EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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Date Approved:	
Review Date:	

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CFS Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Early Years Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the first year of school. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. When new to Reception, children start a week later than children in Years 1-6 to allow for home visits to take place.

Scheme of Work

The 'Early Years Foundation Stage Framework' and 'Development Matters' documents form the basis of our curriculum. This breaks children's development into age related stages. At the end of the EYFS, which happens at the end of Reception, we make judgements against The Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Overarching this curriculum are four principles:

- Each child is unique and the setting must allow for this
- Positive relationships are vital if children are to learn effectively
- Much of the children's learning can be independent if the environment enables this
- Learning and development are strongly linked and are at the heart of all we do

Both the setting and methodology are designed with these principles in mind.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made of 3 prime & 4 specific areas. The prime areas are: Communication and Language (C&L), Physical Development (PD) and Personal & Social Development (PSED). The Specific areas are: Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World (UtW) and Expressive Art & Design (EA&D). None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others but rather through a balanced, child-led curriculum.

Prime Areas

Personal, Social & Emotional Development
Successful personal, social and emotional development is crucial for very young children to develop a positive sense of themselves and alongside the planned activities, adults constantly reinforce the aims of good PSED.

Communication and Language
This area of learning includes communication through speaking and listening in different situations and for different purposes with both adults and peers.

Physical Development
Young children's physical development is inseparable from other aspects of development because they learn much through being active. PD includes both gross and fine motor skills.

Specific Areas

Literacy
This area includes both reading and writing. In reading children will learn to read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words and demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. In writing, children will be taught to use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Maths
This includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships and working with numbers, shapes, space and measures. There is a large focus on the language of maths and much less on the recording of it. Children are encouraged to verbalise what they are doing. Mathematical understanding should be developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play, so that children enjoy using and experimenting with numbers. The curriculum requires that children are familiar with and able to work with numbers to 20.

Understanding the World
In this area of learning, children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. They use all of their senses to learn about the world around them and make connections between new information and what they already know. This area forms the foundation for later work in science, history, geography, and information and computing.

Expressive Art and Design
Creativity is fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. This area of learning includes design and technology, art, music, dance and role play.

Planning

The Long Term Plan outlines the topics to be covered and Medium Term Plans (MTPs) are completed half termly.

Short term planning consists of a foundation subject plan which covers Personal, Social & Emotional Development, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design and Physical Development there are additional plans for Communication & Language and Literacy & Maths.

We run half-termly overarching topics that are not set in stone and can be led by the needs and interests of the cohort. We also have 'interesting interruptions' which allow for us to have focus weeks on other topics.

Alongside this planned learning there is a lot of scope for the children to do what interests them. As long as the activity is purposeful and safe, the children are allowed and encouraged to follow their own ideas. To ensure that staff are maximising the children's learning we have next step sheets which cover all the areas of the curriculum and contain each child's next step for each area of learning. Each week staff focus on a specific area was they facilitate in the environment and ensure that they interact with every child on this at some point in the week. In this way we are taking the learning objectives into their play in an organised and planned way. Any notes made are used to inform both future plans and the child's individual records.

Assessment Procedures

Assessment is continuous in Reception and involves all adults in the setting. We sometimes use a pro-forma for group activities, where evidence of achievement is recorded.

We have a class grid for each area of learning which sign-posts any evidence gathered against the Development Matters age related statements during the year, and the Early Learning Goals and Exceeding Statements at the end of the year. There is no requirement for there to be evidence for every point awarded; practitioner knowledge is equally as valid.

We use a data spreadsheet to record all our ongoing judgements and then record snapshots at the end of each time on our school management system. Staff members meet regularly as a team to monitor progress and identify gaps; this information then informs planning.

At the end of the year children are levelled as 'emerging or expected' against the Early Learning Goals for each strand within the above areas.

Learning though Play

Play is vital for young children's development. Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or uncertainties in controlled and safe situations. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and begin to understand the need for rules.

With all this in mind we ensure that we offer ample opportunities for self-initiated and planned play activities.

Enabling Environments; the Learning Environment

The setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The Early Years unit is divided into learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently wherever possible. The children access a mixture of planned and child-initiated activities in each of the areas across the week. The setting has its own enclosed outdoor area which offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. Here children are able to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and offer resources that mirror those offered inside.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the role that parents have played so far, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- Making visits to the child's home prior to their starting school or offering a school visit in a small group if this is preferable for the family
- While the children spend time with their teacher for transition visits we offer parents the opportunity to have a drink together and meet each other in an informal setting
- Welcoming all parents with an induction meeting the term before their child starts school
- Running parent information sessions on reading, phonics, handwriting and numeracy during which we outline both how we cover these areas and how parents can best help at home
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if they have questions or concerns
- There is a formal meeting for parents during the autumn and spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. A summer term meeting is available on request following the issue of the end of year report.

Roles and Responsibilities of Early Years Leader

- To lead policy development
- To write and implement the subject action plan
- To support colleagues with their knowledge of Early Years
- To monitor progress and improve standards in teaching and learning
- To be familiar with current best practice in the EYFS and apply when appropriate
- Audit, maintain and replace resources
- To manage and monitor expenditure within the annual budget.

Health and Safety

There is always a member of staff in each of the areas of learning, including the outdoor area.
Staff show children how to use any new tools or resources safely.

Roles and Responsibilities of Link Governor

To meet the Early Years Leader at least annually to discuss the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. Visit the setting at least annually in order to relate findings back.

Equal Opportunities

Staff will ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. They will be encouraged to respect similarities & differences within cultures other than their own (see Equality Policy).