Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Review	
Review Schedule	Annually
Implementation Date	Autumn 2026
Date of Next Review	Autumn 2027

Victorious Academies Trust

Success in education

Aldwyn Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow."

Development Matters Sept 2020

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Aldwyn School focuses on the distinct needs of children aged 3 to the end of the Reception Year in primary school. In our EYFS, children are cared for and provided with a stimulating and challenging environment to try to give them the best possible start to their education. In partnership with their family and carers, we enable them to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

This policy links with the Every Child Matters agenda, in that every child has a right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. In our school, children join us from three years of age. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The EYFS is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later learning. The Early Years Framework set out through the Early Learning Goals what is expected of most children by the end of the EYFS.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do; developing self-esteem, confidence, social skills and independence
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment that enables the development of positive attitudes to learning, trust, curiosity and friendships
- It enables children to make an effective transition from home to school.

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following four guided themes, which are broken down into four commitments:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

Implementation

Teaching and learning style

Teaching and learning in the early years curriculum is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. We plan as a team, organising a range of experiences and opportunities based on events, which give children chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the learning environment. We organise the curriculum into areas of Continuous Provision, which are enhanced by mini topics and are linked to all seven areas of learning.

Classroom organisation

Our Foundation Stage Unit consists of a Nursey and Reception. The classrooms are organised into areas of continuous provision where children can develop ownership and independence and can engage in a wide range of practical tasks

and activities; developing and practising skills and concepts. We provide a balance between self-direction; continuous provision and adult directed learning, building on children's previous experiences. EYFS children have access to a large toilet and are encouraged to use the facilities independently over time.

Our outdoor environments are used as an extension of our learning environment. Here children can develop gross motor skills and coordination through the use of a range of equipment and physical activities, develop attitudes and disposition through learning to care for living things and each other, and observe and investigate to find out about the natural world. As some children prefer to learn outside, we also provide resources to promote number, reading and writing opportunities.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that Teachers and Teaching Assistants have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching; we start from the child and his/her needs and plan the learning linked to our assessments and observations.
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication; we believe that children learn through active, handson experiences both inside and outside the classroom.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management; the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through 'Assessment for Learning' of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The clear aims and success criteria for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate our planning and improve what we do;
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage using the Performance Management system to inform this.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We also build in structures to the day for children that change during the school year as we move towards the needs of the Literacy and Numeracy sessions and the smooth transition from Nursery to Reception and from Reception to Year 1.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Learning through play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum. The children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of resources. Through play, children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school, we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion). In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage at Aldwyn reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning goals that cover the knowledge, skills and understanding which the children should acquire by the end of the Reception year, the educational programmes covering the matters, skills and processes taught and finally the assessment arrangements to ascertain their achievements. The seven areas of learning are:

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and emotional development

Specific Areas

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

The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others; they are equally important and depend upon each other to support a rounded approach to the development of each child. The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives in the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. The Early Learning Goals and the objectives in the EYFS practise guidance provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage at Aldwyn. We use the Read Write Inc. program to plan daily phonic lessons. Our medium term planning is based on mini topics that give opportunity to incorporate our children's interests and needs as well as covering seasonal topics and celebrations. Our school values are woven through our curriculum as a golden thread. Foundation stage staff work closely, daily sharing relevant information and observations informally. We have a weekly team-planning meeting where we reflect upon learning, decide next steps and plan activities for the following week.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is ongoing and is an integral part of the learning and development process. This involves all practitioners using Tapestry, making systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. This can be in the form of an annotated piece of work, or photograph or a jotted note or detailed script of what is observed, including any conversation between children or child and adult where appropriate. We also receive information from parents/carers. We regularly send home requests for information in order to build a better picture of each child's development. Each term the child's' teachers reflects and summarises achievements and sets targets for the child to work towards before sharing progress with parents / carers at Parent Consultations.

Baseline assessments are completed on entry to the setting. These are updated termly and show the progression of each child's individual development. Observations and evidence is marked against the Development Matters statements, which are then used to track progression and inform future planning. Phonics tracking is in place to identify where each child is within their phonic development. Concepts about print assessments are tracked to aid guided and shared reading groups.

Foundation stage profiles are completed for each child towards the end of the Reception Year. This is a way of summing up each child's progress at the end of the foundation stage. The profile is based on our ongoing observations and assessments in all seven areas of learning in the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Once the scores are completed, they are sent to the LEA as required. The evidence in Tapestry is moderated regularly by the Foundation Stage staff at Aldwyn. Parents are informed of their child's scores and achievements at Parent consultations. Data from the profiles will be used to inform the Year 1 teacher about each child's progress and learning needs. Targets are set for the transfer to Year 1 and are shared with both new staff and parents.

Parents receive an annual report that gives comments on their child's progress. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

Induction / Parental involvement

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We also want to ensure a smooth transition from home to school and allow parents to ask any questions they may have about starting school. We do this through:

- Inviting new children into school prior to the child starting in the Foundation Unit.
- Providing school brochures and parent booklets along with other relevant information about school including Wrap around care and Breakfast Club.
- An introduction visit is arranged where children and parents come into our setting and spend time with their child exploring the environment and meeting their teachers.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts their Reception year.
- Visits and contact with local nurseries or playgroups where appropriate.
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through Open Evenings and Parental Consultations.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teachers if there are any concerns. If needed a meeting will be set up so that any issues can be resolved quickly.
- An annual progress report at the end of the academic year.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's Reading Record Diary for both Nursery and Reception children. At the start of each half term, a Class Newsletter will be sent home informing parents/carers of the topics and areas of the curriculum to be covered and also any relevant information that may help the parents/carers of the child.
- A Weekly Whole School Newsletter is also sent home, so that parents are informed of whole school issues. These are also available on the school website.
- Stay and Play sessions are run throughout the year intermittently to allow parents to find out how their child learns at school.

Being an Inclusive School, we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best.

Equality

This policy is linked to our Equality Policy, which, in part, states that:

At our school, we will continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, transgender, ethnicity, culture and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability. The school will work actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

This we will do by:

• treating all those within the school community (e.g. pupils, staff, governors, parents and the outside community) as individuals with their own particular abilities, beliefs, challenges attitudes and backgrounds

• maintaining a school ethos which promotes equality, develops understanding and challenges myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices

• encouraging everyone in our school community to gain a positive self-image and high esteem

• having high expectations of everyone involved with the whole school community

• promoting mutual respect and valuing each other's similarities and differences and facing equality issues openly and honestly

• identifying, challenging and removing all practices, procedures and customs which are discriminatory and replacing them with practices that are fair to all

• monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all the above to secure continuous improvement in all that we do

Impact

At Aldwyn, the impact of the EYFS Curriculum is that all children make at least good progress from their individual starting points. All children get the best possible start to their school life and develop the knowledge and skills to reach and exceed their potential as they move through school. They develop and nurture strong, positive attitudes to learning where they become proud and respectful of themselves, others, their school and their community. They are keen and inquisitive learners, who become life-long learners – who love to learn and learn to love.