

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



September 2024

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"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 fulfil their potential." (Early Years Statutory Framework, January 2024).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. This policy outlines the provision Park Hall Academy offers to all its learners aged 3 to 5 years. The Early Years Foundation stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate key stage. Early years education is the foundation upon which our learners begin their learning journey from novice to expert, building strong foundations for future learning.

Intent

At Park Hall Academy we ensure that all members of the Park Hall family contribute to the life of our happy, friendly and successful school. Our values of honesty, enjoyment, achievement, respect and teamwork are at the heart of everything we do. We have the highest aspirations for all learners (little me aspires to be), high quality learning and teaching promote excitement and enthusiasm for learning, which enables all to be successful, independent, confident and resilient learners (**Quality & Consistency**). We are passionate about enabling our learners to develop a lifelong love of learning and see their futures as full of possibilities (**A Secure Foundation**). We are an inclusive and caring community, together we create a nurturing, safe & secure environment where each child is valued and recognises that they are special and important. At Park Hall Academy every child is valued as a unique individual. This ensures that everyone feels a sense of belonging to the Park Hall family. Here everyone is welcomed, loved and unique (**Equality of Opportunity**). We endeavour to work in close partnership with our families, continuing the learning journey together. Parents are partners in their child's learning journey and through collaboration, together we enable each child to be successful (**Partnership Working**).

"When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow." (Development Matters September 2020, revised July 2021).

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We adhere to the statutory framework of the EYFS.

At Park Hall Academy the four guiding principles that shape practice in our EYFS setting 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 way over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Foundation Stage Curriculum (Learning Journey)

At Park Hall Academy, we plan and implement an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable children to achieve the early learning goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. The three prime areas are:

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

They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

Children are also supported through the four specific areas;

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

These areas strengthen and develop the three prime areas and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

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Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful, first hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. At Park Hall Academy, our planning ensures that each learner has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful activities and through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. During children's play, early years practitioners model and interact to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. At Park Hall Academy learners demonstrate their admirable attitudes and positive behaviours through these key characteristics.

Playing and Exploring

Children will have purposeful and meaningful opportunities to investigate, experience and explore. Through engagement in play, children explore and enquire, developing learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build on ideas, think creatively alongside other children as well as independently. They communicate, investigate and solve problems building relationships and collaborative skills.

Active Learning

Children will have time and space to persevere when encountering challenges. Children take pleasure in celebrating their own and others achievements and successes. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children develop independence, control and ownership of their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children are actively encouraged and supported to develop their own ideas, make connections between their learning and develop independent strategies when completing challenges. Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support and extend children's thinking and help them to make connections through modelling, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Learners access resources and move independently around the learning environment; enabling them to extend their learning.



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Planning & Teaching

Our EYFS pedagogy implements each area of learning and development through planned, purposeful play, taking into account the particular strengths and needs of the children that have been identified through observation and assessment.

Wherever possible, learning is centered around a high-quality text to inspire and engage children. At Park Hall Academy, we believe that 'Reading Is The Key To All Learning,' and we place great importance on developing children's communication and language skills. Immersion in stories and texts enriches our learners vocabulary. We utilise research based, standardised assessments to identify next steps for individual learners.

We follow the DFE validated phonics program, 'Success For All Phonics' (FFT) beginning in nursery with the 'First Steps in Phonics'. This ensures that all children are equipped with the skills to enable them to flourish at each stage of their learning journey.

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Practitioners support all learners to explore, experiment and discover. Repeating activities develops a secure understanding of early mathematical concepts. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply understanding, such as using manipulatives, our children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built.

We draw on a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. We plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively across all areas of learning, as well as offering the opportunities to develop their cultural capital (where each child arrives with a number of experiences and ideas based on their own personal circumstances).

Practitioners working with our youngest children, focus strongly on the three prime areas - building the foundations for learning and creating a thirst for acquiring new skills and knowledge. Staff also take into account individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider where additional support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Our planning reflects our ambitious intent for all children. Practitioners are expected to develop strong continuous provision, and plan enhanced provision and additional adult directed activities to support this. As children progress through the EYFS, key group work, adult directed and whole class learning & teaching will be planned, as appropriate for the age and stage of the development of the children.

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Observation and Assessment

At Park Hall Academy, we observe and assess children's development and learning to:

- Understand the unique child, recognising their skills, knowledge and unique achievements.
- Measure progress from a starting point; recognising that children are unique and develop at different rates.
- Identify the next steps for learning

Observations are fundamental. Practitioners are experienced and skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. We recognise that our practitioners 'know' our children as a result of the high quality interactions that professionals engage children in. Formal and informal observations of the children then lead the direction of the adult led and enhanced planning of the continuous provision in the learning environment. We believe that if we are capturing the moment, we cannot be part of the moment therefore we only record relevant and significant observations which are saved to learners individual Showbie folders.

Parents are recognised as partners in their child's learning journey and we value any observations parents and carers share. Parents and carers are regularly informed of their child's progress through parent consultations and an annual written report which summarises their child's achievements in relation to the aspects of learning. Practitioners will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers and any relevant professionals.

Statutory Assessments

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Children are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging)

The profile reflects our observations and assessments and discussions with parents. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers, the local authority and the child's new teacher to support their transition into year one. Our children's EYFS profile is moderated internally referring to the early learning goals set out in the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage and in partnership with other trust schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.



Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Communication & Language

At Park Hall Academy we place great importance on the development of children's spoken language which underpins all seven areas of learning and development. We support children in the development of conversational skills as these skills are fundamental in developing the foundations for language and cognitive development. We develop a language rich environment which promotes the acquisition of new vocabulary. Practitioners model and extend children's language effectively through repeated and purposeful interactions.

Through support and modelling from practitioners and sensitive questioning that invites learners to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures. Reading frequently to children and actively engaging them in stories, non-fiction texts, rhymes and poetry, provides children with extensive opportunities to learn and embed new words in a range of contexts, giving children the opportunity to thrive.

Inclusion

At Park Hall Academy, every member of the Park Hall family is welcomed loved and valued for the unique individual that they are. Difference is embraced and celebrated.

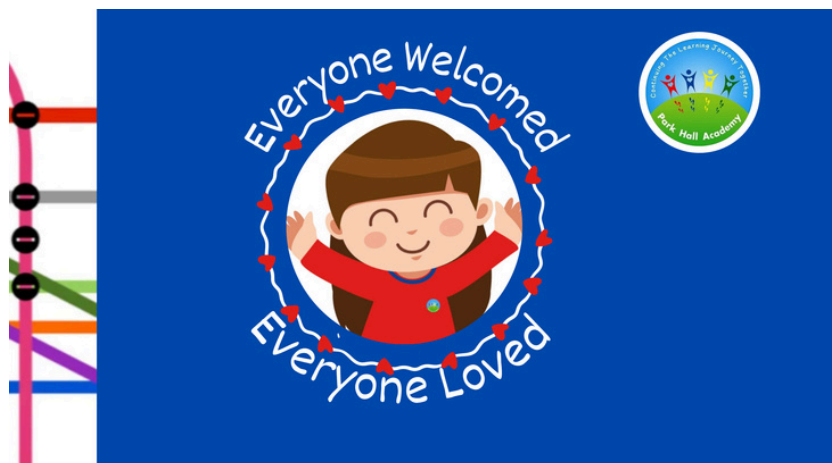
We begin to teach even our youngest learners about the importance of protected characteristics such as disability which we refer to as a special ability.

We value every child as an individual, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan and deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports each at their own pace.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give every child the support that they need and in doing so, we work closely with parents and external agencies.

All children receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities are adapted accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, evidence based intervention programs are implemented and the impact of these is closely monitored and measured.

Our highly experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator supports practitioners and parents in ensuring that provision meets the needs of all learners so that each child can flourish.



Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Parents/Carers as Partners in their Child's Learning Journey

We strive to create and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate in their child's learning journey through attending workshops and special events planned throughout the year - together we create magical memorable moments.

We provide accessible information to parents/carers to enable them to support their child's learning journey. For example, sharing the focus phoneme of the week through video message via Class Dojo which enables parents/carers to hear the correct articulation.

We recognise that we are 'TEAM' Park Hall and that parents/carers are members of our Park Hall family. As such, we work together to support all members of our family on their learning journey. We actively encourage parents to share any worries or concerns at the earliest opportunity to enable us to work together for the benefit of the child. Parents are the experts on their child and we recognise the value of partnership working.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. At Park Hall Academy children's safety and welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that 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. All members of the Park Hall family will always act in the best interests of the child. We recognise the importance of creating a safe, secure and nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and respected and we provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks.

We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

At Park Hall Academy we place great value on listening to the pupil voice. This begins in the early years where children recognise that they have a voice.

All adults within our academy have a full and active part to play in protecting our children from harm and as such they will always exercise professional curiosity. We work closely with parents and carers to ensure their understanding of the schools responsibilities to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, which may include the need to make referrals to other agencies in some situations. We work closely with other professionals to ensure our children have the best support in their learning development. These can include, our Extended Homeschool Link Worker, school nurses, health visitors and the Children's Advice and Duty Team.

Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy



Our ICARE characters and ethos underpin all aspects of Personal, Social & Emotional development. We seek to enable our children to build a strong sense of identity, celebrate their character strengths, appreciate and be thankful, be positive and build successful relationships with all members of the Park Hall family showing empathy towards others. We all recognise that, to be kind, is the most important thing to aspire to be.

Practitioners actively promote positive well-being which is achieved in many ways including:

- Creating a sense of belonging to the Park Hall family
- Introducing children to our 'ICARE' characters
- Everyone Welcomed, Loved and Unique stories
- Weekly celebration assemblies which include celebrating our Attendance Heroes, Pride of Park Hall winner, achievement badge celebrations and more
- Spreading Kindness Like Confetti' recognising that being kind is the most important thing to aspire to be. Sharing kindness cards, compliments and positivity, building positive strong relationships and admirable attitudes.

Safeguarding and Welfare

We have a team of practitioners with a current Paediatric First Aid certificate (PFA) within our setting who are available at all times when children are present (including on educational visits and within our before and after school provision).

We promote the good health of children within our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, oral health and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. (See First Aid policy).

We promote the importance of healthy active lifestyles through the delivery of our curriculum. For example, in physical development children learn about the connections between healthy bodies and healthy minds.

We promote the importance of all learners becoming 'responsible digital citizens' in an age appropriate way.

Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's stage of development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, encouragement to wipe their bottom after toileting and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases intimate care is to do with personal hygiene. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. It is our aim that all children should be independent and we consider our role to be one of supporting and encouraging rather than doing.

Promoting Positive Behaviours

In our Early Years, children are encouraged to be motivated and excited to participate in the many exciting and engaging learning opportunities. We develop "admirable attitudes" to learning through play, our children are encouraged to share and co-operate well, demonstrating high levels of self-regulation and respect for all. We believe that, "We Can and We Will", we learn through our, "Marvellous Mistakes" and believe in, "The Power of Yet". As a result, our little learners persevere in the face of challenges, developing resilience and a can do approach.

Positive behaviour is expected and promoted. All practitioners promote our school vision and values which lie at the HEART of all we do (Honesty, Enjoyment, Achievement, Respect and Teamwork).

Equal Opportunities

In line with the academies Equal Opportunity policy, all areas of provision will be made accessible to all children regardless of age, sex, gender, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, family background, special educational need, special ability. At Park Hall Academy no child will be disadvantaged or discriminated against. (See St Barts Trust Equality and Diversity policy).

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child minders. This supports a smooth transition.

We provide photographs and welcome videos to our families and offer home visits prior to children starting Nursery. This enables practitioners to begin to build positive relationships with children in a safe and familiar environment in which the child feels comfortable. This also enables parents and carers to share information, ask questions and share any worries or concerns they may have.

In addition to this, children attend "Stay and Play" sessions in the Nursery to meet all practitioners and to become comfortable in and excited by their new enabling learning environment.

Children beginning Reception participate in a week of transition days to meet their new teachers and practitioners.

Reception children are supported in their transition into Year 1 as they also engage in transition opportunities.

At each transition point, practitioners meet to share their extensive knowledge on each child's unique interests and talents, development, progress and achievements. As a result children are well prepared for the next steps in the learning journey.