Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at YCAT have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS settings within YCAT.