



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

At Cunningham Hill Infant School the Early Years Policy applies to all children within our Foundation Stage setting who enter the school during the academic year in which they turn five. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Foundation Stage (Reception) is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Foundation Stage Curriculum sets out what is expected of most children by the end of their Reception year, covering the following areas:

Three Prime Areas	Four Specific Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal, Social and Emotional Development• Communication and Language• Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy• Mathematics• Understanding the World• Expressive Art and Design

These areas of learning are broken down into individual steps, which build up to the Early Learning Goals for each area.

In addition, there are 3 Characteristics of Learning, which need to be considered when observing and planning for our children;

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating & thinking Critically

We promote a love of learning through fostering independence, providing a wide range of enriching activities to engage children in their learning and allowing opportunities for sustained concentration. We value child initiated activities and play to challenge all children and stimulate their own creativity within an exciting learning environment.

Some children joining our school have already gained a great deal of experience. Many have attended either a Nursery or Playgroup or both. We have no Nursery ourselves and children enter our school from a wide range of Nurseries. Members of the Early Years team visit children in their Nursery setting and in some cases of families new to the school, in their own homes, prior to starting Reception.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- To provide experiences that build on what children already know and can do.
- To plan purposeful, relevant and appropriate activities, both indoors and outdoors, through the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- To organise rich and stimulating experiences that are enjoyable, well planned and encourage children to make progress, based on careful observations and assessments.
- To provide all children with opportunities for learning through an inclusive curriculum.

Teaching and Learning

We use a variety of teaching approaches to provide a stimulating environment to enhance the children's learning. These include group activities, whole class teaching, focusing on individuals and working alongside children as they explore and interact with each other. Well planned, purposeful activities and appropriate intervention by practitioners will encourage children in the learning process and help them make progress in their learning. Our Policy on Teaching and Learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. The more general features of good practice in our school are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions to enhance and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children towards the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage

- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and continually improve what we do
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage
- to develop a secure understanding of phonics through the RWI scheme.
- To gain a broad and deep understanding of Maths through Maths Mastery

Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. We ensure through our planning that the curriculum provides opportunities both indoor and outdoor for constructive and developmental play.

Outdoor Provision

A key aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum is the use of the outdoor learning environment both for formal and informal learning. Use of the outdoors is linked to all aspects of the areas of the Foundation Stage. This outdoor provision is carefully planned for and integrated fully into the curriculum.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that every child matters. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion).

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations so that many achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We do this by:

- planning for experiences that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on the children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of resources to support all areas within the Foundation Stage
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively and creatively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring and evaluating children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary
- using a challenge wall so the children know their next step in learning, this is accessible to the children and all adults in EYFS

This often involves liaison with a wide range of specialist support including advisory teachers, County Outreach Service, educational psychologists, Child and Family clinic, medical specialists, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy; (see Special Needs Policy). We also have the support of a Family Support Worker, when appropriate.

The Foundation Stage curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the EYFS Curriculum 2012. We take account of the 4 themes supported by 16 Commitments when planning experiences for our children. This enables them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The EYFS documentation or the KS1 curriculum provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our medium term planning is completed half-terminally and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and beyond.

Assessment

We continually make both formal and informal assessments of our children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is in the form of observations both formal and informal. Progress is observed, recorded and monitored throughout the year using the Development Matters, Ages and Stages. Learning Journals provide evidence both pictorial and anecdotal. Assessment is undertaken by all members of staff working in the team.

An initial assessment is made during the children's first half-term in the reception class. Subsequent assessments are then made at the end of the autumn term, spring term and summer term. In addition the Profile is completed towards the end of the academic year. The teacher assesses the ability of each child using the Development Matters, 'Ages and Stages' and our own assessment sheets. These results are recorded in detail and provide the baseline from which we work and plan and assessment and tracking of progress continues throughout the year. At the end of the summer term summative assessments are made using the Foundation Stage Profile in order to establish children's attainment towards the Early Learning Goals. These results are then sent to the DfE and to County as part of the assessment arrangements for the LA. We also record them internally using our own record system. We use them to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort of children. We use this information to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children when they move through to Key Stage 1. The children's attainment of Early Learning Goals is shared with parents at the end of the year consultation evening. The children's attainment during the Spring Term, is shared with parents through a report. This is then updated in the summer term, with the attainment of both Ages and Stages and Early Learning Goals, these are also discussed through parent consultations.

The report also offers brief comments on each child's progress in each Characteristic of Effective Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress and identifying next steps. We complete formal reports which are sent home to parents in March, reports are sent on the Profile in July.

Role of staff and Key Workers

In Reception, the class teacher is the named key worker for each child. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the classroom, offer a settled relationship with the child and build a positive relationship with their parents. All adults within the EYFS actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and future success. There are rare occasions when the key workers cannot be in the class (training and planning or illness) and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents before the child starts in our school; the teacher visits all children in their nursery setting prior to their starting school
- the children have the opportunity prior to starting school to spend time in their new classroom and meet with their teachers and the children they will be learning with
- inviting all parents to a welcome meeting during the term before their child starts school to explain the procedures of starting school and give general guidance how best they might help their child make this transition
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress both formal and informal – after school, consultation evenings and parent workshop

- a meeting is held in the Autumn term to explain to parents about the processes involved in learning to read and how they can help their child at home
- we encourage parents to talk to the child's teacher and share any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents in Autumn and Summer term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- we have organised our induction arrangements over two weeks to enable children to start school in a calm and gentle manner
- we arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents
- we invite parents to curriculum evenings to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the reception class and send information to support and guide parents and to encourage their involvement when appropriate.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. The classrooms are organised into areas and all resources are clearly labelled and well maintained to enable the children to find things independently. Children are taught how to use the different equipment and how to use it and care for it.

Transition to Y1

At the end of the Foundation Stage the children move into Year 1 which is the start of Key Stage One. At this point not all children will be ready for the Key Stage One Curriculum, and this will be accounted for in the planning for the first term.

Admissions

All admissions are in accordance with the County admissions policy.