



# The Milford Academy

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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## 1. Introduction

### Mission Statement

"In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) we aim to provide an environment where children feel happy, safe and secure in their learning. We believe that the first experiences of school need to establish positive attitudes and habits of learning to provide a firm foundation for future learning."

At The Milford Academy, the EYFS is an integral part of the school. We believe that the early years are very important for determining later attainment. By the age of five the majority of children have achieved a substantial part of their adult cognitive and language development.

'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 a child's experiences between birth and age 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 early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

(DFE –Statutory Framework for EYFS 2023)

## 2. 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, that takes into account the interests and needs of our children
- 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
- Staff value the children's own experience and provide a context of care and security for all.
- A safe and secure environment with high quality resources and to offer a wide range of activities both indoors and outdoors.
- We work closely with other agencies (e.g. speech therapists and health visitors) in order to meet the specific needs of all children.

### **3. 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.

### **4. Structure of the EYFS**

At The Milford Academy, our Early Years Foundation Stage consists of the following:

- Nursery (F1) – Provision for 3- and 4-year-olds. We have two-year groups within Nursery, known as N1 and N2. We have up to 60 places in Nursery, per session.
- Reception (F2) – Two 30 place classes for Reception aged children.

All children in Nursery are entitled to the Universal Funding of 15 hours. Children may attend Nursery for the morning sessions or afternoon sessions, which equates to 3 hours per session 5 days a week.

We offer 30-hour places (N1 and N2 children) to working families who are eligible for the 30-hour funding. Lunch provision is included, children may bring a packed lunch or purchase a hot dinner for a small charge.

The times of the day are as follows:

- Morning session – 8.40-11.40am
- Afternoon Session – 12.30-3.30pm
- 30 Hour provision – 8.40-3.30pm

### **5. The Curriculum**

We follow the Early Years Statutory framework, and our curriculum is based on the *Learning and Development Requirements*, which include the Early Years Outcomes, Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning:

#### **Prime Areas:**

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

#### **Specific Areas:**

- Literacy

- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The Early Learning Goals set out what most children should achieve by the end of reception year.

## **5.1 Planning**

Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

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

Our detailed curriculum identifies the progression of key knowledge and skills to ensure children know, learn and remember key information in a child friendly way. Staff can then plan next steps to ensure deep level learning takes place.

Our book-based curriculum develops a love of reading and sits alongside a stimulating language-rich provision. In F1 and F2, children engage in three high quality texts each half term. At the beginning of every story cycle, children are drawn in by the 'hook' to set the scene and bring the story to life. Key vocabulary is taught, alongside the structure of the stories and the ability to retell the book from beginning to end. Children engage in story mapping, sequencing, role play, music, drama and book reviews in every story cycle.

Linked to the theme of each text, children will build on prior knowledge, explore non-fiction books and carefully selected learning opportunities will be planned into the provision to deepen their knowledge and understanding linked to the theme of the book.

Across the EYFS, key texts have been identified as part of our 2 year rolling program, alongside a vast array of diverse, language rich texts that we know children love and enjoy, which allow them to follow their fascinations and interests and spark curiosity.

In the Nursery, and in Reception classes, all planning (long term, medium term and short term) is displayed to aid the team and is available for parents and other interested adults to read.

Play is central to the way children learn in the EYFS and we value the need to give children first hand experiences using both the indoor and outdoor environments within the Academy as well as taking them on visits to places within the local environment and further afield.

"Children don't learn by doing. They learn by thinking about what they are doing."  
George Polya

## **5.2 Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are divided into several well-resourced areas to give a variety of work and play opportunities. The Reception unit has a shared conservatory, freely accessed by children from both classes, where creative activities are continuously available.

Some areas are designed to promote opportunities for children to speak in small group situations.

Each year group has a large outdoor space to allow for outdoor learning and free flow between the indoors and outdoors. Outdoor learning is carefully planned into the daily routine.

Whole class daily phonics is taught in Reception following the Phonics scheme, Little Wandle Letters and Sounds. In Nursery, children are taught the pre-phonics skills through stories, songs, rhymes and music, following Little Wandle Foundation for Phonics and Super Sounds schemes.

Whole class maths sessions are taught in Reception following the White Rose maths scheme. Pre-mathematic skills are taught in nursery during carpet sessions and in the provision.

## **6. Assessment**

At The Milford Academy, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carer.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, the Early Years Lead will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

There are summative assessments carried out at the end of every term and these are recorded on O'Track, a system used by the whole school. These assessments inform planning across the EYFS.

There is a teacher/parent (or carer) meeting twice a year during a child's time in nursery. A formal written report is completed at the end of their final term, commenting on the child's attainment and progress and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. A copy of this is given to the child's family and a copy filed in the child's record to be handed on to the next teacher.

When children enter a Reception class, parents are invited to two parent's evenings in line with Key stage 1. A written midterm report is given to parents in March and a written report is completed at the end of their final term. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this if necessary.

## **7. Working with parents and carers**

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We aim for the partnership to be a two-way process and the following are examples of the way in which we work to maintain the links with parents and carers;

- We acknowledge the parents' role in their child's education and aim to develop a partnership based on shared responsibility.

- We recognise the role parents have already played in the early education of the child and know that their continued involvement is crucial to successful learning.
- We give parents access to information through the Class Dojo app, meetings, brochures, half-termly newsletters, the school website and by the use of the parent's noticeboard.
- We keep parents fully informed about their child's progress and achievements (see section 5). The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Throughout the year parents have the opportunities to attend parent's meetings to discuss their child's progress. End of year reports are shared with families of all children across EYFS.
- We have an open-door policy and welcome parents into the nursery, allowing time to talk to them in order for parents and children to feel secure.
- We listen to parents' concerns about their child and offer support and advice where appropriate. We support parents when external agencies are invited to work with their child.
- Half termly Stay and Plays are organised, where parents are invited to attend a workshop that is planned around one of the seven areas of learning. Family members can then see the techniques shared in action in the classroom when working alongside their children.

## **8. Safeguarding and Welfare procedures**

We recognise 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 make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- For children aged 3 and over:
  - Where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
  - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children

- Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children

All EYFS staff hold a relevant, up to date paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate and they are available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- Our SCARF scheme of learning – Marvelous me, Rights and Respect, Keeping Safe and Growing and Changing.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

We aim to maintain the physical safety of the environment by constant vigilance and removing or repairing dangerous equipment. School governors carry out a health and safety check annually.

A member of staff following instructions from a parent or carer may administer medicine prescribed by a GP, e.g. asthma inhalers. The medicines are kept out of reach of the children, and in the fridge at the main office where necessary.

A record is kept of any minor injuries that require treatment. We notify parents/carers of any minor accidents via Medical Tracker. In the event of a more serious accident or illness the Headteacher is notified, parents are contacted and if necessary, after involving the school First Aider, professional medical help sought.

When taking children on visits away from school we follow the school policy for out of school activities. (See offsite visits policy)

Staff are trained to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire.

## **9. Equal Opportunities and the Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability**

We aim to provide equality of opportunity for all children in the EYFS so that all the activities are available and accessible to every child irrespective of their gender, culture, race, religion or ability.

We encourage the children to develop positive attitudes.

Children with S.E.N.D. are identified by liaising with parents/carers, with other agencies and through our own observations and assessments. We aim to meet their needs in a variety of ways by developing a Provision Map, which first of all involves planning interventions and support and may involve the involvement of other professionals and even alterations to the

physical environment. In exceptional circumstances an Education, Health and Care Plan may be considered.

The school operates the Special Needs Code of Practice. The Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is Mrs Jemma Wallace and the Assistant SENCO is Mrs Butler.

## **10. Links with Other Agencies**

We maintain links with a variety of agencies in order to meet the needs of our children. We work closely with the local health visitors and share information on any child where concerns are raised.

Other agencies we work with include:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Children's Centre and Surestart nurseries in the area
- Paediatricians
- Social Workers
- Educational Psychologists
- Child Protection Agencies
- Library Services
- Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists
- Special Needs Support Services

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

We are constantly operating a self-monitoring system and aim to evaluate our own practice through team discussion and CPD.

We also maintain good practice through discussion with colleagues within The Milford Academy, including Governors and with parents as well as colleagues in other establishments.

All EYFS staff are involved with on-going training, either by attending INSET courses within the Academy, or by attending courses and meetings offered by external agencies and organisations such as the Local Authority and Early Excellence.

All Academy staff take part in the annual appraisal review.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Sophie Smith, the Early Years Lead every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **12. Admission and Induction Procedure**

The Milford Academy Nursery operates a waiting list and vacancies are usually offered to the oldest child on the waiting list. If there are special circumstances, other arrangements may be made. Names can be added to the waiting list through school office staff or nursery staff at any time after the child's birth. At this time, we find out whether any issues need to be addressed before admission, for example literature being translated for non-English speaking families.

When a child is offered a place in Nursery, they are invited to a meeting along with the parent or carer in order to meet staff and to see the nursery. At this meeting they are given information about the nursery in the form of a booklet and a starting date for the child is agreed. Children are able to start the term after they turn 3.

On or before the starting day, each parent or carer will have an individual interview with the Nursery Teacher, when admission forms will be filled in and individual queries can be answered.

After the first day, parents and carers are encouraged to spend as much time in the nursery as they think is necessary in order to settle their child in. For some children this involves being left for part of a session initially, building up to a full session when they are more confident.

### **13. Toilet Training in Nursery**

From April 2025, we ask that all children who attend nursery are fully toilet trained. We have observed an increase in the number of children arriving in nappies, which necessitates regular changes. This process requires the attention of our staff, diverting them from engaging fully in teaching and supporting the learning of other children.

The NHS recommends that 9 out of 10 children should be potty trained by the age of 3.

When offering a child a nursery place, we encourage families to utilise the time between initial correspondence and their start date to support their child in their toilet training journey. We understand that this can be a challenging process.

Should children have a medical condition that affects their ability to be toilet trained, we kindly request that documentation from a doctor is provided, to assist us in understanding their individual needs. Additionally, we recognise that some children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may still be in nappies, and we are committed to working closely with families to support them as needed.

In the case where children may be having frequent, regular toileting accidents throughout a session, we will phone the family to request they collect their child from Nursery. Children can then return when they are dry and using the toilet or potty regularly. We understand children will have occasional toileting accidents, and staff will change the children in these circumstances.