



L.E.A.D. Academy Trust

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# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## Policy/Procedure Management Log

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### **Introduction:**

This policy sets out the expectations in practice and provision alongside key definitions and the legal framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust.

As such, the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust requires this policy to be implemented by all its member academies to ensure consistency of practice across the network of academies.

The L.E.A.D. Academy Trust defines the policy expectation, but the responsibility for implementation of the policy as well as the adaptations and personalisation as necessary rests with the Headteacher of each academy.

### **Legislative Background:**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Early years foundation stage statutory framework January 2024](#)

### **Aims:**

Within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, we aim for each of our academy early years foundation stage settings to give every pupil a positive and meaningful start to their school life. We aim to establish solid foundations upon which pupils can develop into independent and fearless, lifelong learners.

At Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy, we intend for our curriculum to educate all the pupils in knowledge, skills and understanding to be effective, inquisitive, curious, independent learners and influence their wider thinking across all areas of learning.

We encourage pupils to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support pupils in building relationships through the development of social skills, such as cooperation and sharing; to help each pupil to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals. We will ensure that pupils are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

It is our intent that all pupils develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities and people. We understand that play is an integral part of learning and this is at the heart of our Early Years curriculum. We believe that the balance of adult directed and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for our pupils. We pride ourselves upon building warm and positive relationships between staff and pupils - consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key. We recognise the crucial role that early years' education has to play in providing firm foundations, upon which the rest of a pupil's education is successfully based.

We value the diversity of individuals within the academy and believe that every child matters. All pupils at Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy Foundation Stage are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our academy community. We give our pupils every opportunity to achieve their potential and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our pupils' range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our pupils, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend pupils knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on pupils' learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support pupils and to help them learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all pupils is valued.
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of pupils with special educational needs, of pupils who are more able, of pupils with disabilities, of pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, of pupils from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Monitoring pupils' progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy).
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all pupils' needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make accelerated progress.
- Reflecting on our practice, continuing to develop our knowledge and evolving understanding of our pedagogy.
- Raising aspiration for pupils so they are motivated to gain employment in adulthood.

### **The EYFS Curriculum:**

At Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy, we follow the curriculum as outlined in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage – January 2024. Curriculum planning also takes account of the non-statutory DfE curriculum guidance, [Development Matters](#) (Revised September 2023) and [Birth to 5 Matters](#) (Early Years Coalition 2021).

The EYFS Framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the *Prime Areas*, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building pupils' capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The Prime Areas are:

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

The Prime Areas are strengthened and applied through four *Specific Areas*:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design.

At Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy, we aim to provide activities and experiences that enable all pupils to develop and learn effectively. The curriculum rationale, written by us as an individual academy within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, also reflects the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of pupils. We use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. In planning and guiding pupils' activities, staff also reflect on the different ways that pupils learn and include these in their practice. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff are well trained to respond to each pupil's starting points, emerging needs and interests and guide pupil development through warm and positive interactions. As pupils grow older and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help pupils prepare for more formal learning in readiness for Year 1 and beyond.

Whilst academies within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust have the freedom to ensure that their curriculum is adapted to the needs of their pupils and individual context, the Trust also provides detailed direction via the Early Years Handbook (July 2024).

## Curriculum Rationale – Implementation

### Curriculum context

- Approx. 75% of our pupils enter Nursery below age related expectations in all 4 areas of Speech, Language and Communication.
- The academy has a 'boy heavy' bias with the proportion of girls being in the lowest 20% nationally.
- Many pupils and their families have limited cultural enrichment or experiences beyond Newark and therefore fewer opportunities to understand the wider world.
- There are higher levels of deprivation in the area compared to all schools nationally - highest 40 %.( 0.3).
- Pupil Premium is 23% currently.
- Recent Social Mobility Data shows that Newark was the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst region when judged against all 16 key performance social mobility factors (323/324). In addition, the area is ranked worst for Youth Factor as well as being the 20<sup>th</sup> worst for School Readiness into Early Years.
- Unemployment figures within the town are low. There is a good level of employment and some large employing companies including Vodafone, Bakkavor and Know How.

### Curriculum Content

Our pupils will achieve most when planning, learning, teaching and assessment are all combined and interlinked with our exciting curriculum and core values, to allow our pupils to achieve their potential – when 'Acorns can grow into mighty Oaks'.

Learning and teaching is delivered in a way that is full of excitement, innovation, awe and wonder. Teaching will focus on the needs of the pupils and their learning requirements. Pupils will not learn simply from what we tell them, they will learn from being active and engaged at all times with problem solving activities, challenge based sessions and focus groups that involve them 'bringing learning to life'.

We aim to develop an approach where pupils have the opportunity to learn from their efforts/mistakes (Generative Learning) and we believe this cements conceptual understanding and secures knowledge (in the long term memory). In order to make sure that pupils remember this essential knowledge long term, we use 'Knowledge Organisers' and also use a retrieval practice called 'Two Things'. We scaffold and model the vocabulary and stem sentences to support this retrieval. This supports 'self-regulation' and 'executive function', the cognitive abilities needed to control our thoughts, emotions and actions. We develop pupils' independence, self-belief, confidence and a positive growth mind set.

The curriculum is taught through broad themes, which are enriched responsively with enhancements directly from the pupils' fascinations and interests. Visits and visitor enrichments are planned to explore and value our community and immerse the pupils within real, contextual learning experiences.

Themes are supported by quality key texts. These are chosen carefully to encourage pupils' speech, language and communication development. Planning is sequenced, yet flexible and responsive to pupils needs and adapted dependent on pupils' interests.

Our Early Years curriculum is taught through a combination of individual and group adult led activities and learning activities. Expectations and intent towards the purpose of learning activities are set out for pupils. 'Challenge Stars/Cards' are modelled and introduced to ensure a range of learning is experienced, developed, yet deepened, but opportunity to use their initiative.

Our curriculum is designed to recognise pupils prior learning by providing 'cultural capital' for first hand learning experiences and allowing the pupils to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become creative, critical thinkers to enable them to challenge themselves. We ensure the content of the curriculum is taught in a logical progression so that pupils build on prior learning.

Each theme is planned so there is a progression within EYFS to Key Stage 1, which allows for a fluid transition between these two stages of learning. Every theme uses quality pupils' literature to develop a love of reading and books. Continuous assessments are made and these together with observations are recorded using the online Tapestry system.

We encourage pupils to demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours to learning through the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

We understand that in order to maintain high standards of quality first teaching, we invest in our staff by providing high quality CPD in relation to identified key areas of development across the academy and also to provide the correct provision for our pupils.

Teachers in EYFS create an environment to address the needs and skill levels of our pupils and use teacher assessments and gap analysis to inform their planning and provide quality provision.

We prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between adults and between peers. Staff ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing pupils to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators.

We recognise that Reading is a key to all other learning and ensure quality Phonic sessions are being taught daily using the whole academy approach of Read, Write, Inc. with pupils reading books matching their phonic ability as well as reading aloud to the pupils, telling stories and rhymes. We expect parents to read with their child and to recognise the importance of reading to their child on a daily basis, to promote an enjoyment and love of reading. We also recognise that pupils need a vast range of vocabulary in order to succeed in life. This is taught explicitly through pre-teaching sessions and Speech and Language interventions.

The pupils learn number nursery rhymes and develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and exploration. We want our pupils to become confident mathematicians who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.

We have built our academy environment to enable our pupils to strengthen their core muscles through physical play, pupils spend time outdoors in their natural environment in all weathers. They develop through exploratory and sensory experiences.

Our learning environment is adaptable in order to reflect pupil's interests and progression. The pupils are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play.

At this stage in a child's life, learning through play is vital therefore we use the environment to ensure their needs are met through continuous provision, enhanced provision and following their interests.

Pupils learn through their senses and through powerful interaction with their environment. There is a strong focus on play-based and outdoor learning together with a combination of structured play, first-hand experience and directed teaching. The development of the whole child is considered crucial. Active exploration and autonomy are encouraged. Opportunities for investigation and discovery in both the indoor and outdoor environment are provided and adults play a key role in enriching and extending learning potential. A wide range of resources are provided to stimulate interest and nurture curiosity.

We use resources that reflect both the community that the pupils come from and the wider world. We encourage the pupils to select resources and make choices to develop independent learning. One activity can develop skills and competencies across several areas of learning and address many learning outcomes.

## Pedagogy

- All staff will ensure that the academy curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- The Curriculum Leader is responsible for the design and implementation of the curriculum.
- Subject Leaders ensure progression documents, planning, subject knowledge and training is in place.
- The EYFS Phase Leader is responsible for ensuring the cohesive planning of learning and outcomes in the phase.

Each subject leader has created their policy to consistently provide the direction and ambition for their subject. Within this, the implementation, impact and the essential knowledge that all pupils will acquire in each area of learning is clear. Curriculum and Subject leaders are in constant discussion with the Early Years Leader and teachers to ensure a clear curriculum overview or progression map for each term. Learning is sequential and knowledge is cumulative. Prior learning and skills are revisited and built on.

The curriculum approach is planned around themes. The whole academy has the same theme and work towards a common goal/outcome. These outcomes are aimed at sharing learning (e.g. with parents) or applying learning to real life situations.

To help pupils explore and experience subjects in depth, the weeks are blocked and are consistent across the whole academy. This allows pupils to develop the skills and knowledge over the week(s) and gain depth and breadth to their learning.

The two year cycle starts literally 'on our doorstep', in that it is about our local community and Newark itself. We feel that the pupils need a sense of belonging and pride in where they live, before they learn and appreciate the wider world. Where possible, a 'Wow' event launches a new theme to engage and intrigue the pupils. Further visits and enrichment provide pupils with much needed wider experiences of the world in which they live. Subject Leaders will provide these expectations through their overview of planning.

A long term overview shows the ratio of subject provision over the two year cycle. The subject concepts, skills, knowledge, and vocabulary are mapped out in the long term plan. These are then used to form the medium term plans with allocated activities.

English teaching is taught through and linked to the theme so the pupils are applying their knowledge to their writing. We use elements of the Tales Toolkit and Talk for Writing approach so as to develop the pupils' Oracy skills and vocabulary development further. We aim to develop the pupils' Oracy skills, throughout the curriculum through a range of activities to promote language rich discussion.

The teaching of Maths is developed through the 'Power Maths' scheme with a mastery approach to learning. To build fluency, we have a daily Maths session of Active Number. Nursery additionally use Number Blocks.

There is an expectation that pupils have an awareness of current affairs. This may be through discussions of images, or through age- appropriate programmes, such as Newsround. This is also, the opportunity for us to address issues that face our pupils (racism, gender etc.).

Safeguarding is planned through the curriculum via our PSED/PSHE scheme (SCARF), and our teaching of British Values, but each half term plan also identifies 'other' safeguarding opportunities to develop awareness.

We take very seriously our responsibility to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. We ensure that the fundamental British Values are introduced, discussed and lived out through the ethos and work of the academy. This is formally through our PSED/PSHE curriculum, but also reinforced and interconnected into assemblies, events and daily life in the academy.

At Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy, we have 6 core behaviours that we believe pupils need to use and understand to become well-rounded individuals and underpins our curriculum. Throughout the year, we focus on each value and pupils are rewarded for demonstrating these behaviours. They are:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Resilience
- Care



- Aspiration
- Independence

Pupils are expected to listen well, try their hardest and behave. This is reinforced by the use of positive language by all adults working with pupils in the Foundation Stage. For example; 'I like how well you're listening, that will help your learning.' The use of a 'Talk Charter' to support listening and speaking expectations is also displayed and referred to in class.

As part of the Foundation Stage curriculum, expected behaviour is taught explicitly and therefore the behaviour chart reflects this. Pupils are rewarded when they demonstrate one of the core values by their photo/name being recorded under the acorn on display in the unit.

## **Language**

Language is vital as it forms the foundations for interacting with other people – for communicating our needs, our thoughts and our experiences. A child's ability to develop language depends on being immersed in a rich environment of words, sounds, rhythm and verbal and non-verbal expression from birth.

We have recognised that not all our pupils starting Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy have the extended vocabulary and communication abilities, which are important for learning and making friends. We have a high percentage of pupils, who are delayed in their language ability, and without support may lead to significant difficulties later on, particularly in Reading and Writing.

In identifying the need to enhance early language development we will extend our pupils vocabulary and ensure our pupils are confident and skilled communicators. We will aim to do this through every day, fun and interesting activities which reflect pupils' interests.

We recognise the importance of the tiered approach to vocabulary. We know an understanding of this, helps support pupils effectively according to which vocabulary tier is being taught and individual pupils' needs.

Vocabulary in the environment is specifically 'colour coded' and symbolled with whole academy curriculum subjects that are specifically planned and sequenced to challenge, broaden and enrich (both written and voice recorded). Stem sentences are used to develop vocabulary, sentences and confidence. We model the use of 4 Ss (Say less, Stress, Slow and Show) and OWL (Observe, Wait and Listen) to scaffold expectations.

Activities in place to enhance and encourage speech, language and communication (SLC) and reading include:

- Story Time/Book Buzz including (Core books, rhyme teller, story teller, author focus, child leader/red cloak story teller, puppets, including pre-teach)
- Key language highlighted for every area, written on speech bubbles and recorded to ensure accessibility for pupils
- Think and reflect challenges in all areas recorded for accessibility for pupils

- Rhyme of the Week – accompanied with props and microphones
- Language display
- Stay and Play for F1 pupils including interactive activities modelled for parents
- Sign/Symbol – Tales Toolkit
- Snack Station to include talking point – photo to encourage pupils SLC
- Talking Tables
- Hot seating
- Self-registration
- Child Interest activities
- Inviting Reading area
- Story telling shelves
- Talking tubes
- Sessions for parents (e.g. No Pens Day Wednesday)
- Workshops for parents
- Voice recorders
- Think Time – evident in practice and poster accessible and referred to
- Parents in for story-time
- Sharing of learning
- Attention and listening groups
- Library - visits to and visits from
- Team meetings designated to SLC
- Visual timetable accessible to pupils/parents to allow talk about the child's day
- Key rings as SLC reminders
- Posters for information
- Information for new parents
- ECAT and prime area tracker
- Vocabulary, listening and attention groups
- Opportunities for EAL to 'chat' to pupils using home language
- Talk Buddies
- Big Buddies
- EAL books
- Mobile phones for reluctant/EAL
- Photo of pupils to enable independent access to next steps
- Outside hotspots for chatter – den making, building site, mud kitchen
- Story scribing
- Progression tool used when necessary – for early identification
- Referrals of pupils to SLC
- Transitions with Pre-Schools/Children's Centre
- Home Learning
- Speaker spots (Vocabulary, including challenges, themed words and sentence stems)
- Reading for pleasure (specific and non-specific reading opportunities)
- Role-play areas
- Oracy (MT/OT/YT)
- Register and end of day opportunities

- Transition opportunities
- Who, what, where, why and how question bags
- Academy Reading diary
- Parent/volunteer readers
- Author focus/celebration
- Talk detectives

### **Forest School/Friends**

Entering Nursery, typically just below 80% of pupils are below age-expected level, progressing to 55% of pupils at age expected level and over 20% above age related level at the end of EYFS.

Taking part in Forest School/Friends sessions develops communication and language attainment in early language communication promoted by outdoor sensory experiences.

Planning identifies intention of lessons and outcomes with an ECAT tracking tool (Every Child a Talker) focus identified from assessment to identify gaps and support pupils with their next stages. This early identification of communication and speech issues, enables targeted interventions and support. This ensures that pupils make accelerated progress.

Impact of Forest School/Friends also includes:

- Pupils have the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence in Forest School sessions, their self-confidence develops.
- Pupils social skills develop as a result of increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers. This is developed through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play.
- Pupils' sensory experiences in Forest Schools prompts language development and acquiring new vocabulary.
- Increased motivation is evident in pupils due to the fascination of the outdoors. They develop a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time.
- Pupils develop their physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills as a result of team activities, building and using tools.
- Pupils develop an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment, consequently developing knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Reading**

The teaching of Reading is at the very core of our curriculum. Our main aim is to ensure that every pupil becomes a confident, fluent reader who enjoys reading for pleasure. We aim for every pupil to be able to 'read to learn'.

All pupils will be exposed to a variety of literature, genres and authors. We want to make a difference in the lives of our pupils and ensure that they have a life-long love of Reading.

We recognise the importance of choosing suitable texts in order to build on what has gone before and then extend pupil's reading proficiency and comprehension capabilities. We ensure that the full potential of a text is realised and there are no missed opportunities.

We celebrate authors, themed books, pupils' favourite books, nursery rhymes, etc. In addition, throughout the year, the importance of Reading is enhanced through World Book Week, author and poet visits, parent Reading workshops, theatre group visits and through taking part in national Reading initiatives.

Songs including nursery rhymes that develop and support gross and fine motor development are carefully sequenced to support progression and development. Specifically they are used to maximise learning opportunities, for example during transitions between sessions.

Through the teaching of Reading, we aim for pupils to:

- Rapidly acquire a secure Phonics knowledge and make sustained progress in learning to read fluently.
- Participate in the teaching of Phonics knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic and enjoyable way.
- Acquire a wider vocabulary.
- Develop a love of Reading.
- Read for pleasure both at home and school on a regular basis.

## **Phonics**

This is achieved through a well-structured early learning programme which includes a daily story, Phonics (oral), rhyme and song time.

As pupils begin to read, we focus purely on word Reading skills which include phonological awareness, decoding and sight recognition. Phonics is taught directly through the Read, Write, Inc. programme which has a clear progression of skills and a consistent approach to its teaching.

All pupils have a baseline assessment in Phonics and are then grouped accordingly. Phonics is timetabled daily. Pupils move to different classrooms and learning areas for Phonics and all staff including TAs are responsible for a group. Regular assessments each half term are carried out by the Phonics Lead and the groups are changed accordingly.

## **Reading opportunities include:**

Reading Area:

- Book Buzz area
- Story teller station
- HFW activities
- Curriculum texts across learning areas
- Promotion of key authors

- Weekly Book Buzz
- Simple RWI Chart
- Theme book boxes

Reading to pupils:

- Daily story/class text time
- EYFS: Peer Reading with Year 6

Reading at home:

- RWI text linked to Phonics level
- Choice book (not part of RWI)
- Expectations are communicated regarding pupils to read at home 5x a week (Reading diary records)
- Daily story/class text time

### **Writing:**

The teaching of Writing aims to ensure that all pupils are able to:

- Write with confidence, clarity and imagination.
- Understand and apply their knowledge of Phonics and Spelling.
- Understand how to write in a range of genres (fiction, non-fiction & poetry) using the appropriate style, structure and features.
- Develop a wide vocabulary bank, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for Reading, Writing and spoken language.
- Develop their imagination, creativity, expressive language and critical awareness through their writing.

Aims of teaching Writing are to develop pupils who:

- Understand the relationship between Reading and becoming a good writer.
- Understanding how Reading fuels writing by building the capacity to imagine, as well as providing a huge store of creative possibilities.

The structure of our teaching follows our Teaching and Learning Policy, focusing initially on the 3 Ps – Purpose, Process and Product.

Our **purpose** in Writing is split into four main areas:

Writing to Entertain, Writing to Inform, Writing to Persuade, Writing to Discuss.

This is shown on our long term plan where genres have been planned out accordingly. As our themes are on a 2 year cycle, a two year writing cycle has been created so that genres fit themes and anchor texts.

Once the **Purpose** and **Product** is identified we then move onto the **Process**. Our process integrates aspects of Tales Toolkit and the Talk for Writing approach with regards to effective teaching and learning.

Wherever possible, Writing is linked to the termly class theme and therefore the wider curriculum.

## **Handwriting**

Fine and gross motor skills are supported using 'Dough Disco' and 'Squiggle' schemes, which supports early pattern, shape and formation and supports pupils in early mark making. As pupils become more competent, rhyme and letter formation, set out in the Read, Write, Inc. approach is specifically taught and assessed against the academy's benchmarking assessment. This letter handwriting and letter families are taught daily following the Read, Write Inc. handwriting scheme. Number formation is also taught. Gross motor skills are also supported using the academy's 'Premier Education' P.E. scheme.

## **High Frequency Words/Spellings**

The speedy reading and spelling of words are taught alongside each other. An explicit plan on developing high frequency word outcomes is taught alongside the Read, Write, Inc. approach and pupils' progress is tracked.

The purpose of focusing on high frequency words is to prepare and ensure every pupil achieves the best possible outcomes and consistency in approach and transition into Key Stage 1, ultimately giving pupils the tools they need to learn to read, and to read to learn.

## **Maths**

Our intention is that pupils leave Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy with conceptual understanding of Maths that is not purely based around procedural learning. As a rule, you will see pupils discussing Mathematical concepts and using them efficiently via the Discover/Think Together and Practice Book challenges. Teachers will be 'curious' about pupils' answers and ask them to explain their thinking and challenge their reasoning, even if they have an answer correct or not, making knowledge explicit with the pupils – helping them to make links between strands of Maths. Concepts will be explored (Discover/Think Together) and pupils will be able to draw upon what they have learnt previously to help them (pre-requisite learning model). Misconceptions are addressed and pupils unpick why they may have got something wrong or made a mistake, rather than being told 'what to do'.

We believe that Mathematics will be taught through an enquiry-led approach, utilising the pupils' critical thinking skills. Using an enquiry-led approach means that our pupils can ask their own questions and form their own opinions (and be willing to change them). They will have the

confidence to tackle problems which not only arise in Mathematics but in other areas of the curriculum.

In order to achieve this, we are using the approved Power Maths scheme to ensure consistency and progression. The curriculum is broken down into core concepts and then taught in units. A unit divides into smaller learning steps – lessons. Step by step, strong foundations of cumulative knowledge and understanding are built where concepts are shown using concrete, pictorial and abstract and calculations expressed in different ways. Nursery additionally use Number Blocks.

- Before starting Power Maths, we use Active Number at the start of each maths lesson to underpin the importance of mathematical fluency. This is a whole academy approach to teaching and understanding number and operations. It uses the principles of mnemonics to assist the memory, to develop mastery, providing deepened understanding of number and calculation using the four operations. It uses images, actions and verbal reasoning to develop learning in a spiral approach.
- Sharing a new concept (Discover) within the context of a relatable real-life problem solving activity. This activity allows pupils to integrate the question, using their prior knowledge, and through discussion and reasoning find a solution. Through discussion (Share) careful teacher questioning, pupils' reasoning skills are further developed.
- (Think together). During this aspect of the lesson the teacher leads pupils through strategies for solving problems and where appropriate will use the oracy format of 'my turn' (teacher) where the teacher talks their thinking to solve the problem. Then 'our turn' (teacher and pupils talking to their work together) and finally 'your turn' (pupils talk to their work independently).
- (Practise). This allows for pupils to independently develop their skills and understanding further as each question builds to more complex problems.
- (Reflection) gives pupils the opportunity to show their understanding of the concept taught.
- Throughout all of the lesson, the correct mathematical vocabulary will be used.

Where appropriate, pupils will be exposed to a variety of resources, such as ten frames, Numicon, bar models, place value counters, shapes either in concrete, pictorial or abstract form. Vocabulary is on display and referred to consistently. Mathematics is also displayed in other areas of the curriculum e.g. Geography - co-ordinates, History - timelines.

Pupils understand the number at a deeper level. They understand numbers can be represented in a range of ways and with a range of resources.

Pupils will: -

- Be introduced to 'Power Maths' characters that support mathematical strategies and thinking and learning approaches.
- Use stem sentences to develop vocabulary and reasoning, speaking like a mathematician.
- Develop opportunities to agree and disagree by encouraging pupils to A.P.E. (Answer, Prove it, Explain) and 'how do you know', 'show me a different way' encouraging mathematical thinking.
- Develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Mathematics through oral, practical and play activities.
- Use and apply Mathematics in practical tasks, in real-life problems, and within Mathematics itself.
- Develop their use and understanding of mathematical language in context, through communicating/talking about their work and the methods used to develop their reasoning.
- Use more formal methods of working and recording when they are developmentally ready.
- Explore, estimate and solve real life problems in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Develop their understanding of measures, investigate the properties of shape and develop early ideas of position and movement through practical experiences.
- Sort, match, sequence compare objects and events, explore and create simple patterns and relationships, and present their work in a variety of ways.

Our pupils will also be critical thinkers and have the confidence to challenge an idea using arguments of their own using the correct terminology and evidence (concrete, pictorial or abstract) to support their thinking.

### **Assessment Procedures – Impact**

The impact will be the identification of how our pupils have gained comprehensive knowledge, skills and they achieve well. They will leave our academy feeling that their learning has been 'brought to life' and allowed them to 'Broaden Their Horizons'.

The curriculum design ensures that the needs of individual pupils, including SEND and disadvantaged, and small groups of pupils, can be met within the environment of high quality first teaching supported by targeted interventions where appropriate. Pupils have access to activities throughout their school day which consolidates and deepens their understanding and knowledge. As a result, our aim is that all pupils will achieve age related expectations by the end of the EYFS and will be prepared to enter Key Stage 1 of the national curriculum. Pupils will believe in themselves, be confident, belong to the academy and wider community and become anything they wish to.

### **Assessment:**

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations



are used to shape future planning and staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception/Foundation Stage 2, staff administer the *Reception Baseline Assessment* (RBA).

Throughout the year, the summary goal statements for the *Prime and Specific Areas* are assessed against the RBA. This takes place on a half-termly basis within our academy and results are collected at the three end of term assessment points in line with the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust procedures. This enables teachers to determine whether a pupil is '*on track*', '*vulnerable*' or '*accelerating*'. It also allows teachers to judge if pupils are keeping pace with the rate of teaching (as defined by the academy's early years curriculum) and whether pupils are making progress by knowing and remembering more.

The use of ECAT (Every Child a Talker) tracking tool, will also identify gaps and support pupils with their next stages enabling targeted interventions and support, ensuring that pupils make accelerated progress.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the *EYFS Profile* for each pupil. Pupils are assessed against the 17 *Early Learning Goals*, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting the expected levels of development (expected);
- Not yet reaching the expected levels (emerging).

The *EYFS Profile* reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers and the results of the profile are shared with parents/carers for their child at the end of the school year.

The profile is moderated internally in line with the *Development Matters* guidance and in partnership with other academies within the L.E.A.D Academy Trust and schools within the local authority to ensure consistency in assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is also submitted to the local authority on an annual basis.

In addition to summative assessment, the L.E.A.D Academy Trust places great importance on the requirement for effective day-by-day assessment to be able to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and to address issues as early as possible. For this formative assessment to be effective, it is important for the staff making any judgement to know the pupil well and to have a secure understanding of the benchmarks of development as laid out in the L.E.A.D. Assessment Milestones document. In the practice of assessment, staff need to carefully consider a range of evidence such as:

- observations;
- workbooks/ learning journeys;
- recorded clips;
- anecdotal evidence;
- parental observations.

We recognise that pupils learn and develop best when there is a strong partnership between staff and home. Parents/carers are therefore kept up to date with their child's progress and development as detailed as part of this policy. This includes the Progress Check and *EYFS Profile* which helps to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

A learning journey is compiled to celebrate achievements and independent evidence of attainment throughout the EYFS referencing development matters and the Early Learning Goals. To support the compilation of each learning journey and to enable us to celebrate pupils' achievements with their parents, we use books and an on-line learning journey called 'Tapestry'. This enables us to focus upon the process of learning as well as the outcome, linking holistically to all elements of learning and development, alongside the characteristics of learning.

Progress meetings are planned termly with teachers to discuss and moderate pupils' attainment and consider support, interventions or further challenge.

## **SEND**

Pupils within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with SEND are entitled to high-quality Early Years provision based on the EYFS framework. Depending on their special educational need, pupils will demonstrate learning and development in different ways.

Where a pupil is not meeting any of the benchmarks, it is appropriate to refer to Development Matters to the earlier benchmarks to determine where a pupil might be.

We will also be using the Engagement Model for those pupils working below and well below age-related expectations. Pupils within the Early Years key stage will also be part of this curriculum and be assessed against the B Squared assessment or a similar assessment tool if this is required.

We use Makaton, a Signs and Symbols system of communication, to support those who are struggling to communicate. Makaton is used as a tool to support teaching and learning ONLY when required. Signs and Symbols do not replace talking – they are often used at the same time to encourage speaking and they draw attention to the important key words pupils hear, giving pupils more time to process and understand what has been said. The use of Makaton helps to reduce instances of frustration with communication, for those that need to use it. Symbols are used on visual timetables, which runs consistently through the whole academy.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare:**

At Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy, we are absolutely committed to the safeguarding of all our pupils and fully comply with the welfare requirements as set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage January 2024. These are to:

- provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where pupils can grow in confidence due to the positive relationships with the adults caring for them;
- ensure staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and that they fully adhere to the Trust's code of conduct;
- promote good health;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensure that all adults who look after pupils, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting to meet the needs of the pupils;
- ensure that the setting, furniture, resources and equipment are safe and suitable for the purpose for which they are used.

**Keeping Safe** - It is imperative that all pupils within our academy are safe. We aim to educate pupils on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand how to stay safe. We provide pupils with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage pupils to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We also aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all pupils.

**Good Health** - All pupils are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They also have access to water at all times. In addition, healthy living and good oral health are also promoted.

**Intimate Care** - Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching, or carrying out an invasive procedure that most pupils can carry out themselves. However, depending on a pupil's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every pupil has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual pupil. No intimate care is given without the express written permission of the parent/carer of the child.

**Key Person** - Each pupil is assigned a *key person* who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. Parents must be provided with the name of their child's key person and details of their role when the child joins the academy. The *key person* supports parents/carers in guiding their child's development at home and helps families to engage with more specialist support, wherever necessary.

**Suitable Adults** - We ensure that all staff looking after pupils are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. All L.E.A.D. academies have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who may have regular contact with pupils are suitable. As a result, all adults working with pupils are subject to an enhanced DBS check as part of their ongoing employment within the Trust. The recruitment of staff always follows the Trust's **Safer Recruitment Policy**.

Any other adults working as volunteers in regulated activity within our academy are also subject to DBS checks.

All adults are trained in safeguarding practice and procedures on an annual basis as a minimum. In addition, all L.E.A.D. Academy Trust academies also provide regular updated training throughout the year to ensure the highest possible protection for pupils. (See the Trust's **Safeguarding Policy** for practice and detail).

Where a person is disqualified, academy leaders do not employ that person in connection with early years provision. Where we as the employer become aware of relevant information that may lead to the disqualification of an employee, academy leaders take appropriate action to ensure the safety of pupils. Please see the following for more information:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants)

### **Expectations of Early Years Settings:**

We ensure that appropriate support is put in place to ensure a successful transition from home to school in order that the start to each pupil's learning journey is made as positive as possible. This includes planning for such aspects as:

- providing a parent/carer and child handbook of information in preparation for commencing early years education;
- inviting parents/carers and children to spend time in nursery/FS1 and Stay and Play sessions or reception/FS2 for induction visits before starting at the academy;
- providing an induction meeting for nursery/FS1 or reception/FS2 parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss academy routines, expectations and to answer any questions that they might have;
- holding a parent/carer consultation meeting early in the academic year to establish how their child is settling into the school environment as well as a further parent/teacher consultation meeting in the spring term;
- operating an open-door policy/'help email' for parents/carers to build relationships as well as share any queries or concerns to resolve problems swiftly;
- Contact through academy online communication, text messages and newsletters (Email/MarvellousMe/SWAYs);
- publishing a curriculum map detailing the areas of learning, the overarching theme of the term/half-term and overview on the academy website;
- inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics/reading and maths;
- regularly sharing the children's *Learning Journey* with parents/carers and showing value for their on-going contributions;

- sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in nursery/FS1 (where applicable) and reception/FS2;
- asking parents to sign a generic permission form at the start of the academy for visits, food tasting and photographs, etc.;
- inviting parents/carers to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, end of term themed outcome sessions, Christmas productions and sports days, etc.;
- offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the academy on a volunteer basis to assist with the pupils' learning, e.g., hearing readers;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, academy and parents, e.g., stay and play sessions etc.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

### **Play and Enabling Environments:**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending pupil's development. Through a variety of assessment activities, we assess children's interests and stages of development needs, before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Play-based learning is paramount and pupils have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. As such, we plan the environment both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive attitude to learning and reflect pupils' individual interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the pupils come from and the wider world. Pupils are enabled and supported to make their own selection of the activities on offer to encourage independent learning. In addition, all resources and spaces are safe to use and are checked regularly.

We believe that young children learn best from play with activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching, and extending play, skills and language. All academies provide pupils with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore, develop and make sense of the world as well as think creatively and critically alongside other pupils as well as on their own. In addition, pupils are supported to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning at their own level and pace, pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. As a result, pupils learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

### **Transition:**

Starting school and moving up to new classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both pupils and parents/carers. As a result, we have established a strong procedure for transition to ensure that children, as well as their parents/carers, are well supported when facing the challenges of moving between each year group within the EYFS setting as well as up to Year 1.

### **Partnership with Parents:**

Parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore we work very closely to ensure they are involved in their child's education and development whilst at the academy. As a result, parents/carers receive regular communication and are given a wide range of opportunities to speak to adults within the EYFS setting as well as the wider academy if they should need to do so. This includes open events and workshops for parents/carers and their children to attend sessions in the setting, as well as parent consultation meetings. In addition, daily opportunities are also provided through an open-door policy in which parents/carers can make comments and share issues in order that any problems can be resolved swiftly.

### **Staff Qualifications, Training, Support and Skills:**

The daily experience of pupils and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

We ensure that all staff receive induction training to enable them to understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information regarding emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.

We support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure that they offer quality learning and development experiences for pupils that continually improve. In addition, practitioners in the EYFS are offered regular supervision to discuss their practice and effectiveness in working with the very youngest pupils in our academy. This results in a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement and encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

**Qualifications** - We ensure that leaders hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification or above and have at least two years' experience of working in an early years setting or other suitable experience. They must also hold a level 2 maths qualification or be working towards achieving this within 2 years of appointment, if appointed from the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024. We also expect there to be a named deputy who is capable and qualified to take charge in the early years leader's absence.

We ensure that at least half of all other staff hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

In addition, we also ensure that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is always on the premises and available when pupils are present and accompanies pupils on visits off-site. Any member of staff appointed after June 2016 must hold a paediatric first aid certificate if they are to be included in staff ratios.

For more information concerning EYFS Staff Qualifications, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualification-requirements-and-standards>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england>

**Supervision** - We ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all pupils and always ensure their safety. We ensure that pupils are adequately supervised at all times and are always in the sight and hearing of staff. This includes whilst eating. We also inform parents and/or carers about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.

**Ratios** - Within our academy, and all L.E.A.D Academy Trust EYFS settings, we ensure that only those aged 17 or over may be included in ratios if they are suitable. Suitable students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over), and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over), may be included in the ratios if we are satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

For children aged two, we ensure that there is:

- at least one member of staff for every five children;
- at least one member of staff who holds an approved level 3 qualification;
- at least half of all other staff who holds an approved level 2 qualification.

For children aged three and over, we ensure that there is:

- a qualified teacher;
- at least one member of staff for every 13 children;
- at least one other member of staff with an approved level 3 qualification.

Reception/FS2 classes are subject to *Infant Class Size Legislation*. The *School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations, 2012* limits the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher (subject to permitted exceptions) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted.

'School teachers' does not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants or other support staff. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, we employ sufficient qualified teachers to enable infant classes to be taught in groups of no more than 30 children per teacher.

Within our academy, as in some other L.E.A.D Academy Trust EYFS settings, some schools mix their reception/FS2 classes with groups of younger children from nursery. In this case, we determine ratios within mixed groups and are guided by the relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of individual children. In exercising this discretion, we comply with the statutory requirements relating to the education of children of compulsory school age and infant class sizes.

### **Trust Quality Assurance:**

The Trust will quality assure all early years settings against its quality standards on annual basis. These are:

- clear vision and strategic action plan for the early years
- well qualified staff with relevant early years qualifications and/or training

- all welfare requirements specified in the early years foundation stage statutory framework are met
- effective utilisation of indoor and outdoor spaces with a clear rationale
- provision of a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the 7 areas of learning and adheres to the early years foundation stage statutory framework
- assessment is regular and comprehensive and informs pedagogy
- at least 68% of pupils meet the good level of development
- at least 66% of pupils meet the expected level across all 17 early learning goals.