LDBS Academies Trust

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

DATE APPROVED BY THE LDBS ACADEMIES TRUST	21st May 2025		
NEXT REVIEW DATE (Biennial)	September 2027		
SIGNED HEADTEACHER	Lisa Miles	DATE	21/05/2027
SIGNED CHAIR OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE	Jenette Charles	DATE	21/05/2027

Vision Statement

Grounded in faith, growing beyond expectations, serving with love

At LDBS Academies Trust, our vision is inspired by the parable of The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13: 31-32). Every school within our Trust, like the mustard seed, holds the potential to grow beyond expectations. Through careful nurture and high aspirations, we create the right environment for this growth. Just as the mustard seed in the parable becomes a thriving tree where birds perch in the branches, so too will our schools be broad and inclusive places of blessing and belonging, in which pupils and adults alike can flourish.

Grounded in faith, inspired by hope and walking in love, we work together to broaden our horizons, to equip one another for action and to empower all for service. As we grow beyond expectations, we bring the transforming presence of the kingdom of God into our communities.

In our school we demonstrate how we support this vision through our values which are justice, trust, humility, reverence, peace, thankfulness, endurance, wisdom, creation, service, koinonia, friendship, forgiveness, compassion and hope, and summed up in the following statement *"We aim to provide a caring, stable and intellectually stimulating environment where all children are valued, nurtured and empowered to develop their individual potential, flourish in their learning, and contribute positively to their community through our Christian values."*

We live out our values and vision through our key policies e.g. The behaviour policy is supported through the values described in the rewards and sanctions section of the policy demonstrating the importance of dignity and forgiveness.

The school admissions policy decided by the Local Academy Committee shows our inclusivity and the importance we place on service to our local community.

The breadth of the curriculum and the creative projects which we enjoy are key to providing opportunities for children to experience life in 'all its fullness', so that alongside learning and wisdom they also experience joy and delight in learning.

Care for the individual and their needs is crucial and the school's policies regarding inclusion and SEND are constant reminders that each of us is known to God and our names are 'inscribed on the palms of His hands'.

The HR policies are common in all Trust schools and are created to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and with dignity. All HR policies have been scrutinised by the various unions to ensure that they contain acceptable procedures.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of the "Early Years". For the purpose of this policy "Early Years" refers to children in their first years at school (Nursery and Reception).

Aims:

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 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

Legislation:

- This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2024.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Children need:

- Adults who, while sensitive to their differing needs, abilities, backgrounds and previous experiences, will teach, support, care and offer opportunities for each child to develop their full potential.
- Adults who will respect them, and value their ideas and opinions.
- A challenging, diverse and progressive curriculum offering ample opportunity to practise and develop skills and learning. There must also be opportunities for the development of personal qualities and social skills.
- Rich and positive learning experiences, with plenty of first-hand experience, varied to include all learning styles and including regular opportunity to explore and learn through practical and play activities.
- A balance of approaches – child/adult led; inside and outside; experiencing and learning from other sources.
- The chance to make decisions and to take responsibility –for both their learning and their behaviour. This includes the chance to make mistakes in a forgiving environment and to realise that making mistakes is itself a learning experience.

The Curriculum:

The curriculum is based on the educational programmes in the Statutory Framework. These outline the experiences and activities all children should be exposed to. Settings will refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage ('EYFS') guidance from the DfE effective from September 2025. It sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to the age of five. The updated versions of 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to Five' are the non-statutory curriculum guidance documents for the EYFS framework which can be used alongside to help give an overall view of how children develop and learn. The curriculum should be shaped for the context of each school and meet the individual needs of the learners. Areas of learning and development consist of 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas.

Progress check at age two:
Children's progress will be reviewed between the ages of two and three and a written summary provided to parents/carers.

Play and teaching:
Providers are responsible for ongoing judgments about the balance between play and teaching, between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults.

English as an additional language:
Providers must take reasonable steps to support children, including the assessment of children's skills in English.

Safeguarding and welfare requirements:

Child protection: EYFS guidance gives examples of adult's behaviour which might be signs of abuse and neglect. EYFS now requires that safeguarding policies and procedures must cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting

Staff qualifications, training, support and skills: staff must have opportunities for coaching and training, support, teamwork. Staff: child ratios must be maintained as required by DfE.

Premises: safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment must be monitored. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Supervision: Schools must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met. Schools must inform parents and/or carers about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions. Children must usually be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing. Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.

Children aged two:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every five children
- at least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification
- at least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification

Exception to usual ratios:

when childminders are caring for siblings, or
when caring for their own child, or
to maintain continuity of care, or
if children aged three to five only attend the childminding setting before and/or after a normal school day, and/or during school holidays, they may be cared for at the same time as three other young children.

In **all circumstances**, the total number of children under the age of eight being cared for must not exceed six per adult.

The EYFS seeks 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 planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and / or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. The EYFS principles guide the work of all practitioners.

Principles and Practice:
Four guiding principles shape practice in our EYFS settings:

- a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient capable, confident and self-assured.
- Child learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs
- **learning and development**

There are 3 prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

There are 4 specific areas through which the 3 prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Communication and Language is at the forefront of all EYFS settings and runs through all areas of the curriculum. Interactions, conversations and sensitive questioning promotes language rich environments.

The three characteristics of effective learning: active learning, playing and exploring and creating and thinking critically are a pivotal part of the EYFS curriculum. They underpin the development matters. They focus on how children learn and inform provision as much as what they learn.

The Early Learning Goals

For each goal, teachers will determine whether children are meeting expected levels, or are below (emerging).

The prime areas

Communication and language:

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

Physical development:

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

The specific areas

Literacy:

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Mathematics:

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

Understanding the world:

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

Expressive arts and design:

- Creating with Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

Practitioners working with the youngest children should ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

Assessment on entry, during and at the end of the EYFS:

Entry: Teachers and support staff assess children as they start nursery to establish each child's starting point. These baseline assessments are used to help staff plan effective learning opportunities for children. Staff will continue formative, ongoing assessments throughout the year. Any barriers / difficulties in accessing the nursery curriculum will quickly be identified and discussions with parents and if necessary relevant professionals will be arranged so that all children including those with EHCP's and with special needs have tailored support.

In accordance with DFE expectations, the National Baseline will be administered from September 2021in all reception classes. Each child will be assessed within the first six weeks of joining reception, regardless of when they join the class to identify if the child is at national average attainment (unless they have been assessed at a previous setting or disapplied). Teachers will undertake additional baseline assessments through observation of the areas of learning not assessed in the national baseline to determine readiness for reception.

Ongoing: Ongoing assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not necessarily be required to prove this through the collection of physical evidence. However, staff will be involved in observations and assessments throughout the Early Years; this will include child-initiated

tasks and teacher-led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs will be recorded in each child's record. Professional judgement / data will be entered electronically into the school's tracking systems.

Final: The EYFS Profile will be completed at the end of the Reception year and it will be passed on to the Year 1 teacher for use in Year 1. Some Reception children will begin to work at 'greater depth' when it is judged appropriate for them. (Children who do not achieve all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year continue to work towards them in Year 1.) The observations, assessments and 'scale point data' form the basis of individual reports to parents in Term 6. All attainment data is passed to the Year 1 teacher.

Organisation:

The curriculum will be planned, overseen and delivered by the Early Years Leader/Teacher and an experienced Teaching Assistant with specific early years training and experience. Parent helpers may also support Early Years children.

Key person:

The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

At school, the key person is the Early Years class teacher. Their role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. They will, of course, work in close partnership with the class teaching assistant.

A key person is:

- A named member of staff who has more contact than others with the child.
- Someone to build relationships with the child and parents.
- Someone who helps the child become familiar with the provision.
- Someone who meets children's individual needs and care needs.
- Someone who responds sensitively to children's feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- The person who acts as a point of contact with parents.

Links with other pre-school providers:

The school should, as far as possible, maintain a good relationship with any local preschool groups.

Home-School links:

We endeavour to develop a close relationship with parents; one that supports and encourages all children to achieve their full potential. We consider Parents to be the child's first and most enduring educators, therefore working in partnership is central to EYFS. Research indicates that effective relationships between parents and educators can have long lasting and beneficial effects on children's learning and well-being. Partnership characterized by two -way

communication where parents and practitioners listen and value each other's views and support in achieving the best outcomes for the child. Schools may wish, with parental agreement, to use a range of observation and recording apps to help parents be more engaged with their child's learning.
A parent information evening should be held for prospective parents. The purpose of this meeting is, in part, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion, and to emphasize the vital importance of home-school cooperation and mutual support. Support from parents is required for homework tasks based on early literacy and numeracy. Settings should give a high regard to reading and encourage families to focus on this at home. Staff will liaise with parents and carers whose children require additional home learning support for other specific areas. They are also encouraged to maintain a dialogue with the teacher. Literature to support the parental role in early learning should be provided, workshops for parents to find out how the school teaches phonics, number skills, etc.

Induction and entry to school:

Parents of new children to be invited to a meeting when admission arrangements, visits, parent meetings; uniforms, etc. are discussed. The children are invited in during the term before they join the school for induction sessions.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognize that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We follow up on absences promptly. If a child is absent for a prolonged time or without notice, we must attempt to contact the child's parents/carers, or emergency contacts

We also try to hold more than 2 emergency contact numbers for each child, where possible

We will appoint a DSL to oversee the safeguarding of children

Our practitioners are trained in safeguarding policies, and are supported and confident in applying them in line with the new criteria (annex C of the updated EYFS framework)

The DSL provides ongoing support, advice and guidance to all our practitioners and must attend a training course, consistent with the new criteria (annex C of the updated framework). The training is be renewed every 2 years

While children are eating:

- There should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid PFA certificate
- They should be seated safely in appropriate chairs
- They must be within sight and earshot of a member of staff

Before admitting a child into the setting, we must get information on special dietary needs, preferences, allergies and health requirements. This must be shared with all staff involved in food preparation and handling

Schools must regularly consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for managing known allergies/intolerances with health professionals, keep this information up to date and share it with all staff
- Discuss the child's progress with solid foods

Schools must prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking – in the event of a choking incident, the school should record details and make parents/carers aware
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs

Staffing

Guidance for Early Years Foundation Stage ('EYFS') Staffing

This guidance is based on the Department for Education's ('DfE's') Statutory framework for the early years' foundation stage ('the Framework').

Qualifications

The Early Years Class must be led by a person who is a qualified teacher with the appropriate Early Years ('EY') training and experience.

Induction

All staff should receive induction training detailing their roles and responsibilities, information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety issues.

Professional training

There should be appropriate arrangements in place to allow staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.
Students and trainee staff must hold a valid and current PFA qualification in order to be included in staff: child ratios. The school is responsible for selecting a competent training provider to deliver the PFA training. The DfE recommends members of trade bodies with approved monitoring schemes, Voluntary Aid Societies and those working under Ofqual awarding organisations

Supervision

The Early Years classroom must ensure that supervision of staff is effective and provides support, coaching and training for practitioners and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues. Supervision should provide opportunities to discuss any issues (particularly concerning children's development or well-being, including child protection concerns), identify solutions to address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve the personal effectiveness of practitioners.

Staff to child ratios

Children must be at all times in sight and hearing of staff. When a child has particular needs, the parent must be consulted on how this requirement can be met and the minimum ratio for the age may need to change.

For children aged under two:
(1) There must be at least one member of staff for every three children;
(2) At least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification, and must be suitably experienced in working with children under two;
(3) At least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification; and
(4) At least half of all staff must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies.

For **children aged two**:
(1) There must be at least one member of staff for every four children;
(2) At least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification; and
(3) At least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification.

For **children aged three and four**, in an Early Years Class where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, or equivalent, as per the guidance in the Framework:
(1) There must be at least one member of staff for every thirteen children;
(2) At least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification; and
(3) At least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification.

For **children aged three and four**, in an Early Years Class without a person with Qualified Teacher Status, or equivalent, as per the guidance in the Framework:
(1) There must be at least one member of staff for every eight children;
(2) At least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification; and
(3) At least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification.

For children in Reception class (**four and five year olds**):
(1) There must be at least one member of staff for every thirty children; and
(2) At least one member of staff must hold be a qualified teacher.

For **extended day care and school holidays for three-to-five-year-old children**, outside of the school day:
(1) There must be at least one member of staff for every eight children;
(2) At least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification; and
(3) At least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification.

Absolute requirements

Every child must have a key worker in order to ensure that the child's care is tailored to meet their needs and that the child can quickly settle into the nursery. The key worker should build a strong professional relationship with the parents / carers of the child and if necessary help the parents find additional specialist support.

There must be at least one member of staff in each Early Years Class who holds a valid and in-date paediatric first aid training certificate, who is on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany the children on outings. The certificate must be for a fill course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the Framework. The certificate should be on display or made available to parents.

No member of staff may work with children who is under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

Staff taking medicine must have their medicine locked away while on premises. Such staff may only be able to work with children if their doctor confirms that their treatment will not affect their judgement or ability to care properly for children.

Staff qualifications, identity checks and vetting procedures must be in compliance with government legislation and regulation and recorded at the school, including criminal records check reference number, the date it was obtained, and signed off by the person who checked it.

If someone is dismissed or chooses to leave because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk, they must be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act.

Staff cannot be employed if they are disqualified from working with children and they may also be disqualified because they live in the same house as someone who is unsuitable.

We are required to obtain references before employing new members of staff.