

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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BeyondAutism Schools are specialist educational establishments for children and young people with autism. The school is committed to educating its pupils by following the principles and practices of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB) and to empowering young people with autism to lead fuller lives.

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to achieve their full potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up” (Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, 2014)

The EYFS seeks to provide every child with.

- **Quality and consistency** – ensuring that every child is treated individually and makes good progress
- **A secure foundation** – learning, developmental opportunities and planning are individualised around the needs and interests of the child. These are reviewed and assessed regularly
- **Partnership working** – Practitioners, parents/carers work together in order to provide the best possible opportunities for the child
- **Equality of opportunity** – Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice which ensures that every child is included and supported

There are four guiding principles of the EYFS. These themes, and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the EYFS.

Themes	A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
Principles	<i>Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured</i>	<i>Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships</i>	<i>Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers</i>	<i>Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities</i>

Aims and Objectives

BeyondAutism Schools pride ourselves on our vision, and an objective and measurable assessment of how this vision will be achieved. BeyondAutism Schools' vision of 'Empowering young people with autism to lead fuller lives!' is achieved through:

Outcomes for pupils – consistently high expectations and achievements for every individual

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – high quality, inspirational and innovative teaching and learning

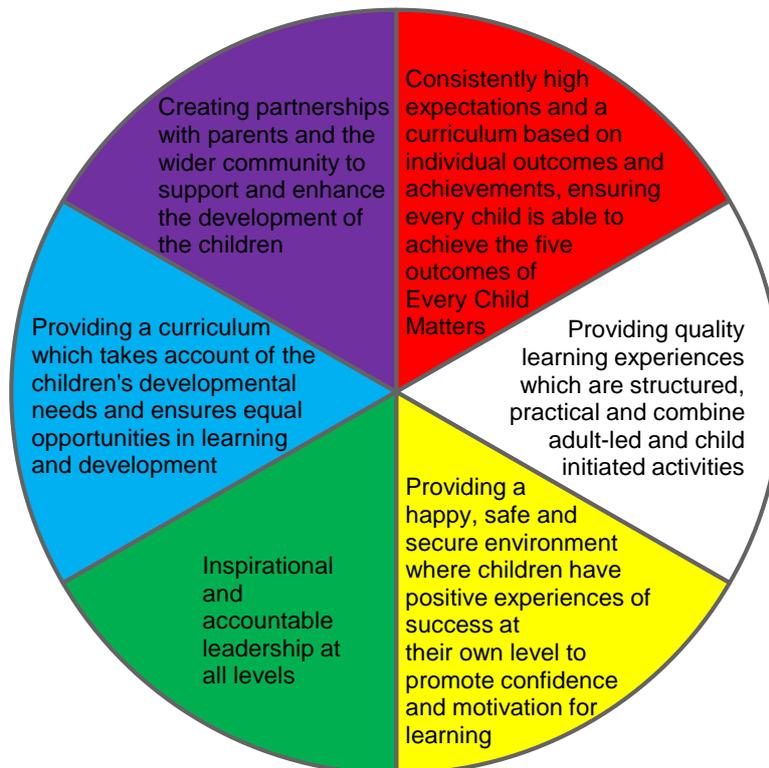
Personal development, behaviour and welfare – a safe, secure, caring and enjoyable environment in which to thrive, work and learn

Leadership and Management – inspirational and accountable leadership at all levels

Curriculum development – a personalised, inspirational curriculum for the 21st century

Developing the organisation – an ambitious drive to be the leading autism education provider in the UK and beyond

The Foundation Stage Curriculum at BeyondAutism Schools aims to include these objectives into the EYFS Framework and its guiding principles. It will do this by;



- Outcomes for pupils
- Quality of teaching, learning and development
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Leadership and Management
- Curriculum Development
- Developing the organisation

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

BeyondAutism Schools ensure that our early years environment, planning, curriculum and teaching considers the different ways that children learn and includes the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which are:

Playing and exploring – Engagement; *Children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’*

Children are encouraged to explore new activities and engage in new experiences daily. Engaging in new experiences can be challenging for children with autism. Our tutors and teachers use the principles of ABA/VB in order to motivate and reward the children for ‘having a go’. New experiences are paired with preferred items in order to increase the likelihood of the child being willing to engage in new experiences in the future so that they continue to learn and develop. BeyondAutism Schools aim to create a safe and secure environment where the children feel supported and comfortable to engage in experiences that may be challenging for them.

Active learning – Motivation; *Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements*

Children are more likely to remain on task when they are motivated to respond and engage. Each child is treated as an individual, with specific motivators to engage in behaviours that lead to learning. BeyondAutism Schools use pupil specific motivators and reinforcers to encourage the children to be resilient and to ‘keep on trying’ until they are able to achieve their full potential in the task or activity at hand. Achievements are pupil specific and related to ability so that each child is able to experience success.

Creating and thinking critically – Thinking; *Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things*

At BeyondAutism Schools staff are trained to identify behaviours that signal motivation (looking, reaching, grabbing, walking over to, and asking for things using speech, sign or pictures). Staff follow these child initiated motivational signals when the motivators are appropriate. By doing this it enables staff to ensure that the spontaneous behaviours of the children are being encouraged, and when skill repertoires increase, will lead to the development of their own ideas and strategies.

Staff are trained to increase skill repertoires by prompting behaviours and reinforcing attempts to engage in the activities and lessons. These prompts are gradually faded and success in completing activities and tasks independently increases. This enables the children to develop independence, confidence and their own preferred ways of doing things.

Curriculum and Planning

The EYFS curriculum focuses on and is characterised by 7 different areas of learning:

Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language

- Physical Development

Specific Areas

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

Prime areas are considered fundamental, they work together and move through to support development in all other areas. They develop in response to relationships and experiences and are important throughout the entirety of the EYFS. Specific areas are considered essential skills and knowledge for successful participation in society. They grow out of the prime areas and provide context for learning.

These 7 areas of learning are further categorised into 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) which are the basis for assessment on entry to Year 1.

PRIME AREAS	
Area of learning	Early Learning Goal
PSED	Self-confidence and self-awareness Managing feelings and behaviour Making relationships
Communication and Language	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking
Physical Development	Moving and handling Health and self-care
SPECIFIC AREAS	
Literacy	Reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers Shape, space and measures
Understanding the World	People and communities The world Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Exploring and using media and materials Being imaginative

BeyondAutism Schools ensure that our individual and activity planning are based around these 7 areas of learning. Teaching and learning will take place within the classroom and outside areas as well as in the community. Within these areas children will participate in a variety of activities, with adult support when needed. These activities enable the children to engage in learning experiences that work towards pupil specific achievements when measured against the early learning goals.

Long-Term Planning

Topic planning takes place once a year in the summer term for the year ahead. Two topics are covered per term. This ensures that the children experience a variety of activities based around relevant topics for the year ahead. Topics covered are consistent across the whole school, however topic titles vary to account for the age of the learners, for example 'My Identity' would instead be named as 'All about me' for the EYFS.

Medium-Term Planning

Activity planning takes place on a half-termly basis. The EYFS plans for 10 activities per week and each of these activities are based around the current topic. Activities planned for include: Songs and Rhymes, Water Play, Role Play, Sand Play, Science, Writing, Art, Maths, Messy Play and Food Fun. Activities are adapted and differentiated by the child's tutor based on their level of ability.

Planned activities act as learning platforms for the 7 different areas. For example a writing activity may develop writing skills for one child and language skills for another. Activities are not planned to achieve one specific target or to obtain one specific observation. They are planned to enable the children to engage in new experiences and to develop skills that are relevant to their abilities, ensuring that each child can achieve success within that activity based on their own individual next steps.

Individual Plans

Pupil specific EYFS plans are developed on a half-termly basis. Each child has a half-termly overview of 'next steps' for each area of learning (identified from assessment of the Development Matters in the EYFS Profile) and an individual fortnightly observation sheet which evidences achievement towards these. (See appendix 2)

Within the half-termly overview, a minimum of three 'next steps' per area are identified (a total of 21 'next steps'). One 'next step' per area is then transferred to an individual observation sheet (IOS) for the upcoming fortnight. IOS's are handed to tutors on a weekly basis for evidence collection.

Observation ideas for each 'next step' are identified by the Instructor and placed in a box at the top of the IOS. This gives tutors indicators of where developmental skills are most likely to be observed. The observation ideas may or may not be directly linked to the planned activities for that week.

Assessments and Observations

Baseline Assessments

On entry to the EYFS, the 'Development Matters in the EYFS' Profile is used as a baseline assessment to identify current skills, behaviours and to plan for 'next steps'. The baseline assessment is carried out during each child's first three weeks in the classroom and is scored in blue. The assessment is based on a variety of evidence including direct observations from staff, photos of engagement in specific behaviours and work.

Each child in the EYFS classroom is re-assessed at the beginning of the Autumn Term for the school year ahead. Learning that has been acquired through the previous years'

teaching will be assessed as achieved at baseline and now scored in blue for upcoming year. This enables us to continue to identify year on year progress. Year on year assessments will be dated by the relevant school year meaning that the child may enter Year 1 with up to 3 Development Matters (DV) Profiles. Each of which would show the progress made in each academic year towards the ELG.

Once the Baseline Assessment has taken place the child is given a developmental age bracket so that all staff are aware of the child's ability levels and how to plan for 'next steps'. The developmental age groups are coded as follows:

-  = 8 to 20 month age range
-  = 16 to 26 month age range
-  = 22 to 36 month age range
-  = 30 to 40 month age range
-  = 40 to 60 month age range

By colour coding the age ranges it also allows for planning to happen accordingly throughout each of the 7 areas of learning. For example one child may be working within the 8-20 month age range for Physical Development, but may be working within the 30-40 month age range for reading. All planning is individualised and based on assessment and ongoing progress. This enables the child to continue to develop within each of the 7 areas of learning specific to their abilities.

Day-to-day Assessment and Observation

Day to day assessment and observation is primarily carried out by the child's ABA tutor. Additional general observations (observations that are not included in the fortnightly individual 'next steps' planning) and evidence are also collected by, parents, other tutors in the class, Senior Tutors, Instructors, Supervisors, and any other staff member familiar with the EYFS curriculum. This is to ensure that a variety of people involved with the pupil are part of their learning and development.

General observation sheets are colour coded by term. For example written and photo observations collected in the Autumn Term have an orange table, Spring Term have a green table and the Summer Term has a yellow table (see Appendix 3). This is to ensure consistency in evidence collection across the whole school and for ease of referencing.

General observation sheets are placed in a plastic wallet up on the wall in each room so that they are readily and easily accessible on the go for anyone to complete.

Observations are handed to the Instructor on a daily basis and used as evidence towards statements within the DV Profile Tracker.

On Friday of each week an A4 page of 'Wow Moments' are sent home to parents for them to collect evidence of anything significant or relevant they observe over the weekend. The parents are encouraged to complete and hand these into their child's tutor weekly.

Evidence

Evidence is collected in the form of ongoing observations, photos and videos, as well as the children's work and parents 'Wow Moments' (see Appendix 3). Preferably two pieces of evidence, for example two observations in different situations or a photo and a piece of work are used to evidence achievement of a 'next step'. This is due to many children with autism failing to generalise acquired skills across different situations, people and environments.

Each child has an Evidence File where their current DV Profile Tracker is kept, alongside any evidence towards 'next steps' achieved. Evidence Files are organised by topic, from Autumn through to Summer with additional sections for the children's work in literacy, maths and art. Evidence collected in Autumn 1 will be archived under the autumn 1 topic, evidence collected in Autumn 2 will be archived under the Autumn 2 topic and so on and so forth.

The EYFS Instructor is responsible for checking the evidence handed in by tutors and other staff members. This ensures that there is consistency in data recording for each child when evidencing. If sufficient evidence has been collected, the 'next step' is classed as achieved and highlighted off in the DV Profile Tracker in the relevant term colour highlighter. The DV profile is then referenced to the Evidence File in the following format: 'All about me, week 3' and a key is placed to list which types of evidence have been collected.

EVIDENCE KEY	
Photo	P
Child's work	W
Observation	O
Video	V
Wow Moment	WM

The piece of evidence is also referenced so that all evidence within the folder and the DV profile can be cross referenced regardless of which piece of information you are looking at. If evidence is in the form of a written observation or a photo then the standard EYFS BeyondAutism Schools template observation forms are completed and used (see Appendix 3). If the evidence is a piece of work, a video or a wow moment the following reference is used: 'All about me, week 3, PSED: *Making Relationships*, point 4.

Each DV Profile Tracker has been adapted so that within each ELG every statement has been numbered. This is for ease of reference. For example under PSED '*Making Relationships*' there are 18 numbered statements (see Appendix 4). Birth-11 months has not been numbered as 'next steps' are not planned from this development point.

Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom consists of one large main classroom split into two distinct areas, another small room which is separated from the main classroom by a corridor and two small outdoor areas. Access to all of these rooms are available throughout the school day to each child.

The main classroom consists of one area dedicated to 1-1 intensive teaching, alongside an art area, science area and access to the larger of the two outdoor areas. The rest of the classroom consists of a large carpeted area with access to toys and games, a reading corner and an ICT area with two computers.

The second room houses the following areas: maths table, writing table and role play area. Additionally there is an interactive whiteboard which is available for ICT interaction.

The larger of the outdoor areas is dedicated to physical development, with scooters, a trampoline and small playground equipment. The smaller outdoor area houses the water and sand play area as well as a small garden area for pots and plants.

Planned activities are set out at each of the areas and are left out for the children and tutors to explore and interact with throughout the week. Once activities have been completed, the tutors inform the Instructor of which activities they have completed via a tick sheet which is up on the notice board in the main classroom (see Appendix 5).

Each activity is accompanied by a sign to explain the activity objective to the child and tutor. Activities are set up on a Monday morning before the children enter the building and are removed on Friday afternoon when the children leave.

Due to the limited outdoor space and the importance of physical development in the EYFS, the EYFS class visit the local park and playground on a weekly basis. This enables the children to further develop their physical skills and additionally creates other learning opportunities such as interaction with typically developing children, road awareness and keeping safe.

The children also visit the local swimming pool once a week and attend a weekly horse-riding lesson at a riding school at Vauxhall City Farm.

Teaching Strategies

BeyondAutism Schools apply the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Behaviour (VB) in order to teach communication, language, social skills, self-help and independence, community participation and any other socially significant behaviours. Teaching strategies such as errorless teaching, error correction, task analysis, prompting and prompt fading are used alongside reinforcement in order to teach, shape and reward acquisition of new skills and behaviours that will enhance the quality of life for the children we work with.

The EYFS at BeyondAutism Schools aims to incorporate the core principles of the EYFS curriculum as much as possible. However, in certain circumstances it may not be functional, safe, or in the child's best interests to leave a child to initiate their own play or choose their own activities. In these instances the principles of ABA are applied and the EYFS is adapted dependent on the specificity of the situation.

BeyondAutism Schools believe that each child is an individual, with different needs, abilities and interests. In all aspects of our teaching these beliefs are applied and suitable teaching strategies are implemented based on the child and their stage of development.

Transitions

Before a child starts in the EYFS classroom, a transition plan is devised in order for the School to meet with previous establishments, parents and the child. Once a place at BeyondAutism Schools is confirmed a transition plan is devised and sent to the parents and the current school contact. A home visit is arranged as the first step towards transition, in order to build relationships with parents and observe and get to know the child in an environment they feel safe and secure in.

A visit to observe the child in their current school placement (if applicable) is then arranged in order to gain more information about their likes and dislikes and relevant information from professionals who currently know the child best.

A staggered transition plan into school is then implemented (if necessary) where the child will attend school for two sessions on their first visit (leaves before lunch), two sessions and lunch on their second visit, and a whole day on their third. Parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up their child on each transition day however are informed that it is 'goodbye' from reception from their first session at the school. After the first hour parents are contacted via telephone to give them an update on how their child has settled and what they are enjoying. On their first full day they are also contacted after lunch time for a brief update on how their child is settling.

The EYFS class and Year 1 class are based on the same site and therefore communication between classes is fluid. Often staff members from the Year 1 class are used as cover staff in the EYFS classroom and therefore the staff members are already familiar to the children, making transitions between classes less overwhelming.

Handovers between tutors happen prior to transitions. During this time the current tutor will inform the child's new tutor, Instructor and Supervisor of everything they need to know to make the child's transition into Year 1 as comfortable as possible. DV Profile Trackers and Evidence Files are handed over to the Year 1 Instructor at the beginning of the term.

Staff Training

On entering the EYFS classroom, all staff are trained by the Instructor, Supervisor or relevant trained staff member (qualified teacher or a staff member with a full and relevant EYFS level 3 qualification). Staff members will be given an overview of the EYFS, their responsibilities within an EYFS classroom and how to collect observations and evidence. Additionally all staff receive the following relevant training when starting the school as an ABA Tutor: Behaviour, Child Protection, Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Safeguarding

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them" (Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, 2014). BeyondAutism Schools take all necessary steps to ensure children's safety and welfare at all times. We will do this by: safeguarding children, ensuring the suitability of adults who have contact with the children, promoting good health, managing behaviour and maintaining records, policies and procedures (see appendix 6 for relevant policies).

Appendices

The following documents are attached for information and reference:

- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2014)
- EYFS planning templates
- General observation sheets – written and photo
- Development Matters in the EYFS Profile Tracker
- EYFS Activity Tick Sheet
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Recruitment Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy

Last review: November 2015

Date of next review: November 2018

Review group: Standards Committee