



**Alma  
Primary**

עולם חסד יבנה  
A world built on kindness

## **Alma Primary EYFS policy**

Responsibility: *AHT-FS Leader*  
GB committee responsible: *Learning and Children*  
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### **Plan Development**

<b>Change</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>
Updated	VSR	March 22

## Alma Primary EYFS Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Children join the Reception Class at Alma Primary when they are 4 years old. Many children have attended a nursery or play group before they arrive and so their journey through the EYFS has often already begun before starting primary school.
- 1.2. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Alma Primary we recognise that the early years are crucial in terms of children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.
- 1.3. Education in the EYFS aims to develop key learning skills such as listening, speaking, concentration, perseverance and cooperation with others, in addition to learning essential English, maths and science skills.
- 1.4. EYFS learning at Alma Primary is based on developing curiosity and a love of learning so that every child can become a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.
- 1.5. Our approach to inclusivity rooted in Jewish values is a core component of our Early Years education, ensuring children gain an initial connection to Judaism and Jewish spirituality, along with a positive exposure to Ivrit (Hebrew) as a modern foreign language.

### 2. School Aims

- 2.1. At Alma Primary we aim to achieve high academic standards by encouraging independent learning in a stimulating and child-centred environment. Our vision for all children at Alma Primary is that they reach their full potential and embody 'a world built on kindness' in all that they do.
- 2.2. We support and challenge our children to make maximum progress, whatever their starting point. We create a fun, caring environment which encourages mutual trust, tolerance, friendship, confidence and wellbeing.
- 2.3. We aim for the children to develop over the course of time into responsible, self-confident, aware young people ready to embrace the challenges of contemporary Britain. Creativity, in all its aspects, is integrated throughout the curriculum.

### 3. Overarching Principles

- 3.1. The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:
  - **A unique child** – developing into resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals;
  - **Positive relationships** – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent;
  - **Enabling environments** – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child;
  - **Learning and developing** – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.
- 3.2. At Alma Primary, we ensure that:
  - All children feel included, valued, secure and happy;
  - The learning space is clean, lively and stimulating;
  - The EYFS curriculum is well planned and carefully differentiated to ensure that early years' experience builds on what children already know and can do independently whilst promoting suitable challenge;

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- We encourage self-confidence and a positive attitude to learning;
- There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults, as well as those that they plan or initiate themselves;
- Children are encouraged to make choices and develop interests; they are given freedom to be creative and to experiment;
- Practitioners observe, respond and intervene appropriately to engage children in the learning process;
- The Jewish values and ethos of the school are woven into the day as well as into the learning framework;
- The learning environment is enriching, engaging and promotes a good level of challenge;
- The premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose;
- The classroom and resources are well organised to promote and develop independence;
- Parents/carers and practitioners work together to support children in their development;
- Children's achievements are valued and celebrated;
- Children are taught to respect each other and the things in our classroom;
- Records, policies and procedures are maintained for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### 4. The EYFS Approach

- 4.1. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) provide learning in Reception which is in line with the EYFS (2021) Statutory Framework and the school's curriculum plans. In partnership with parents/carers, the school promotes the learning and development of children to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.
- 4.2. The EYFS provision and practice is based on practitioner interactions and observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in school are planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.
- 4.3. There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas" and four are "specific areas." These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:
- 4.4. The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:
  - Communication and language:
    - Listening, attention
    - Understanding
    - Speaking
  - Physical development:
    - Moving and handling health and self-care
  - Personal, social and emotional development:
    - Understanding emotions
    - Sense of self
    - Making relationships
- 4.5. The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:
  - Literacy:
    - Comprehension
    - Word reading
    - Writing

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- Mathematics:
  - Numbers
  - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world:
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design:
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

4.6. The characteristics of effective learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, use what they know and are willing to try new things
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

4.7. At Alma Primary we follow the guidance on independent play set out in the EYFS framework (2021), which states: "Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults."

4.8. Experiences and activities planned will reflect the different ways that children learn inside the classroom and in the outdoor environment. The outside environment extends inside learning and promotes physical and cognitive challenge. At Alma Primary, we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

4.9. Encompassing within the Alma ethos, the EYFS team weaves the schools approach to Jewish learning and SMSC within the children's learning experiences.

## 5. Reading

5.1. As each child learns at a different rate, their progression through blending and sight recognition will vary. When the child has a secure understanding of how to blend sounds to build words, they will take home a reading book.

5.2. The children read with someone in the Reception Team at least once a week on an individual basis in addition whole class story time. Each child is sent home with a reading record detailing to parents/carers which books to read at home. Parents/ carers are encouraged to write comments in the logs to share child's progress about their reading at home.

5.3. Children also have a weekly library slot where they can borrow a book to take home from our school library in order to further promote a love of reading.

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### **6. Phonics and Ivrit**

- 6.1. Children are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop and extend their phonics skills in Reception. This will also be continued into Key Stage 1, and into 2 where necessary, to support those children who do not yet have the phonic knowledge and skills they need.
- 6.2. The school uses a phonics scheme which meets the requirements of the DfE guidance to plan daily phonics sessions, which ensure progression and effective, high quality teaching.
- 6.3. Discrete phonics lessons take place daily. Half of the class will have phonics for 30 minutes with the class teacher whilst the other half of the class has an Ivrit lesson, where they learn the Hebrew language. This structure enables high quality targeted teaching in smaller groups for both phonics and Ivrit.
- 6.4. Phonics lessons follow the structure of 'Review, Teach, Practise, Apply' to ensure that children are consolidating phonic knowledge and skills over time and that they are able to apply them in context. Lessons proceed at pace and incorporate a wide range of practical and interactive activities to engage the children.
- 6.5. Where possible, links between phonics knowledge and understanding are made to learning in both reading and writing.
- 6.6. A range of resources are used which are appropriate for the level at which the children are working. They include practical resources such as: magnetic letters, instruments, letter fans.

### **7. Recording Progress**

- 7.1. EYFS staff currently use Tapestry to record progress, which is a secure online learning journey system showing the personal learning journey of each child on a secure server.
- 7.2. The site is password protected and can be accessed on a range of devices.
- 7.3. Observations, photographs and videos documenting key moments of learning and progress are recorded on the system. The evidence collected is a record of each child's experiences and achievements during their time in Reception and is linked to the current Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

### **8. Assessment and Monitoring**

- 8.1. All EYFS planning is organised in advance. The EYFS leader and Head teacher monitor curriculum coverage, teaching and standards of achievement.
- 8.2. In line with the school's marking policy, EYFS staff scribe and mark work in green pen, in addition to writing comments from the children. Whenever possible EYFS staff give children immediate oral feedback and mark the work with the child present.
- 8.3. Termly assessment grids are completed for all areas of learning in relation to the Early Learning Goals. These inform future planning and teaching.
- 8.4. Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.
- 8.5. Parents/carers are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development via tapestry, termly meetings and an 'End of Year Celebration'. The EYFS team will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents/carers.
- 8.6. Ongoing formative assessments are used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs, and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.
- 8.7. EYFS staff at Alma Primary undertake a summative assessment of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

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- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year. This is a required assessment from the British Government.
  - The EYFS Profile: a comprehensive assessment for each area of learning which is completed at the end of the Reception year, to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.
- 8.8. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.
- 8.9. The EYFS team will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents/carers. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.
- 8.10. The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS team will contact the child's parents/carers to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.
- 8.11. The school will endeavour to ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and practitioners from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development.
- 8.12. Teachers will not be required to record or document evidence to prove children's level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements, in order to plan teaching and where this is beneficial for building knowledge of children.
- 8.13. The school reports EYFS Profile results to Barnet LA during the summer term. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the DfE.

### **9. Transition into Reception and Staggered Entry**

- 9.1. During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:
- Parents/carers and children are invited to look around the school, meet the Reception/EYFS team and ensure they know about school procedures along with the 'parents' handbook' which explains life at Alma.
  - Each child will receive a home and/or nursery visit from the Reception class teacher, EYFS lead and/or Head teacher.
  - The number of visits or meetings will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.
- 9.2. Before starting at Alma Primary, children joining Reception will normally be offered an opportunity to visit the school with their parents/carers to meet their teacher and see the classroom.
- 9.3. In the autumn term when children start school at Alma Primary under a 'staggered entry' process. This is system which is in place to ensure a smooth transition from pre-school into Reception, minimising upset and stress for children and their families by ensuring each child has an individual starting day.

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- 9.4. The benefits of this process are a positive start to the child for their relationship with the teacher and LSA; a calmer start to their first day; giving them an opportunity to start school with familiar faces around them e.g. from nursery where applicable; and giving the children a chance to have their parents/carers bring them in and settled them in their new classroom.
- 9.5. Staff at Alma talk to both pre-school settings and families of incoming children in order to take account of children's needs and guide the staggered entry process. Where possible and appropriate, the Alma staff group children together who already know each other, for example from nursery.
- 9.6. This process consists of 4 to 5 new children starting each day, initially staying in school for a half day, with the length of day increasing over three days until the child finally stays all day. The new children always arrive first so that they have their own individualised time with their Reception class teacher, LSA and new classroom.
- 9.7. The school arranges the dates that children start based on what works best for the children and the school, taking into consideration any SEND.
- 9.8. In order to facilitate children having a calm and settled start, the staggered entry process runs over a three to four week period, depending on Jewish holidays. Children normally start in September and/or October, depending on the dates of autumn term Jewish festivals.

### **10. Transition from Reception to Year 1**

- 10.1. We ensure transition from Reception to Year 1 through the following strategies:
  - During the final term in Reception, the Early Learning Goals are completed for each child to provide parents/carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of each child's knowledge, interests, accomplishments, understanding and abilities, their progress against age expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.
  - Observations and assessments between Reception and Year 1 teachers take place in the summer term of Reception so that the children's learning needs are met through the Year 1 planning and teaching.
  - At the start of Year 1, activities and experiences will be planned to encourage play based, independent learning with the 'characteristics of effective learning' still underpinning practice
- 10.2. In some cases children will require a bespoke transition process to take account of individual learning needs. Where appropriate, these will be prepared by the Reception class teacher, working with the Inclusion Leader and the Year 1 teacher and will be shared with parents/carers as part of the transition process.

### **11. School Trips and Visitors**

- 11.1. The Reception children normally go on at least one trip in the spring term and one in the summer term, but where other opportunities are presented more trips will be offered. Reception class trips are based around the topics they have been exploring in the classroom.
- 11.2. All school trips will be planned and run in accordance with the school policies and guidance on off site visits. Risk assessments are completed for every excursion that the Reception children go on.
- 11.3. We regularly welcome visitors to Reception throughout the year and encourage parents/ family members to talk to the class on a variety of topics, as well as sharing in the children's learning.

### **12. Handwriting**

- 12.1. The development of handwriting skills is an important feature of learning in Reception. To support learning information and resources will be shared with families throughout the year
- 12.2. Children are taught the correct way of holding a writing medium with different resources accessible to children to support them, and EYFS staff focus on ensuring that there is time for gross and fine motor skills activities to develop and strengthen children's muscles.
- 12.3. Children are taught the correct lower case and number formation, the importance of finger spaces between words, and orientation of letters based on the school's chosen handwriting scheme (currently PenPals).
- 12.4. Children are taught how to write a sentence correctly including capital letters, finger spaces and full stops. Some children may be challenged to learn about different types of punctuation such as question/ exclamation/ speech marks.
- 12.5. Children will learn different genres of writing, such as sentences, labels/ captioning, letters, lists and books.

### **13. SEND, Equal Opportunities and Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 13.1. We welcome all children to Alma Primary, regardless of need, providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- 13.2. Pupils with additional educational needs generally learn alongside their classmates and receive appropriate support both within and outside the classroom from the school Inclusion Leader and the school HLTA. We work in partnership with parents/carers as well as specialists, advisors and support groups to ensure our pupils have every opportunity to achieve their best. In particular, the school works with the Barnet Inclusion Advisory Team to provide more bespoke support, where this is needed.
- 13.3. Staff meet the needs of our children through planning which build upon and extend their knowledge, experience, interest, self-esteem and confidence. Activities are carefully planned and differentiated to ensure that each child is appropriately challenged, and we use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and preferences.
- 13.4. We aim to develop, purchase and use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

### **14. Celebrating Achievement in Reception**

- 14.1. The Reception class forms an integral part of our school community. The children in Reception attend whole-school assemblies and learning days, when the Reception class team feel they are ready to do so.
- 14.2. Children receive a 'Teudat Kavod - Honour Certificate' from their class teacher, which is presented during our weekly Kabbalat Shabbat assembly on Friday afternoons (mornings during the late winter and early Spring). Family members of those who receive a certificate that week will be notified in advance and invited to attend via zoom or in person, when this is appropriate.
- 14.3. Classroom Displays – displays are constantly updated with children's work and are used to demonstrate to the pupils that their work is valued and celebrated.
- 14.4. Alma's behaviour code of kindness is promoted in the Reception class, where there is an honour board which is used by the Reception team to promote the school's core expectations of kindness, respect, readiness to learn and responsibility.
- 14.5. Children in Reception can also be nominated for Alma's 'Giraffe Club', where children are appreciated for the ways in which they have 'stuck their neck out' for others.



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### **15. Reporting to Parents/carers**

- 15.1. Families are sent a weekly newsmail, which details activities that the children have completed in class that week and key reminders for the upcoming weeks such as special whole school learning days and events.
- 15.2. Parent/carer and teacher meetings take place in the second half of the autumn and spring terms.
- 15.3. At the end of the summer term parents/carers are sent an 'End of Year Celebration', a formal written summary of their child's learning achievements, which includes the child's EYFS profile.

### **16. Monitoring and review**

- 16.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years by the EYFS Leader and the Headteacher, or earlier if Government guidance or concerns regarding EYFS provision require this policy to be updated.
- 16.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2025.