



## Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Date of issue	Next review	Version	Signed: Chair of Governors	Signed: Headteacher
Sept 2021	Sept 2022			

### Single Equality Statement

The [Equality Information and Objectives](#) document, for Veritas MAT, provides a format for addressing the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2010 and The Children and Families Act 2014. This supersedes and brings together all previous statutory duties in relation to race, gender and disability and also addresses the duty to promote community cohesion, thus meeting the school's statutory duties in these areas.

### Governor Statement

The headteacher in each school is the leader of their school. Each member school has autonomy over its curriculum and provision and, while upholding the three core values of the trust, we expect each school to have an individual character relevant to the community it serves.

Each school has a Regional Governing Body. Warden House and Pilgrims' Way Primary Schools share a Regional Governing Body while Mundella Primary has its own Regional Governing Body. The Regional Governing Body sits six times a year. Each Regional Governing Body reports up to the MAT Board and Trust Members who quality assure their work.

The Regional Governing Body is responsible for a hub of up to three academies. The Regional Governing Body reports up to the Trust Board who quality assure their work. Veritas MAT has two Regional Governing Bodies.

Key areas of responsibility for the Regional Governing Body are:

#### **Standards, Finance and Audit, Human Resources, Infrastructure and Procurement**

The Executive Board consists of the CEO and Company Secretary / Trust Business Manager who run a team that support core operational tasks across the trust. Roles include finance, standards, research, training, school-to-school support and mentor-coaching. The CEO and a designated Trust Board Trustee also sit on the Regional Governing Body.

The Board of Trustees set the strategic direction, vision and ethos of Veritas Multi Academy Trust and are accountable to the Secretary of State for Education for standards across trust schools.



## Philosophy

Our school's values recognise that children need to be nurtured and supported both academically and socially if they are to develop and succeed. Across the whole school, and in the EYFS, we aim to create an environment where all pupils, whatever their background, can flourish because all are treated with dignity and respect. As the EYFS is the starting point to the majority of our children and families at Mundella, we aim to ensure that those who may be more vulnerable, or have additional learning or personal needs, are identified and supported.

In the Foundation Stage class we aim to provide a **stimulating** and **challenging** environment that will give children the best possible start to their time at Mundella Primary School. In **partnership** with the families and carers we enable them to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. This policy works hand in hand with the **Every Child Matters** agenda, in that every child has a right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

## Introduction

The **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception Year.

Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

The EYFS is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later learning. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the EYFS.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activities that provides opportunities for learning
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment
- it enables children to make an effective transition from home to school

## EYFS Principles

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following four guiding themes:

- **A Unique Child** : recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety and health and well-being.
- **Positive Relationships**: describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnerships with parents; supporting learning and the role of the key person.
- **Enabling Environments**: explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focused around

observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment and the wider context – transitions, continuity and multiagency working

- **Learning and Development:** recognises that children learn in different ways and at different rates and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

### **Teaching and Learning**

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years are:

- The partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- The understanding that practitioners have knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this affects planning and teaching; we start from the children's needs and interests then plan the learning accordingly. We then use these observations to inform our ongoing assessments
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication; we believe that children learn through active, hands-on experiences both in and outside of the classroom
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children to work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of Foundation Stage
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management and self-confidence
- The support for learning with appropriate space, facilities and equipment
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through 'Assessment For Learning'
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school
- The clear aims and success criteria for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate our planning and improve what we do
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the EYFS to ensure the very best provision for our children based on current research and exemplary practice
- The development of outdoor provision, which enables children to learn about their environment and participate in activities in a more physical and creative way

### **Play in the Early Years Curriculum**

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Curriculum.

The children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. As well as opportunities for joy, interest, happiness, friendship and empathy, pupils they also have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. The children are involved with

both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of resources. Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

### **Inclusion in the Early Years**

At Mundella we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion).

In the Early Years we set realistic and challenging expectations to meet the needs of our children. We strive to achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may involve referral to outside agencies such as speech therapy or additional classroom support for some of our children

## The Early Years Curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years is grouped into seven interrelated areas of learning. Our EYFS curriculum reflects the experiences and activities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to achieve the **Early Learning Goals** by the end of the Reception year.

The EYFS is broken down into seven areas of learning. These are split into three prime areas and four specific areas. The three prime areas are as follows:

- Personal, Social and emotional development
- Communication and Language
- Physical development

These prime areas are supplemented by four additional specific areas of learning, which strengthen the development within the prime areas. These are as follows:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

The experiences that our children meet enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others, they are equally important and depend upon each other to support a rounded approach to the development of each child.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)

The Early Years Foundation Stage has always highlighted the importance of **how** as well as **what** children learn. Staff reflect on the different ways they learn, and then reflect these in their practice. A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment.

The different characteristics of effective learning are;

- **Playing and exploring**
  - finding out and exploring
  - playing with what they know
  - being willing to have a go
- **Active learning**
  - being involved and concentrating
  - keeping on trying
  - enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and thinking critically**
  - having their own ideas
  - making links
  - choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

Parents will receive a report at the end of the EYFS, informing them of how their child learns in correlation with the CoEL.

### **Resources**

The Early Years team plan an environment that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent, confident learners with the skills and attitudes needed to equip them for a lifetime of learning.

### **Assessment**

Practitioners make regular assessments of children's learning, and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years is ongoing and is an integral part of the learning and development process. The staff make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements and interests. The observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences of our children. The observations are then matched to the Early Learning Goals and are recorded as part of the EYFSP. Evidence may take the form of photographs, examples of work or observations made by practitioners. Evidence will be stored in their individual **Learning Journeys** for reviewing and sharing with parents and carers. These are available for parents and carers to view at any time.

## **The Role of Parents**

At Mundella we believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- The EYFS Team visit children in their Nursery setting prior to pupils starting at school
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Home visits, where EYFS Team ask if they can come and see the children in their home environment before they start school
- There are formal meetings for parents in the autumn and spring terms at which the class teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress each term
- Curriculum meetings are held throughout the year. This is where the class teachers will invite the parents into the hall to and hold a powerpoint/interactive workshop to inform the parents how they can help support their children at home
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents, such as parent/family learning workshops – stay and play sessions, and craft afternoons
- Regular newsletters are sent so that parent are informed of key information and learning
- Encouraging parents to be forthcoming with any information that may affect their child's wellbeing or learning