

EYFS Curriculum Principles

This document should be read in conjunction with the Trust Curriculum Principles

Our mission

Our mission is to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North.

- All children are entitled to a curriculum and to the powerful knowledge¹ which will open doors and maximise their life chances:
 - our academies challenge social inequality by instilling shared and powerful knowledge
 - children need powerful knowledge to understand and interpret the world, and to think in new and unexpected ways. Without it, they remain dependent upon those who have it
 - shared and powerful knowledge is verified through learned communities e.g. universities, research and subject associations
 - powerful knowledge is cognitively superior to that needed for daily life, transcending and liberating students from their daily experience
 - shared knowledge is a foundation for a just and sustainable democracy. Citizens educated together share an understanding of our common values, and can understand, cooperate and shape the world together²

How?

We establish high-performing non-faith academies which maximise attainment, value diversity, develop character and build cultural capital.

- Our focus on powerful knowledge begins in EYFS through a carefully planned curriculum and focus on vocabulary acquisition. Key knowledge is carefully chosen throughout the curriculum and builds on previous learning and experiences. Skills and understanding are seen as forms of knowledge; the EYFS curriculum has an emphasis on procedural knowledge.
- The curriculum should be planned vertically and horizontally giving thought to the optimum knowledge sequence for building secure schema. EYFS Leads should have an overview of the primary curriculum in order to lay the foundations for KS1.
- The EYFS curriculum should focus on closing gaps, early intervention and developing the core literacy and numeracy skills for success.
- The EYFS curriculum should emphasise the prime areas of learning to enable students to be confident in other areas of learning.
- Continuous provision with high quality resources should provide rich experiences to develop successful learners. The stimulating environment directs students in their independent learning. We value play and the power of autonomous learning and there is space to allow students to follow their own interests.
- Quality adult to child interactions happen at all times throughout the day in order to teach the curriculum alongside the directed learning. Practitioners support students to make relationships and self-regulate, allowing them to develop personally and socially.
- The EYFS curriculum should recognise the importance of early language development and have this at its core. Communication and language progression is planned for over the year, with a constant focus during adult to child interactions. All practitioners model and recast high standards of correct English and ambitious vocabulary which supports language acquisition.
- Students will be taught to read, through systematic synthetic phonics and sequenced English lessons, allowing them to access texts independently and become lifelong readers.
- The EYFS timetable should be adjusted as students progress through the year; consequently, the amount of directed / undirected learning time changes throughout the year.

Measure

By the age of 18, we want every student to have the choice of university or a high-quality apprenticeship.

- The EYFS curriculum lays the foundations for life-long learning and confident, independent, curious students.
- Students will leave EYFS with an understanding of themselves in the context of their immediate surroundings and the wider world. They will be able to speak about themselves confidently and positively. They will share their understanding with others and articulate their reasoning. They will use precise, subject specific vocabulary and speak in complete sentences.
- A smooth transition into KS1 leading to accelerated learning in Year 1 is the key measure of a successful EYFS.

¹ M Young, D Lambert *et al.*, *Knowledge and the Future School: Curriculum and Social Justice*, London, 2014

² These bullet points are adapted from work by Carolyn Roberts, Headteacher, Thomas Tallis School



EYFS Assessment Principles

At Dixons, the most important assessment data in our academies comes from formative assessment. Every day, we use specific and repetitive minute-by-minute formative assessment and other leading indicators to help shape students' learning.

We focus on teaching and interaction, and through a well-structured, broad and ambitious EYFS curriculum, we ensure progress is rapid for all of our students. Although assessment will always form a meaningful part of teachers and practitioners' daily role, we ensure that this is proportional to its impact on development.

How?

- We assess what students know, understand, remember and can do.
- We focus on interaction: assessment is based on the interaction between staff and students; this knowledge is then used to shape future interactions and teaching.
- We use Development Matters to support practitioners' thinking about progression; we refer to and understand this document; however, we do not use it as a tool to track students.
- Observation checkpoints in the prime areas are used as a guide to make sure there is progress through our curriculum throughout the nursery and reception years.
- We complete the EYFSP for every child at the end of their reception year and assess whether they are 'emerging' or 'expected' in all 17 areas.
- The Early Learning Goals are used to assess whether a student is at the expected level at the end of their reception year.
- We focus on how well staff know all students; we do not focus on gathering evidence to support this.
- We only record what is useful; schools are free to decide which method of recording to use and what system is best to handle the information they want to record.
- We need to be certain that students are making progress; there is ongoing conversation between practitioners, and whole phase meetings are held within individual schools.
- We moderate in our own settings and across our Trust to ensure common understanding. We use the terminology of 'expected' and 'emerging' to describe how students are performing throughout the EYFS.
- Leaders understand the primary curriculum, beginning to end, to enable EYFS staff to ensure students are ready for what comes next.

How do class teachers use this information to support students?

- Assessment is used to enable us to plan lessons and activities to ensure all students progress.
- Assessment is used to identify strengths and barriers in learning. Support and scaffolds can then be planned for those who are not making progress and to ensure all students are accessing and benefiting from the curriculum. Academies are free to choose their own tools / documents to do this.
- Assessment ensures that our EYFS curriculum is accessible for all students; we are always reviewing and checking our curriculum is right for our students.
- The focus for class teachers is on ensuring that evidence about learning is used to adjust instruction to better meet students' needs.
- We share this information with parents during parent feedback meetings and in our end of year report.
- We use this information to communicate with Year 1 teachers; assessment informs and supports transition into Year 1.

During academy Data Days, teachers use all the information they have on every individual student to identify and to plan to address critical knowledge-gaps and misconceptions. Bespoke interventions may be targeted at individuals, small groups or the whole class and take place throughout the cycle. The curriculum may be adjusted (prevention) to ensure all students are included.

What does this look like for families?

In EYFS, we report through parent meetings throughout the year. In Cycle 3, we report the EYFS outcomes. In addition, we give a teacher comment and a key next step for each student.

A standard student report is used across our Trust for all years. Attainment is coloured red if a student's attainment is below expected (emerging) and is coloured white if a student's attainment is at expected (i.e. has achieved the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception year).

