

***Wyvern Academy***

*A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. No 8123602*

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Review of Policy: November 2020**

**Members of staff responsible: Head of Early Years**

**Policy History: Ratified**

**Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process**

**People involved: Early Years Teacher**

**T&L Committee**

Signed by Chair of Trustees: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11th November 2020

Date for Review: Summer 2021

**Wyvern Academy Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Contents

Introduction

* Mission statement
* Vision

Aims and objectives

Teaching and learning

* Play
* Independent learning

Curriculum- The Early Years Developmental Matters

* The prime areas of learning
* The specific areas of learning.

ICT

Early Years Foundation Stage Planning

Assessment, recording and reporting progress.

Progress

Specialist provision

Inclusion

Partnerships with parents

Safeguarding

(Therapist’s contributions to the learning journey, visual impairment and any additional training needs for staff)

**Introduction**

Wyvern Academy is a specialist school, providing highly individualised education for up to 85 pupils aged 2 - 19 years with complex learning difficulties, including Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

The majority of pupils educated at Wyvern Academy have substantial global developmental delay, emergent communication skills and are highly dependent. Some may have additional disabilities such as cerebral palsy, sensory impairment, autism and/or complex needs including challenging behaviour.

Wyvern’s mission statement is ‘To provide a learning community which gives every young person the opportunity to develop their full potential in learning through our knowledge, care, commitment, friendship and the appreciation of every individual achievement.’

The school’s vision is to be ‘**more than just a school’,**committed to making a difference to the lives of young people and their families by valuing and respecting everyone as individuals and as part of an inclusive society.

**The Early Years**

Children enter the early years when they have an ‘Education Health Care Plan’. We take children from the age of 2 years 9 months and they remain with us until they are 6 years old. All the children follow the Early Years curriculum, more specifically the Derbyshire small steps. We help them settle into the school environment, school routines and we assess their individual learning needs. We use a total communication system and work very closely with various health professionals, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and sensory impairment support who give us advice and individual therapy plans which are then incorporated into our day. All planning is based around the ‘Early Years Developmental Matters’ statutory guidance (2020).

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five, and describes the curriculum used in the early years’ class. It states that-

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and the child’s experiences between birth and five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’(EYFS Statutory framework 2017)

**Aims**

In the early years at Wyvern our aim is for all of our pupils to develop a positive foundation for lifelong learning. We achieve this by supporting the four guiding principles in the EYFS statutory framework , as follows;

1. **Unique learners-** every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.
2. **Positive relationships –** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships with their family and key workers.
3. **Enabling environments -** Children learn and develop well when the experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and /or carers.
4. **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates,** this is particularly true at Wyvern where we provide quality and consistency for all children, so that every child makes at least good progress.

To deliver the principles we will:

* Provide a safe and secure learning environment for the children where individual needs are met.
* Provide a secure foundation, by planning fun and practical learning opportunities based around the needs and interests of each individual.
* Promote a safe, challenging, rich and varied learning environment both indoors and outdoors.
* Promote independence skills; also promote basic self help and self care skills.
* Provide each child with an appropriate communication system that will work for them as they progress through the school.
* Ensure all seven areas of learning and development, as detailed in the early years Foundation Stage, are given appropriate coverage, providing an appropriate balance between adult led and child led activities, and that planning is based on observations of the children, their interests and their next steps in learning.
* Recognises that parents/ carers are partners in their child’s learning.
* Ensure that all children have an equal opportunity, so that every child is supported and included.
* Ensure that learning through play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

**Teaching and Learning.**

All teaching and learning is based on a comprehensive knowledge of the early years. Priority is given to the three prime areas of learning and development. These are:

* Personal, social and emotional skills (including behavioural, sensory and social skills)
* Physical development
* Communication and language (using a total communication approach whenever possible- symbols, PECS, visual clues and sign along)

Planning opportunities build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests to develop self esteem and confidence, whilst monitoring their progress and taking action to support and extend where necessary. Children’s learning will also be supported by an individual learning profile which incorporates their individual education plan with the early year’s characteristics of learning. These are:

* **Playing and exploring**- we encourage children to engage in investigating and experiencing things and to ‘have a go’.
* **Active learning**- We motivate children to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
* **Creating and thinking critically**- we encourage children to have and develop their own ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Due to the individual needs of the children we have an area for circle time and there is a table for group activities. Some of the children follow schedules which help them understand what is happening next. There are also matching cards around the room for various activities e.g. snack, play, choose, book etc. We also have a soft sensory area where the children can sit quietly, relax, sleep or follow a therapy programme.

**Play**

Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A welcoming, accessible and inclusive play provision is provided both indoors and outdoors where children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

Play is essential for physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development. Through play experiences children learn knowledge, skills and personal development, self confidence, understanding of self as an individual, ability to make choices, coping with disputes and overcoming fears.

**Independent learning**

We encourage children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop independent self help skills depending on their level of ability. The more able children will be given less prompts whilst undertaking an activity or they may start to take the register to the office with less help. A child on the autistic spectrum will spend time developing independent skills through the TEACCH principles which will include learning how to use a schedule and being given opportunities to develop learning skills such as matching and posting activities. Play will be child led and will include exploring tactile materials such as rice, oats, water play, cornflour and shaving foam. They will also be encouraged to choose play activities using TOBI’s.( true object based image)

**Curriculum**

The Early Years Curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning, three prime areas and four specific areas.

The prime areas of learning are as follows:

**Personal, social and emotional development.**

This area is very important to the children at Wyvern due to the children’s special needs. This area helps children to form a positive sense of self; form positive relationships with others; develop social skills; learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour and develop confidence in themselves.

**Communication and language**

This area is equally important due to the children’s learning difficulties. Regular support and advice is given by the speech and language therapist and children will receive support from the speech therapy assistant at regular intervals. This area involves children experiencing a rich language environment; developing their listening skills and their confidence and skills to express themselves using their preferred mode of communication in a range of situations. The children will have access to a total communication system which includes use of PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), signing, use of visual clues (objects) and symbols. Derbyshire language and ‘peic d’ (developing communication through parallel play) may also be used as part of play to help children develop their language skills. Children will also be offered choices and they will indicate their choice either by eye pointing, reaching or taking their preferred choice from a choosing board.

**Physical development**

This provides opportunities for children at Wyvern to be active and interactive; to develop their coordination, control and movement and begin to have some understanding of the importance of physical exercise and making healthy food choices. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties will have a Physiotherapy and an Occupational therapy plan that will be followed on a daily basis alongside play based learning. Children with physical difficulties and sensory needs will also benefit from TAC PAC (Tactile Approach to Communication). Some of the children will also access the ‘move’ programme which has been adopted by the Academy to develop the functional skills of children and young people with profound and complex physical disabilities.

**The specific areas of learning.**

**Literacy**

In this area we follow the letters and sounds curriculum, phase 1. This focus’ on exploring musical sounds and listening and joining into action songs and nursery rhymes. We also develop their reading skills by focusing on looking at books, choosing favourite stories and helping them develop an enjoyment of books. Their writing skills are developed through sensory play and mark making using various media.

**Mathematics**

Children have opportunities to develop their counting, understanding and number recognition. They explore shape, space and measures through child led activities. We sing number and action songs using visual clues. We also focus on time through awareness of routines and we explore money through shop role play.

**Understanding of the world.**

This area of the curriculum is very topic based. We will look at ourselves, seasonal celebrations and festivals reflecting our diverse British culture, animals, the environment, people who help us, the seaside and the seasons. We will also go for walks in the local community and visit shops, cafes and children’s farms. Topics will be varied and will depend on the interests of the children. Technology is also selected and used to develop skill depending on the children’s needs and abilities.

**Expressive arts and design.**

This area gives the children at Wyvern an opportunity to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials as well as providing opportunities for them to develop and express their imagination through role play, sensory play, structured play, music, and art and design technology.

Play both indoors and outdoors underpins the curriculum, however, the range of difficulties which our children experience leads us to provide a balance of structured learning and child led play. Our children very often do not have the skills and developmental maturity and cognitive ability to engage in play and exploratory investigations on their own. They need modelling and adult support to make sense of their environments and often need support to manage their own feelings as well as to engage and interact with others.

**ICT**

Various forms of ICT are made available to the children. These include the ipad, touch screen programmes, switch toys and the internet. The ipad is used on a sensory level- the children try and touch the screen to create eye catching patterns and noises or as part of their mathematical and literacy development. They can access various handwriting, phonics, story, number and shape apps. The iPad is used as part of a focused activity and will be incorporated into their individual learning profile.

The children with more complex and physical learning difficulties will be given opportunities to access switches and explore various touch screen programmes. They may need assistance depending on the severity of their condition. Switch work activities are usually an integral part of their therapy programmes.

Cause and effect toys are also available.

**Planning**

Each year a long term plan is developed that includes seasonal activities, celebrations and festivals that reflect our diverse British culture, and various topics that are appropriate to the needs and interests of the children. A medium term plan is then developed that gives a topic overview for the term. Short term plans are developed for more focused activities such as the mathematics focus and the chosen text. Individual targets are set as part of these plans. There is a weekly timetable which focus’ on the routines, focused activities, and play activities both indoor and outside. Each child has an individual learning profile so that each member of staff can help with the child’s individual learning needs and therapy needs.

**Assessment, recording and reporting progress.**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment is made in the following ways, all of which contributes to the child’s individual learning journey and progress in their Mapp targets or pre key stage standards when they enter Y1. Written observations during child led learning that link to targets set on a termly basis relating to the learning age in Derbyshire small steps and to the learning outcomes in individual pupils EHCP’s. These are included in the children’s learning journeys.

* Photographs
* Dated and annotated examples of work
* Comments on planning- next steps.
* Therapy notes detailing therapies covered each day, including the ‘MOVE’ programme.
* Written notes of WOW moments. Again these will be incorporated into the children’s learning journeys.
* Video evidence for target work achievements and baseline assessments at the end of the reception year (MAPP targets or pre key stage standards).
* Ongoing checklists based on the developmental matters framework (0-5 years) for parental information and to identify next steps.
* The children will be base-line assessed at the end of the reception year for MAPP assessments or pre key stage standards. (the children will also be base lined when they enter the early years to show progress)
* Parental contributions of WOW moments outside school. Those are included in the child’s learning journey.
* Therapists are encouraged to make contributions to the learning journeys when they have made an important contribution to the child’s learning or physical needs.
* ‘Assessments against the 17 early learning goals and the three characteristics of learning must be made in the summer term of the academic year when the child reaches age five, in accordance with the statutory framework’ (see EYFS profile handbook for guidance 2020)

Parents’ evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms to discuss progress and to look at the child’s learning journey and profile as it develops. Person centred reviews are also held twice a year to discuss the family’s needs, the child’s progress and any issues that need to be addressed. The Education Health Care Plan learning outcomes are reviewed to check that it still reflects the child’s educational needs and new small steps are set to enable the pupil to achieve the outcomes. There is also an end of year report that focuses on the seven areas of the Early Years Curriculum.

**Progress**

Pupils in the Early Years are base-lined within the first term of entering school. The school uses Derbyshire small steps as the basis for judging progress within this key stage. Targets are set in the 3 prime areas; P.S.E., Physical development and Communication and Language. Expected progress would be to show good progress in three targets for each prime area. If they are only emerging they would only achieve two targets in each prime area and exceeding would be when they achieve four or more targets in each prime area.

Children with autism may not achieve all aspects of the level that they are base- lined in. Hospital admissions, sickness and medical appointments may also affect the child’s overall progress during the year.

**Specialist provision**

As a specialist school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism, we offer a range of specialist strategies to ensure that all children are included.

* Health care plans and emergency protocols to ensure that all the children’s health care needs are provided for.
* A highly structured environment using a TEACCH approach for children on the autistic spectrum.
* The use of a total communication system- sign-a-long, use of objects, symbols, PECS
* Frequent use of visual timetables and schedules.
* Language adapted to suit the individual children’s needs and levels of understanding.
* Specific input from hearing and visual impairment services, speech and language team, physiotherapy and occupational therapy team.
* a behavioural support team when necessary (SWIFTS)

**Inclusion**

The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage will join in with whole school activities and celebrations. There will also be occasions where the planning and activities will be linked to a special focus e.g. a cultural week, a PSHE focus or a healthy school’s week.

Also we have links with the local primary school (St Nicholas and St Laurence) and our class will occasionally join in a play session (golden time) or a child may access parts of their curriculum depending on their learning needs and abilities.

**Parental involvement**

Parental involvement is extremely important in the child’s first years at school. Before the child enters the early years a home visit is organised with either the school family worker or the head of primary to see the child in their home setting and to start to build up a picture of the child’s likes and dislikes, sensory needs, medical needs, dietary requirements, personal care and the child’s family unit. The class routine, transport and hours are also discussed.

Usually one or two visits are also organised where the parent/ carer can stay with their child to become familiar with the class environment and some of the staff team. These will be after school.

.

Each child has a home/ school book where daily activities are recorded and any other important information about the child e.g. what they ate at dinner time. The parent /carer is encouraged to also record any important information about the child e.g. if they slept badly or seem unwell as this may have an effect on their general behaviour and well being during the day. Parents/ carers can also ring the school if they have a worry or concern and their call will be returned as soon as possible. The school also runs regular coffee mornings to encourage parent support and friendships.

**Safeguarding**

All reasonable measures are taken to ensure the safety of all the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Medicines are kept locked away and a medicine folder is used for recording all administration of medicines. Another member of staff always checks any medication that has to be administered. Staff receive the appropriate training in gastronomy feeds; how to administer bucculam in the event of a prolonged seizure (emergency protocols have to be adhered to); manual handling and team teach. Staff will also receive any other additional training when the need arises e.g. tracheotomy care. They are aware of the children’s individual learning needs and follow any behaviour plans. Risk assessments are also put in place for any trips outside school and walks in the community. All staff also receive regular safeguarding training and they receive training in how to report a concern.

The majority of the staff in the early years have paediatric first aid training and parents are contacted if their child has had an accident or if they are unwell. The school also has a school nurse. Medical incident forms are also filled in.