



## **Chesterfield Primary School** **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### **Introduction**

At Chesterfield Primary School we use the term Early Years Foundation Stage to refer to the time from when a child enters Nursery to the end of the Reception year. This early development and learning is a distinct phase in each child's education and should provide an essential and firm foundation for their future school life. "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012.

### **Principles**

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. **A unique child.** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
2. **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
3. **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
4. **Learning and development.** The Early Years Foundation Stage Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and think independently and in partnerships. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Chesterfield Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

## **Aims**

It is every child's right to grow up in a safe, healthy environment whilst enjoying their learning, achieving at the highest standards, making good progress across the curriculum and making a positive contribution to our school family. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these outcomes.

- We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.
- Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. We provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment, which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- To demonstrate an ethos that values play as the centre of learning and a curriculum where children are able to experience their learning in the here and now supported by skilled adults who recognise the teachable moment.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, families and the wider community and value their contributions - ensuring that all children thrive, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.
- Provide opportunities for children to lead their learning and thinking, building learning experiences around children's interests, questioning, talents and skills, whilst maintaining a balanced approach to the curriculum.

## **Learning and Development**

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

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

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is done by:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Focused support and challenge
- Creative and critical thinking

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around half termly learning journeys, as well as also following children's interests. We plan our literacy inputs based on carefully selected, high quality texts. Both the inside and outside environments are enhanced to allow the children to fully immerse themselves in the story and to allow them to retell, act out and explore the sequence of the story. Core text plans are carefully sequenced in order to allow children to apply the knowledge and skills from the text and then achieve a planned written outcome (differentiated according to the range of abilities in the class). We follow a medium term plan for maths to ensure coverage of learning objectives allows for identification of any gaps in learning. We also plan enhancements for both our inside and outside environments that stem from our core texts, maths plans, children's interests and identified gaps in learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of regular observations of the children that are shared via a learning platform called Seesaw. We are also able to share home learning activities, special mentions and other important information for parents using this platform. Parents are able to easily access their child's profile and make comments on their child's learning, as well as sharing examples of learning and experiences from home. Literacy evidence in reception is recorded in individual literacy books, and maths evidence is shared across both Seesaw and individual maths books (depending on whether it is a written or practical task).

## **Learning Through Play**

At Chesterfield Primary School, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. In addition we always have one of our members of staff working as an interactor alongside children's play to move thinking and learning to the next level through questions, role modelling and/or partnership learning. We also come together at least four times a day for class based or group learning, which focuses on key skills and knowledge. These include the teaching of Phonics for Reading and Writing, Mathematical Skills, music and time to talk. Children have planned PE lessons once a week.

## **Home and School Links**

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will outline the school's expectations in a Home School Agreement.
- We will hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We will conduct family learning events for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- We will conduct a further parent consultation in Spring term to inform parents and carers formally of a child's overall progress and achievements.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head Teacher, Head of School and EYFS lead, alongside other subject leaders are responsible for monitoring and evaluation of Early Years provision and learning. This information is used to inform teaching and learning, staff training and development and the School Improvement Plan.

