

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 to 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 in order to develop well-rounded future citizens. 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 built and seek to work collaboratively with parents and carers to ensure they get off to the best-possible start.

We believe that the correct mix of adult-directed, adult-led and uninterrupted child-initiated activities ensures the best outcomes for learners and we spend a great deal of time and energy planning rich learning experiences that link to our curriculum which is built around a core spine of high-quality texts. As we firmly believe that the most important gift we can give a child is the ability to read and therefore to acquire and build knowledge for themselves, we also adopt a 'no excuses' culture to the teaching of early reading through the rigorous implementation of our chosen systematic, synthetic phonics programme: Read, Write, Inc.

To ensure children make good progress during their first year at Boston Pioneers, we take into consideration their individual starting points and needs. Via the adaptation of key learning experiences, we aim to ensure every child has equity of access to a broad and balanced curriculum. 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 now and in the future. However, we also recognise that they can only do this if we embed the right habits for learning within them through the promotion of 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

Implementation:

Care, Guidance & Support: Inclusive, Whole Child Education

'Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care'

At Boston Pioneers Free School Academy we meet the welfare requirements laid down in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our children.

Care and guidance sit at the heart of our school. As an Academy, we recognise that pupils who are socially and emotionally literate have a greater chance of achieving success in school and later life; and that children will learn most effectively when they are healthy, safe and secure. Essentially, we deem wellbeing to not simply be about 'coping' and 'surviving' but about 'flourishing' and 'thriving'.

We are committed to the Early Years Foundation Stage Principal of a 'unique child', with all children having core entitlements including their right to be treated fairly and equitably regardless of race, religion and ability. We also recognise that the very best early education is inclusive education because of the emphasis in practice of identifying and meeting the individual learning needs of all young children.

Oracy and Vocabulary, Reading and Writing - 'Learning the Words to Learn.'

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. Trained staff ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace; in order that they are able to become confident communicators.

We build learners' core vocabulary by following the recommendations of Kelly Ashley, author of 'Word Power', and introduce 10 new words a week through to 'power up' our learners' expressive and receptive language. These words are directly taught in context using the high-quality texts around which the EYFS wider Curriculum is built.

We recognise that to make word learning 'sticky' we must find ways to help pupils connect the new with the known. In order to do this, we ensure a language- rich environment with high-quality interactions through play. Parents are encouraged to support their child's vocabulary development by recapping the 10 words to boost language learning at home. The weekly 'top ten' are shared via Tapestry with parents. All words that are directly taught as part of the weekly 'top ten' are retained and recalled at a variety of points across the year to strengthen word memory over time (spaced learning).

Such is the importance of having a strong vocabulary base to draw upon, learners identified as having limited vocabulary skills are picked up quickly through evidence-based interventions to provide them with the best possible chances of achieving their full potential.

All writing tasks are linked to a high-quality picture book. We use aspects of the 'Talk for Writing' approach in our English lessons. This is an approach to writing which emphasises oral language development, storytelling and imitation. To engage the creative minds of our young writers, at the start of each new talk for writing process, we use a "hook" to give the writing context and provide the children with exciting new opportunities. The start of the sequence of learning begins by orally re-telling the focus story using a story map. The children learn to use a range of actions and expressions to retell stories. Once the children have internalised the story, the children then map the story onto a story S frame (blank story map) and transcribe the story. Following on from this, the children imitate the text they have learnt. They may make simple changes to the original text and re-tell their imitated version before transcribing their new story. We also hold weekly story invention sessions in which the class create a story together using a bank of characters and settings. There are daily opportunities for children to 'play' at inventing stories.

Experiential learning: 'I see and I forget, I hear and I remember, I do and I understand'

We understand that children learn best (retain more core knowledge) when learning is 'made memorable'. We do this through the provision of first-hand experiences and by ensuring learners are given the opportunity to apply their learning in a range of contexts. Rich first hand experiences (inside, outdoors, offsite and by inviting 'experts' into the setting) are planned across the year in order to both widen experiences and provide awe and wonderment. Our 'themes for learning' take into account the needs and interests of our learners and reflect our local context. Each 'theme' also has planned 'hooks' as we understand that children have higher wellbeing and involvement levels when they are excited and have a purpose for learning.

Experiential learning is also a key aspect of the way in which we teach maths in EYFS as we want our learners to understand real-life purpose and application of maths. We use Broadbent Maths to develop mathematical thinking through both direct teaching and exploration.

Raising Aspirations - 'The world beyond Boston'

Research shows that more than one third of children base their early aspirations solely on the people they know. Due to factors outside of their control, many of the learners we serve have had fewer opportunities to meet people in a range of jobs in their early childhood. All of this means that for many their horizons can be narrowed at a very early stage. However, we seek to offer our learners the opportunity to ignite excitement about their own futures and the array of opportunities available in the world of work by showing them how the skills and knowledge learnt in a particular week can be used in later life. We also organise real life interactions with working people so children can base their

aspirations on people they know. In doing so our learners are also encouraged to challenge stereotypes, in particular those relating to background, gender or socio-economic status.

Impact:

The impact of our curriculum is measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well rounded individuals who embody community values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens.

We use learning journals and work in exercise books to evidence individual learner's key developmental milestones across all areas of learning. Regular internal moderation sessions and high-quality CPD helps to ensure that our judgements for the above are consistent with those in a range of other settings from both the wider community and within our Trust. The data gathered is then used to inform planning.

Our children enter our Academy at a variety of different stages, with significant numbers of them working below age-related expectations. However, through ambitious attitudes, we seek to close any gaps at the earliest opportunity, taking the approach that every effort should be made for them to 'keep up' rather than having to 'catch up'. As a result of QFT and early intervention where required, our pupils make rapid progress in the EYFS towards the national expectation for a good level of development at the end of the year. This is evidenced through the comparison of their individual starting points and exit point assessments, which for the academic year 22-23 were in almost all areas of learning at least double the local authority area average.