KernowLearning
Building Excellent Schools Together

Early Years Policy

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Meeting your communication needs:
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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Practice Guidance set out learning and development and welfare requirements.

The Early Years Foundation Stage can be broken down into four guiding themes:

A unique chid: every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships: children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments: the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles.

- to build on what our children already know and can do;
- to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- provide a rich and stimulating environment both indoors and out.

At St Columb Major Academy we have links with Major Steps Childcare. This offers parents childcare for children from birth until the beginning of full-time school. This is in response to the need for high-quality childcare during the school day. While we have close links with Major Steps we recognise that they are a separate business and have their own policies and procedures. As a school we also liaise with many pre-schools, nurseries and childminders to support children's transition to school.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

A high-quality Early Years' experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. In order to achieve this, we aim to:

• make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun
• encourage parents to become partners with the school in the education of their children
• provide a curriculum firmly based on stimulating play-based age appropriate learning to meet the needs of the individual child
• foster love of learning, inquiring minds and the ability to discuss, adapt and negotiate
• support children in developing respect for self, others and the environment
• provide an environment that promotes physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

Teaching and Learning

We consider good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage to include:

• a partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
• planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
• using child-initiated play to engage children and support their sense of natural curiosity and enthusiasm to learn;
• extending and developing play and communication;
• using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
• providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
• providing a safe, supportive and enabling learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
• using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
• planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
• reading and vocabulary is valued and we have a culture where children gain a love for books and stories and develop their vocabulary. Children are read to frequently each day and are given the opportunity to talk on subjects of interest to develop and extend the vocabulary and language. Children are taught to read with a systematic

phonics approach using the Read Write Inc phonics scheme. Children are assessed regularly to ensure their teaching matches their ability and the reading books sent home are also in line with their skill level.
• Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary and sharing this information with parents.
• The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
• These are features of good practice that may extend beyond the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS. Through play our children explore, develop and represent learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills and learn codes of behaviour which help them interact with others. They learn to take risks and make mistakes. They have the opportunity to think creatively and imaginatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express emotions and re-live experiences in controlled and safe situations. Children will have opportunities to play inside and outside. Where children do not play spontaneously they will be supported by adults. Adults will support and extend the play of all children by questioning, scaffolding, challenging and playing alongside children. Within child-initiated play adults follow the 'Objective Led Planning' to teach children's individual next steps and ensure they progress.

Behaviour Management

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all children matter. 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. Meeting the needs of all children lies at the heart of EYFS.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of:

- boys and girls
- children with special educational needs
- children with disabilities
- gifted and talented children/more able
- children from all social and cultural backgrounds
- children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds
- pupil premium children

In addition to the good practice detailed above, we meet the needs of all our children through:

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may involve using outside agencies (e.g. speech therapists) for some of our children

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Each year we reflect on our current cohort and plan for the particular needs and interests. We plan exciting and relevant topics and stimuli to broaden their interests, skills, knowledge and understanding.

We are aware of the progression the children need to make from nursery, through Reception and on into Year One.

We value children's personal cultures and experiences and plan exciting activities and opportunities to broaden their knowledge and enrich their learning. First hand experiences are planned obstacles and tackle challenges.

Coverage of the curriculum is planned carefully, and we pay attention to each of the strands. We ensure by the end of the year each strand has the coverage needed to ensure children progress towards the ELGs and beyond.

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage in our school is based on the seven areas of learning and development. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives in the Primary National Strategy. Teachers initially address the requirements in a flexible way but, as part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, children are introduced to more formal learning in Literacy and Maths by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basics for planning throughout the Reception Year. For children who are working towards the Early Learning Goals we use earlier ages and stages (identified in the Development Matters) and for children who meet the expected standards earlier we deepen their knowledge and skills.

Pedagogy

Our pedagogy has child-initiated play at its heart. Experienced adults teach children during their play to extend their learning and knowledge. We observe carefully, and enhance the learning whenever we spot a 'teachable moment'. Our observations, interactions and outcomes are recorded afterwards.

Children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and practitioners can support them in this. We do this by creating an enabling environment (both physical and emotional) and through the relationships and interactions that the children experience.

We also directly teach children through small focused group activities across all 7 areas of learning. Whole class lessons in maths, phonics and writing take place daily to teach children the skills that they can practice and consolidate in their own play.

Assessment

Rigorous assessments enable staff to focus on and teach specific areas or groups of children to narrow the 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 Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. The 'Objective Led Planning' supports the assessment process. Adults can clearly see what the children know and what next steps need to be scaffolded, challenged and taught within their play. These are then recorded and tracked for future planning and assessment purposes.

Observations of children may be based on planned focus activities, or during continuous provision or by recording a spontaneous, significant achievement for a particular child. These observations form the basis for recording achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Staff are aware that most of the observations undertaken will be of spontaneous child led activities as these are a better indicator of achievement.

We use the Early Years Development Matters to monitor achievement. We update children's Profile 3 times a year and use this to monitor their development and set targets for future learning. In the first half term we undertake an on-entry assessments which are used to track and monitor children's attainment and progress. We compare this to the final data assessments and analyse this to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort of children. We use this information to modify the teaching programme in Early Years Foundation Stage classes and to support and extend individuals and groups in Year 1. We use the information in the Profile as a basis for sharing information and targets with parents. Parents receive a copy of their child's Profile at the end of the Reception Year. The Profile will be annotated as appropriate and will contain a general comment highlighting the child's strengths and attitudes to learning.

The role of Parents/Carers

We believe that all parents/carers 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 about their child before their child starts in our school
• the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school. We do this through our Learning Together Sessions. These begin in the term before the child starts school. Parents/carers attend these sessions with their children
• offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class
• encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.

There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress annually.

• parents are invited into school throughout the year to look at their child's books and informally chat to the teacher about their child's progress
• parents are also invited regularly to Open Afternoons to join in with various learning experiences in a range of subjects
• having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances
• arranging for children to start school over the first week of term. We stagger the starting time of small groups of children over this period, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school
• encouraging the involvement of parents through newsletters and invitations to join class activities both within and outside of school, including open days and trips
• parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and show and tell opportunities by adding pictures and information to Dojo.

Transitions into and out of Reception

• The EYFS teacher/s visits all the nurseries, child minders and other Early Years providers to support transitions into Reception class. This enable conversations to take place with the child's key worker and for observations of the child to take place in a setting where they are comfortable and settled.
• 'Meet the teacher' is an Open Afternoon for parents to gain information about school, what they ned to know and how to get their child ready for school. It is also an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
• Learning Together sessions – children and parents can stay and play. It is an opportunity to get to know staff and the learning environment as well as other children and parents.
• We have a staggered start in the first week of school in September which also supports the children to settle in a calm environment.
• Formal learning is introduced in the last few weeks of Reception to mirror the learning in Year 1. Transition meetings take place with the Year 1 teachers to support transitions and share information.

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. We also encourage children to select their own resources to complete activities and tasks.