



Boston Pioneers
ACADEMY



Boston Pioneers Academy

Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy

Monitoring Responsibility	Head of Academy
Date Ratified	
Approval Body	Local Governing Body
Next Review Date	
Chair of LGB	

Statement of intent

At Boston Pioneers Academy our aim is to offer a curriculum rich in wonder and memorable experiences. We work hard to create a safe and nurturing learning environment and build relationships which support, enhance and invite a child's curiosity, confidence and individual competency to flourish regardless of backgrounds, circumstances or needs. We recognise the importance of supporting children's social and emotional development alongside their learning to develop well rounded future citizens. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers and we aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a love of learning.

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 correct mix of adult directed, adult led activities and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils. We recognise the crucial role that early year's education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based upon.

To ensure children make outstanding progress during their first year at Boston Pioneers, it is our intent to take into consideration their starting points and needs of our pupils as they begin their learning journey and to help every child begin to achieve their full potential. Every child has access to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which prepares them for now and for the future in terms of opportunities and experiences. Our curriculum is therefore the cultural capital we know our pupils need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. They can only do that if we embed the right habits for learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning - Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking.

Our EYFS curriculum aims to enable our children to be:

Competent and creative learners; who are curious about the world around them.

Strong and Independent; who develop positive relationships and respond to their own individual interests and needs.

Secure and confident; who enjoy coming to school and learning new skills and knowledge building on their existing learning.

Skillful communicators; who connect with others through language and play, ensuring that they play in a vocab rich environment.

It is our intent to ensure that all children will receive the teaching of early reading through systematic, synthetic phonics to learn to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Children join our reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

Organisation

The children are organised into two reception classes. All reception children attend full time. Throughout the day the children have opportunities to work as part of a whole class, in small groups and individually in adult led, adult directed and child-initiated activities. A child may be deferred from full time entry into the FS2 year only following consultation with the class teacher, parent(s) and Head Teacher.

Children receive fruit as a snack provided by a Free Fruit scheme and also have access to fresh drinking water. Children receive 1/3 of a pint of semi skimmed milk each school day until their 5th birthday as part of a free scheme.

All children receive a free school meal in the foundation stage as part of the Universal Free School Meals government scheme, provided by our Trust kitchens.

We follow four principles that shape our practice here at Pioneers:

These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be **strong and independent** through positive relationships
- 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 and/or carers.
- **Children develop and learn at different rates.**

A Unique Child

At Boston Pioneers Free School Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Boston Pioneers Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We do not group children based on notions of fixed ability. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy. In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and 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 through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school feel safe and included.

Positive Relationships

At Boston Pioneers Free School Academy we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- inviting the children to spend time with their teacher in the classroom before starting at school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- holding parental workshops to educate our parents on key aspects of our curriculum such as RWI Phonics, the love of reading, writing and mathematics.

- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- encouraging parents to contribute to observations using Tapestry, which is our online learning journal
- inviting parents to share in special learning activities with their children

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

We have good links with the local feeder nurseries and visits are undertaken in the summer term to meet and discuss the children joining our setting in September. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children. Each term our largest nursery feeder either comes to us for a stay or play session or the EYFS Lead goes there to deliver a short play session with the Pre- School children.

Enabling Environments

At Boston Pioneers Free School Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child-initiated activities reflecting the topic where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS starts with the long-term plan, these are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning. Our curriculum centres around quality texts upon vocabulary development is planned for and built upon to help every child develop their language. From the long-term plan, medium term plans are developed focussing on key skills and knowledge. A short term, weekly plan, is then developed which links to the educational programmes and shared with all EYFS staff. We plan experiential experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children.

In the EYFS assessment of attainment and progress is based on observation, discussion, questioning and evidence of children's independent learning. We recognise that assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence and therefore valuable evidence of children's learning is obtained through observation of independent and targeted learning but also playing and getting to know the children. These observations/ key milestones are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and are recorded using tapestry, an online learning journey. Each child's progress is also recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from

the ELGs (Early Learning Goals) at the end of the Reception year to form the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Learning and Development

At Boston Pioneers Free School Academy, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas which underpin everything:

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

Specific Areas which help to strengthen and apply the prime areas:

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

These areas are delivered throughout the topic and linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. The EYFS classes have a shared outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways and assists our children with their physical development. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring- children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.' Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up on ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They 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.

Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.' Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They

practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Transitional Periods

At Boston Pioneers Academy we understand the importance of the transition process and, therefore, we adapt our practices to support pupils settling into their new learning environment. We offer nursery visits and sessions during the summer term prior to pupils starting primary school. The school's transition arrangements are reviewed collaboratively by staff members on an annual basis.

Transition meetings between EYFS staff members and Year 1 staff members are held during the Summer term to discuss and expand on the information presented in pupils' EYFS profiles. EYFS staff members provide the relevant Year 1 teachers with information regarding pupils, allowing them to accurately plan effective learning during Year 1.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance and legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2016
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2020) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' EYFS reforms early adopter version
- Standards and Testing Agency (2021) 'Early years foundation stage profile' Early adopters version.

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy