



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Castle Hills Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full 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.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, children join us, part time, in the nursery at the beginning of the school year in which they are four. They move to Foundation 2, full time at the start of the school year in which they turn five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- ✓ A Unique Child
- ✓ Positive Relationships
- ✓ Enabling Environments
- ✓ Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Castle Hills Primary School 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, 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. In addition, we are a Restorative school and all staff are trained to resolve conflict in a way which effects reconciliation. The ethos and working philosophy of Castle Hills means that all stakeholders are actively encouraged to have respect for each other. Considerate and respectful behaviour is expected and regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Castle Hills School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our 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. In the EYFS 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 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 meet the needs of all our children through:

- ✓ planning opportunities 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 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 and supportive 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;
- ✓ monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

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. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

At Castle Hills we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- ✓ Promote the welfare of children.
- ✓ Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- ✓ Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ✓ Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ✓ Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ✓ Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- ✓ Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Castle Hills we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent by forming secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

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 F1 teacher visits all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- ✓ the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during Transition days/open days

- ✓ inviting all parents to a series of induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and on an ad-hoc basis after they have started
- ✓ offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our F2 class by having 10 minutes stay and play time every day and regular open days in the Foundation unit.
- ✓ allowing free access to the children's 'Learning journeys'
- ✓ 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 in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- ✓ arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: holiday diaries, school Trips, phonics workshops, maths mornings, sports Day etc;
- ✓ providing regular opportunities for parents to contribute to children's 'learning journeys' relating to the children's achievements.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school each child has a 'Key Person' these are listed on the notice boards in cloakrooms.

We have developed good working relationship with our local two year old providers, Daisy Chains, who deliver from the school premises. We have developed strong links with the local Children's Centre and our pyramid schools. The EYFS Manager attends regular meetings with staff from these settings, chairs the advisory board committee and is SLE for PIL. Where children continue to attend preschool provision, while only attending school part time, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements.

Enabling Environments

At Castle Hills we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. Where possible we involved them in the planning of topics and activities to encourage ownership of their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS pays attention to the schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. 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 observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual files/books, planning and 'electronic learning journeys'. They may also contain information provided by parents and other settings.

At Castle Hills, we use the Local Authority criteria to record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 Early Learning Goals. Each child is assessed against these goals and given a judgement of working at an emerging, expected, or exceeding level. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the 17 ELG's and a brief summary of a child's 'Characteristics of learning'. The F2 teachers and year 1 teachers collaborate and discuss each child before final judgements are made of a child's attainment. We encourage parents to contribute to assessments and these are discussed at pupil progress meetings with parents and carers.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS unit has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At Castle Hills we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS 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 and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- 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 shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas:

- ✓ Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- ✓ Communication and Language
- ✓ Physical Development

Specific Areas:

- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Understanding of the World
- ✓ Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS - Mrs V Parkin. She will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Signed

Sarah Cronin

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