

The Aylesbury Vale Academy Trust



The Aylesbury Vale Academy

RESPECT | ASPIRATION | RESILIENCE

EYFS Policy

Policy Reference:	AVA 040
Description:	This policy aims to describe our Early Years curriculum and show how the Academy Primary Early Years department strives to give children the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential
Status:	Statutory Policy
Policy Audience:	Staff, Students and Parents/Carers
Academy Contact:	Academy Principal
Other related AVA policies and procedures:	Equality Policy, Child Protection Policy, E-Safety Procedures, Safeguarding Procedures, Intimate care policy, Preschool Admissions Policy, Admissions Policy
Governor Committee:	Full Governing Body
Approved by the Governing Board on:	22.01.2025
Latest Date for Next Review:	22.01.2026
Version + Schedule of Amendments:	V4
Signed:	
Date of Signature:	22.01.2025
In reviewing this policy the Governing Board has had regard to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged by this policy.	

Aylesbury Vale Academy Early Years Policy

Our vision:

- A clear, progressive, knowledge and skills-based curriculum for 2–5-year olds
- A chance to learn skills for life and growing independence
- A strong emphasis on Parent Partnership and supporting family units
- A curriculum that focuses on child development and skills
- A strong start to their learning with a shared pedagogical approach.
- A clear focus on embedding Communication and Language in all areas of a child's learning
- Prioritising settling and forming attachments with Family Key Carers
- An enabling environment with enhancements and invitations to play
- Child-led interests explored and developed
- Adult-led opportunities to expand on their learning and development through objective-led planning

Intent

1. Aims:

- That children at the Aylesbury Vale Academy access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, updated 11 October 2024.

3. Structure of Early Years:

- Preschool: 2–4-year-olds
- Reception: 4–5-year-olds

At The Aylesbury Vale Academy, we have a 2–4-year-old preschool provision, with AM, PM as well as full time spaces; consisting of 30hr funded/privately funded or a combination of partially funded and privately funded; with a total of 48 children at any time.

Eligible parents will be able to access their funded entitlement hours.

Please refer to the Preschool Admission policy for further information.

We also have 2 reception classes, offering a total of 60 places full school time hours.

At The Aylesbury Vale Academy, we offer an enhanced transition with stay and plays provided in the summer term prior to starting. Then in September we operate a staggered approach to our intake to ensure the children have time to settle into their surroundings and practitioners can get to know them. We offer a three-point entry into our preschool for Autumn 1, Spring 1, and Summer 1.

Please refer to the Preschool Admission policy for further information.

We have a highly trained team, consisting of our Early Years Leader as Preschool Manager and Teacher, Two Room Leaders, and three Key Carers.

The two Reception classes have three experienced teachers, with each class supported by its own Learning Support Assistant.

All classes have access to our shared outdoor learning environment during free flow, with the continuous provision and areas of learning, spread across the space.

4. The Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework (updated 11 October 2024)

We offer a bespoke, broad, and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support pupils' personal development, prepare pupils for their next stage of education and develop the whole child.

Each term offers a new over-arching theme in Preschool and Reception- 'Our Stories,' 'Our Lives' and 'Our World.' The themes enable the Teachers and Key Carers to plan and develop the children's learning opportunities, along-side the children's own interests and lines of enquiry.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Within these, the EYFS setting works to ensure that:

- Children develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning including, Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically.

As the children enter Preschool and Reception, we aim to develop the Prime areas of learning. As we get to know the children and they settle, they form attachments with their Teachers and Key Carers. We work with the children to ensure they feel safe in our school, which enables them to access the enabling environment with the support of their trusted adult.

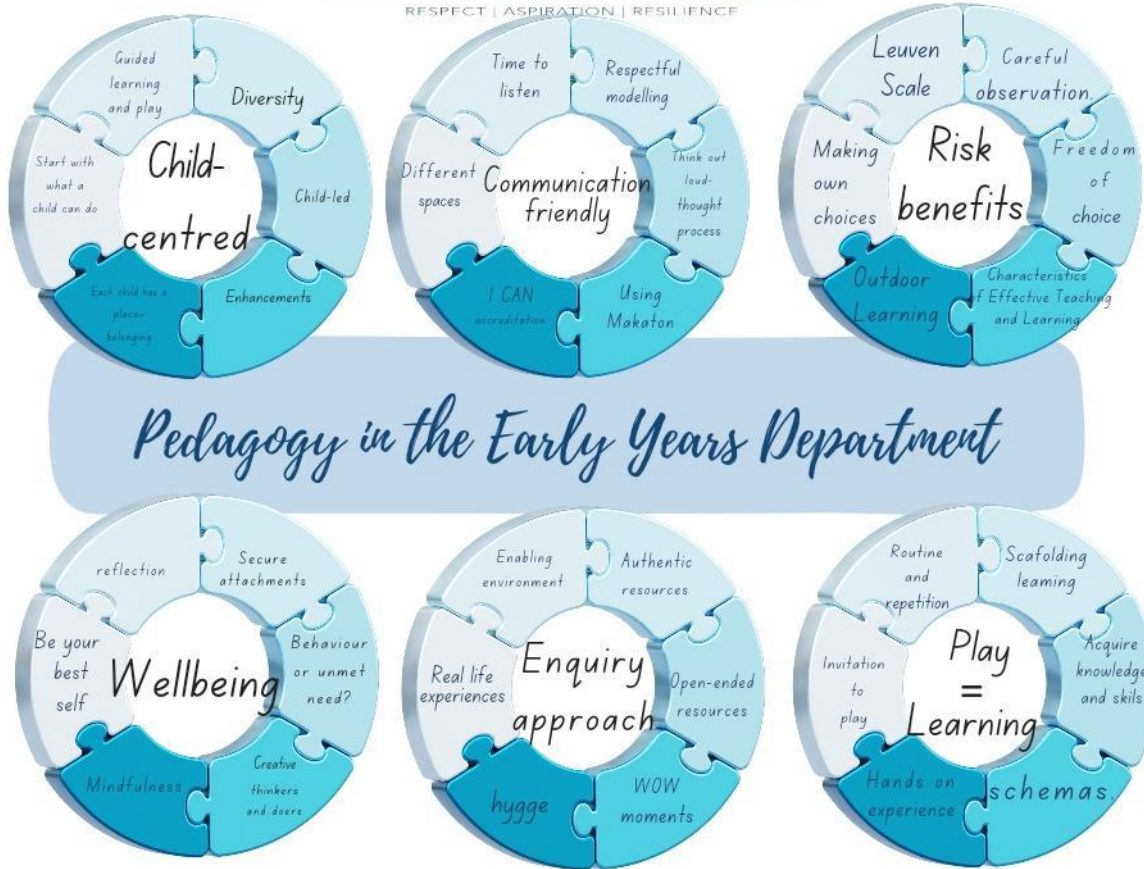
We will use the Non-Statutory document, *Development Matters* as a framework for our Curriculum. We will work with the children towards the Early Learning Goals.

We aim to build upon what the children already know and can do and to develop a disposition to learn and a positive attitude to learning, guarding against early failure. The children will be encouraged to think for themselves and develop skills of confidence, independence, and cooperation.

We aim to ensure that all children feel secure, included, and valued, and to work with and alongside Parents and Key Carers encouraging them to join us at every opportunity.

Implementation:**5. Our Pedagogy**

Our pedagogy is child-centred, firmly based around communication friendly, enabling environments, encapsulating wellbeing, ensuring carefully considered risk-benefits, and a strong emphasis on individual enquiry within our curriculum, where play = learning.



6. Planning

Regular meetings will be held with all members of staff in the Foundation stage. Evaluation, assessment, and observations will be used to inform future planning. All practitioners will be encouraged to contribute to future planning which seeks to ensure access to a broad range of experiences, which meet the children's needs.

We do not make a distinction between play and work (play=learning), thus we aspire to achieve our aims in a safe, friendly environment where the emphasis is on fun and physical participation through a variety of child-led enquiry. We incorporate key calendar events and celebrations, linked to children's culture and religions, 'in the moment' topics of interest, alongside flexible themes, as well as 'invitations to play.' All these aspects are skilfully prepared for the cohort's needs by the Teachers and Key Carers. We put a huge value on the contribution of all children and offer them a safe, supportive learning environment to engage in their play.

7. Teaching

Using a range of teaching strategies, the Early Years practitioners will be supporting their learning, extending their knowledge, and understanding, helping them to gain confidence and develop skills.

To ensure this, we will provide a well-planned and resourced environment. This is often referred to as the 'third teacher' alongside the parent and the teacher. The neutral, calm, and 'homely' environment gives children rich and stimulating experiences through a mixture of free choice and directed activities. The activities will be carefully differentiated to cater for children's individual needs.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

8. The Outside Classroom

At the AVA, outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years, and it has a positive impact on children's development. The outdoor environment offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active thus develop their gross motor skills. It also offers opportunities to learn and play in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment, at the AVA provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure that each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Preschool and Reception have a separate outdoor garden and all of the children have free-flow access during continuous provision. The continuous provision has a range of learning opportunities including a mud kitchen, sand and water play, role play/ stage area, loose parts, balancing equipment, large scale construction, wheeled vehicles and literacy and mathematics opportunities. The outdoor environment is both a teaching and learning environment where there is a balance of child-led and adult-led learning.

9. Experiences

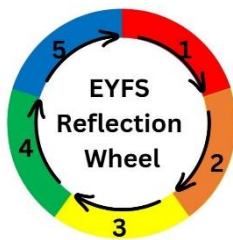
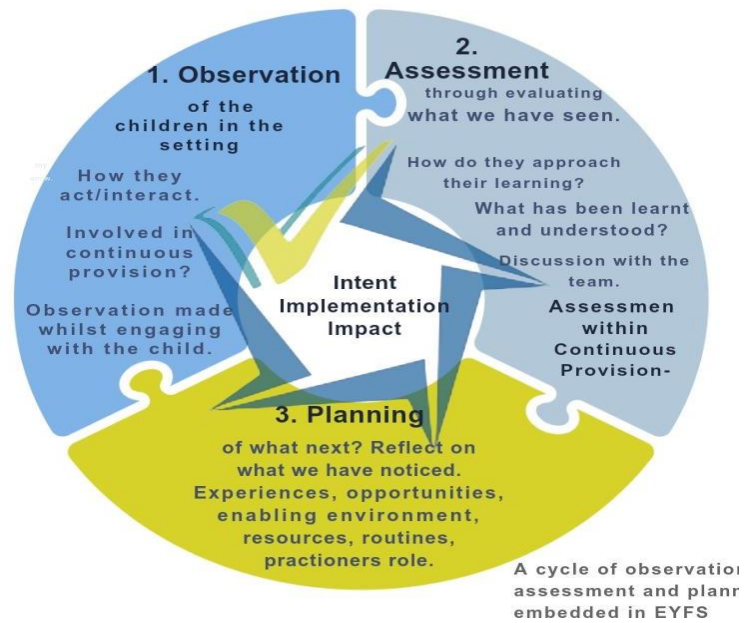
Alongside and enhancing these areas of learning we will aim to provide a wide variety of experiences which are well resourced and popular with the children. Therefore, things will change due to children's interests and fascinations. These areas will also be used to fulfil specific learning objectives as appropriate. Visits and visitors as appropriate to complement and enhance these experiences.

Impact

10. Evaluation and Assessment

Here we will see the impact of the quality interactions, careful observations, evolving enabling environment and the growth within the 'unique child.' The evaluation and assessment are crucial factors which enable us to plan and deliver the Foundation stage curriculum. Therefore, we work with parents/carers to establish a baseline of learning for all children entering our setting and plan our curriculum to stretch and strengthen this learning. We will use Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) alongside our own observations to

assess children on their entry into Reception. These initial assessments will then be updated regularly using their online Learning Journey – Evidence Me – which will be shared with parents, as part of the Parent Partnership. All learning within the Foundation stage will be carefully evaluated and assessed by observation and discussion, written, physical, photographic, and recorded evidence. Activities will be evaluated on completion regarding fulfilment of learning objectives and children’s progress monitored. This information will then be used to inform future planning. Where appropriate, work will be marked in line with the whole school marking policy.



Children also have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning, incorporating the Academy Reflection Wheel. Children begin in Reception during small adult-led groups. The importance of developing these skills builds resilience in tasks and allows autonomy over their ideas for self-assessment.

11. Parent Partnership

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. Parents/carers play a key role in children’s development, and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with the people at home to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents and carers to make contributions and share information about their child’s learning and development through our online learning platform, Evidence me.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child’s progress and development. The 2-year-old progress check and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) helps to provide parents/carers with a well-round picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key carer who helps ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key carer supports parents/carers in guiding their child’s development at home. In Reception this is the class teacher, with support from the Learning support assistant, who is a Key Practitioner.

We aim to strengthen our parent/carer partnerships by:

- Offering home visits for children new to the setting and Meet the Teacher meetings.

- Providing Stay and Play sessions for preschool and new Reception transition times.
- Inviting parents/carers in for workshops.
- Distributing half-termly newsletters.
- Access to the Primary Phase pastoral team.
- Organising events throughout the year, where parents are encouraged to join us in school.
- Offering parent questionnaires and responding to essential feedback
- Liaising with the Children's Centre.
- Working with outside agencies to support children/ families with additional needs

12. Health and Safety

Staff in EYFS have either Paediatric First Aid Training or First Aid in school training. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. They are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken daily for all key areas and before we embark on any school outings.

13. Snack time

Snack time is used to encourage children to listen to their own bodies and decide when they are hungry or thirsty. Children can make the decision when to have their snack. Snack time is an ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to support our ethos of being a healthy school with healthy snacks. All children are seated whilst they eat. An adult is always present during these times to support peeling fruit, pouring drinks and ensure safe eating.

14. Transition between Year Groups

Preschool

The 2–4-year-olds share a learning environment and free flow together inside and outside. Parents/ Carers are offered home visits, where two members of staff will come to spend time completing transition documents and getting to know the children, building relationships. Children are invited to settling sessions, we ensure each child has a good start by establishing relationships straight away to assist with attachment; always referring to the unique child and their individual needs.

Preschool to Reception

Transition begins in the Autumn term, the year before they are due to start, when school applications are completed. Parents will have the opportunity to look around the Early Years setting and across the rest of the school.

The Early Years Lead, or a member of the Reception team will make contact and if possible, visit our new starters before they begin with us, this establishes good relationships early on, good lines of communication between settings and essential support for the transitioning children.

During the Summer term, Preschool, 3–4-year-olds and the new joiners have stay and play opportunities in the Reception learning environment. They will then have the opportunity to meet and make friendships with the children joining from other nurseries. This provides them with the opportunity to get to know the staff, environment, and routines in Reception.

There will be a 'Welcome to the AVA' meeting for Reception parent/carers in the summer term. In the Autumn, parents/ carers will have a 1:1 meeting with the class teacher, completing transition documents into school. This will be an opportunity to share further information and a chance for the child to spend time with the class Key practitioner.

Reception to Year 1

Over the course of the year Reception children will make use of primary school facilities such as the hall, library, learning resources area, and KS1 playground. In the Summer term Reception children will have weekly opportunities to visit the Year 1 classrooms to get to know the environment and introduce them to some class routines.

At the end of each school year, teachers and practitioners meet to share information on each child with their new class teacher/ key person. This will include end of year assessment data and help to build a picture of the whole unique child for the next practitioner.

15. Staffing Ratios

In line with statutory guidance- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage that applies last updated 11 October 2024.

16. Inclusion

All pupils in Aylesbury Vale Academy are entitled to a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. Both able children and those with Special Educational Needs are considered, and the curriculum adapted to suit all levels of ability. Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Preschool age onwards. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible through targeted interventions. Outlined in our Inclusion Policy.

17. Equal Opportunities

Our Equal opportunities information can be found in our Annual Equality information and Objective's report

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy See Intimate care policy
Special Educational Needs	Our Special Educational Needs procedures are outlined in our SEND policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy

Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Preschool Admissions Policy Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
Monitoring Arrangements	This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing body every year