

drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Vision

'all pupils achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes regardless of circumstances or background.'

The drb Ignite Trust has been established through a shared belief that lives can be transformed by what goes on in schools. We believe that the process of teaching and learning shapes futures. To this end our vision is to provide every child with learning experiences that excite them and give them the power to begin to shape their own lives.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 29

Children's education should help them to develop their personalities, talents and activities. It should teach them to understand their own rights and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

Article 13

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

1. Policy rationale

The Trust recognises the importance of Early Years provision in ensuring that all pupils have the very best start to their school journey.

All pupils deserve the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in their earliest years and the experiences children have between birth and the age of five has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is viewed as critically important by all Trust schools. Early years provision provides the foundation for later learning and ensures that pupils are ready to access the national curriculum.

The Trust recognises the importance of high-quality Early Years provision within our schools, that sits alongside working with parents as partners. Trust schools understand the importance of developing a love of learning through awe, wonder and experiences, ultimately developing the unique child who is self-motivated to learn and engage with education.

2. Policy aims

The EYFS policy aims are based around the four principles of early years, as outlined in the DfE **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**. These principles are:

- **A unique child:** Trust schools recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable and self-assured. Practitioners understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.
- **Positive relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Trust schools recognise that positive relationships are warm and loving and foster a sense of belonging. Practitioners are sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests. They are supportive of the child's own efforts and independence and consistent in setting clear boundaries
- **Enabling Environments:** Trust schools recognise that children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents or carers. All staff recognises that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Through observations, staff assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences that extend their learning.
- **Learning and development:** In Trust schools the EYFS is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. Environments are set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The aims of EYFS provision in Trust schools are to:

- foster a consistent and high-quality Early Years provision across Trust schools.
- guarantee that practice is inclusive of all pupils no matter their background, disposition or academic ability.
- ensure that all pupils feel safe, secure and happy when attending Early Years provision and increase their capacity for self-regulation and awareness.
- work alongside outside agencies to ensure all pupils thrive, both academically and pastorally.
- ensure that pupils have access to a broad, balanced and holistic curriculum that prepares them for later life.
- develop strong working relationships between school and families.
- motivate pupils intrinsically, fostering their passions and interests.
- foster high aspirations and develop resilience in pupils to achieve.
- foster a collaborative approach to school improvement by working across schools.
- enable pupils to progress well and achieve their full potential socially, emotionally and academically.

3. Statutory requirements

i. Staffing

The Trust ensures that all early years provision is staffed, as a minimum, to the statutory guidance outlined in [The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#) (pages 28-31). All schools have assigned key workers in each of their early years settings. These members of staff ensure that every child's care is tailored individually to meet their needs. It also enables children to settle, building strong relationships between themselves and staff and securing parental confidence.

ii. Curriculum

Trust schools share an ambitious, common curriculum, designed especially for EYFS. This curriculum has been co-created by EYFS leaders, who represent all of the individual settings. The curriculum outlines the key learning expected for pupils at each stage of their EYFS journey and is intrinsically linked to the requirements outlined in the [National Curriculum](#). All schools are expected to tailor this curriculum to the demographics of their catchment area and individual pupils. The curriculum meets and exceeds the expectations outlined in [The Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage](#). The Trust requires the curriculum documents created by leaders to be statutory in all settings.

4. Equal opportunities

The Trust values the contribution of all staff, pupils and their families, welcoming contributions and feedback no matter an individual's background, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. We actively celebrate diversity and ensure that all practice is inclusive.

5. Admissions

For pupils under the age of three, families should apply directly to the Trust school they wish their child to attend. Families can gain further information about *rising threes* and the Trust's admission arrangements by either contacting the school or visiting the school/ Trust website, where relevant policies are published.

Pupils joining reception should apply through the local authority application process by the end of December. Pupils applying for reception will be considered in-line with the *Admissions Policy* on the school/Trust website. This Policy is decided and set with the local authorities in which the school is located i.e., Birmingham or Dudley.

For note: Pupils who attend a school's nursery provision must still apply for a reception place, even in the same school, through the local authority process.

All schools provide an age-appropriate transition for pupils joining nursery and reception. Where required, to better enable an individual pupil to settle safely into an environment, schools may adapt and create a bespoke transition alongside parents and outside agencies.

6. Health and safety and safeguarding

Trust schools ensure that pupil's safety, health and well-being are at the centre of everything they do. The Trust's *culture of safeguarding* ensures that everyone views safeguarding and pupil well-being as their responsibility. As such, all schools meet or exceed the expectations for pupils safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in [The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – section three](#).

The Trust has a strong Safeguarding Policy which is followed by all schools. These are available on both the Trust and school websites. These are also reviewed regularly in line with ***Keeping Children Safe in Education***, a link to this statutory documentation can be found in section three of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Year Foundation Stage document*.

To ensure continued high expectations in safeguarding and wellbeing practice, Trust schools regularly review all policies and train staff accordingly. Safeguarding support is available at all times from trained DSLs in all settings. Where necessary, schools may access further support by drawing on the expertise of other trained DSLs within or outside of the Trust. The Trust arranges regular internal and external reviews of safeguarding practices to ensure that the culture is safeguarding is maintained and continues to be of the highest standard.

7. Curriculum content

Trust schools have a progressive curriculum in place that has been co-created through collaboration with all EYFS leaders. The curriculum aims and coverage are published on all school websites. The curriculum has been designed to allow children to build resilience, ambition and integrity. It is designed progressively to ensure that pupils have time to embed knowledge and basic skills in preparation for later life. The Trust particularly recognises the importance of developing spoken language and vocabulary in enabling children to successfully access all curriculum areas.

There are 7 areas for learning and development that have been carefully planned, with cross curricular links identified. These are divided into the prime areas of learning and specific areas of learning.

The **prime areas of learning** include:

1. Communication and language.
2. Personal, social and emotional development.
3. Physical development.

The **specific areas**, where the prime areas are further reinforced and applied include:

4. Literacy.
5. Mathematics.
6. Understanding the world.
7. Expressive arts and design.

The Trust recognises the importance of children accessing learning from all areas to ensure that they receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Access to all areas of the curriculum is expected for all pupils, no matter their individual circumstances.

Staff carefully use the curriculum to plan learning opportunities that also develop pupils' *characteristics of effective learning*. These include **playing and exploring, active learning** and **creating and thinking critically**.

8. Curriculum delivery

The Trust believes an outstanding EYFS curriculum is vital to effective provision, alongside great teaching. All schools have a published intent for their curriculum delivery, this intent outlines the broad curriculum approach for each school.

i. Approach

Each school has a clear pedagogical approach to the curriculum that is based on adult led and child-initiated activities. These approaches incorporate a balance of key elements to ensure pupils make good progress and fulfil their potential. These can include structured explicit teaching, child led activities and suitable scaffolding. In all settings, the role of the adult is crucial and carefully planned by teaching staff. Learning is embedded and reinforced through the use of structured play and following the children's interests. Each individual school maps the agreed curriculum through selecting their own topic themes that inspire and capture the imagination of all pupils. The development of early language is a top priority and is recognised as the key to success in every area of the curriculum.

School also plans approaches that ensure pupils develop independence and resilience when engaging with their learning. Adults will at times intervene, facilitate and observe pupils learning, enabling them to secure knowledge and embed key skills independently. Adults will model learning for pupils to support them in acquiring the relevant content and allow opportunities to apply this knowledge and skills confidently.

The Trust recognises the importance of the outdoor environment in supporting pupil's progress. The outdoor environment in all schools is language rich and carefully planned with activities that further embed or facilitate learning. The outdoor environment is seen as part of the classroom in all Trust schools.

ii. Early reading

Trust schools prioritise the development of early reading. All schools have daily phonics teaching timetabled for pupils in both nursery and reception. Schools implement a validated *Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme*. This currently includes the use of *Read Write Inc* or *Little Wandle Revised Letters and Sounds*.

Pupils have appropriate reading texts that are acutely matched to their phonics learning. The Trust also places high value on the importance of reading for pleasure and has clear strategies to reinforce this within schools e.g. provision for high quality texts and daily story times. Pupils are provided with opportunities to read every day.

The *reading for pleasure* pedagogical approach is based on the recognised four pedagogies of reading for pleasure. These include:

1. reading aloud
2. book talk
3. social reading environments
4. recommendations for reading.

Learning environments are language rich and provide a wide range of reading stimuli to encourage the love of reading and independent application of reading skills.

All schools provide structured guidance for families around how to support children in early reading. Such support may include online reading resources, phonics workshops, stay and play sessions and home readers. Where necessary, schools will provide further support on an individual basis.

iii. Planning

Early years teaching staff carefully plan provision for pupils based on their needs, having identified what they already know and can do. Curriculum objectives are planned into each schools' yearly curriculum overview to ensure that coverage is met. Staff carefully plan input and activities using approaches outlined previously to ensure progress. Scaffolds and support structures are planned carefully to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils. Planning is linked directly to the different areas of learning and where cross curricular links are evident, they are reinforced. Staff plan opportunities to regularly revisit prior learning and build on existing knowledge. This helps pupils to address misconceptions, develop strong schema and fosters the development of skills.

iv. Resources

Learning in EYFS is predominantly delivered through play and so the role of high-quality resources is key to supporting and scaffolding learning. These are carefully selected by staff to match the needs of individual pupils. All schools provide access to resources that support both indoor and outdoor learning and the resources used are linked directly to all of the areas of the curriculum.

Practitioners recognise the importance of concrete resources in enabling pupils to develop a sound understanding of abstract concepts e.g. the use of counters in mathematics for number value. Open ended and natural materials are provided both indoors and outdoors, enabling pupils to use and combine these in their own way to meet their own purpose – ensuring continuous provision.

9. Impact

In order to be confident of the impact of the Trust's early years provision, executive leaders, headteachers and EYFS leaders will monitor all aspects of teaching and learning effectively using the **deep dive** methodology. They will also carry out regular evaluative discussions with pupils. The Trust believes this is a valuable way of knowing exactly what the children feel is the impact on them of their learning.

This approach ensures that impact matches intent across all school communities and will be a part of Trust wide school improvement reviews. Data collected through regular and rigorously moderated assessments will also be used to track pupil progress and attainment. This data will be used by leaders to ascertain the impact of teaching and curriculum delivery.

Trustees will receive feedback about the success of the Policy and Trust approach to Early Years through the *Achievement, Support and Scrutiny sub-committee* and within school improvement reports to the Trust Board.

10. Assessment and monitoring

Assessment is a major contributor in ensuring impact and is used to ensure pupils are building on their skills and knowledge over time. It evidences the quality of education in place and the impact of the curriculum. Assessment information informs the relevant next steps of learning through the teaching and any targeted support required. Assessments are recorded for all areas of the curriculum each term. Schools use both formative and summative assessments to gain the assessment data required.

All pupils will complete a **statutory baseline assessment** when entering Reception year. This baseline is used by the DfE to track pupils progress and attainment across both Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.

At the end of Reception all pupils will be assessed against the **early learning goals (ELGs)** outlined in the DfE *Early Years Foundation Profile*. Pupils will be judged as meeting the expected standards or emerging. If pupils achieve the expected standard for early learning goals (ELGs) within the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of literacy and mathematics, they will be judged as having a **good level of development** (GLD). This is a summative assessment of pupils' progress and attainment to the end of the EYFS.

Throughout the early years provision, teachers use formative assessments as the heart of effective practice. These assessments are carried out daily by staff and involve, speaking to, observing and questioning pupils. The primary modality for assessments is through regular observations of children when working independently.

Pupil development in Early Years is monitored by class teachers as part of Trust assessment systems to ensure their teaching is impactful.

Further assessments include regular phonics checks and termly formative data collections. These assessments are moderated by Trust and school leaders regularly to ensure consistency of expectations and accuracy of judgements.

The delivery of EYFS is monitored by each school's Early Years leader and senior leaders through cross Trust EYFS moderation, scrutiny, learning walks, observations of teaching and pupil voice.

11. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust

The Trust Board will approve and review the *Early Years Foundation Stage Policy* and hold headteachers to account for its implementation. The Trust Board will receive regular reports enabling them to make judgements on its effectiveness and ensure an effective culture of safeguarding across all provision for the Trust's youngest pupils.

Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that the Trust Policy is implemented consistently across their school and the expected quality of education is in place. Headteachers are responsible for ensuring they have an effective *Early Years Leader* in place. They are also responsible for ensuring staff are suitably inducted to implement this Policy and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

EYFS leaders

EYFS leaders are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is delivered effectively in their school, fulfilling this Policy in its entirety and to ensure an effective culture of safeguarding across the setting.

Early Years staff

Early years staff are responsible for:

- implementing the Trust's *Early Years Foundation Stage Policy*.
- ensuring they have sufficient subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively and seek support when needed.
- engaging in staff training and using documentation to ensure they feel confident to teach all areas of the EYFS curriculum.
- monitoring and assessing pupil achievement and progress.
- modelling the use of agreed pedagogies and approaches.
- adhering to all associated school policies.
- responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- ensuring a culture of safeguarding across the setting.

12. Partnership with parents

The Trust recognises that parents and carers are their child's first educators and are essential in ensuring pupils make good progress and are well looked after. All schools are expected to foster and nurture strong partnerships with families to develop independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential albeit from different starting points.

Schools achieve this through strategies such as:


- parental workshops
- induction meetings
- transition days
- stay and play sessions
- open door approaches
- parent consultations.

13. Professional development and training

The Trust values the importance and impact of staff's professional development on school improvement and pupil outcomes across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. The Trust works closely with leaders to support staff development and measure the impact of this. Specific and differentiated professional development opportunities are planned for early years staff and form part of the Trust's annual CPD programme. Where necessary, schools may be provided with enhanced levels of development, this could be in the form of school-to-school support. Trust and school leaders work collaboratively to identify key development points and these are used to select and implement targeted CPD. The impact of professional development is tracked and used to inform next steps.

14. Policy monitoring and review

This Policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Director of School Improvement. Should there be any changes/further national guidance issued relevant to this Policy, it will be updated accordingly prior to the review date shown above and referred to the next Trust Board meeting.

Monitoring and review:	CEO and Executive Director of School Improvement
Staff responsible:	Headteachers Senior Leaders Teachers
Committee responsible:	Achievement, Support and Scrutiny
Date reviewed:	July 2023
Next review date:	July 2024
Sign off by Trust Chair:	 Date: July 2023

Change management

Issue No	Change date	Change description
1.0	July 2021	Initial release
2.0	July 2023	Reviewed and signed off