

Cranbrook Church of England Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Written by: Rosie Piper	January 2015
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Signed by Chair of Governors:	
Signed by Headteacher:	

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

As a Church of England School this policy is read within the context of the Christian values and teachings of our school.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2014)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

A Unique Child

At Cranbrook 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.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and celebrate both similarities and differences. All children at Cranbrook Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. 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, including those 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;
- 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 and feel safe. We 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. We allow children to take calculated and planned risks, alongside support, to help them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

At Cranbrook Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. 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.

Positive Relationships

At Cranbrook Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents play, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Inviting all parents and children to 'taster sessions' for two afternoons during the term before the child starts in Reception.
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Providing opportunities for children to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- Encouraging parents/guardians to complete an 'about me' booklet with their child prior to starting school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception classes and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journeys';
- Sharing learning stories and celebrating achievements. Also encouraging parents to share special achievements at home, by writing them in their 'sharing books';
- Providing opportunities for parents to leave comments relating to their children's achievements and learning in their sharing books;
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Holding two formal parent meeting evenings during the academic year;
- Giving parents a mid-year and end-of-year report on their child's attainment and progress.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration, including phonics training, maths workshops and regular 'stay, play, learn' sessions for parents.

Staffing and Organisation

There is one Reception class at Cranbrook Primary School, with a maximum intake of 30 places. There is a teaching assistant in the class throughout the school day, to support learning, allow for 'free-flow' activities in and outdoors and to carry out interventions. 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. Where required, learning support assistants may also be in post to assist the additional needs of individual children.

Transition arrangements

At Cranbrook Primary School we have close links between the school and local nurseries. The Reception teacher visits all children that are due to start in Reception in the previous term, either at nursery or at home. Staff from local nurseries are also invited on occasion to attend early years specific training at school, or within the nursery. A new parents meeting is held in the summer term to introduce the school's expectations and routines, and to outline the induction process and reception curriculum. Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit

the reception classroom. Parents/guardians are given a reception letter, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.

During the two-week induction period in September, Reception children stay at school for mornings only. The first week children are picked up at 12pm (before lunch) and the second week they are picked up at 1pm (after lunch). After this they begin full days.

- Reception to Year 1 Transition: Reception and year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible, focusing on the following:
- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year;
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support;
- EYFS profile data is discussed with and provided to year 1 staff, along with a commentary on children's 'characteristics of learning' and phonic phase data to enable appropriate provision for individual children;
- Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in the summer term; Reception children visit their new year 1 class and teacher in the summer term;
- During the summer term Reception children will attend some whole-school assemblies;

Enabling Environments

At Cranbrook Primary School 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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Observation: EYFS staff build a full picture of children's interests, abilities and needs through observational assessment. This involves reaching an understanding of children's learning by watching, listening and interacting as they engage in everyday activities, events and experiences, and demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Some observations are planned and others are spontaneous – capturing a significant moment. In accordance with EYFS Profile (2013) "Observational assessment does not require prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor excessive written recording. It is likely to be interwoven with high quality interactions or conversations in words or sign language with children about their activities and current interests."

Assessment: Practitioners' knowledge of a child forms the basis of assessment within EYFS. This knowledge is built from observation of the child's self-initiated activities, some adult-led activities and day to day interactions with children. In addition, children will be involved as practitioners encourage children to review their own learning. Parents / carers and other adults who have significant interactions with a child will also contribute to the assessment process by identifying children's achievements outside the school environment.

Entry data will be gathered through observations over the first two weeks, in order to record what age band children are currently working within. This information is collated on a central EYFS assessment document. Reception teachers continue to use the 'Development Matters' banding system throughout the reception year, before summarising children's attainments against the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year, referring to the EYFS Profile Handbook and exemplification materials. At this stage practitioners will decide whether children have reached: the description of the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (emerging); or beyond the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (exceeding). Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales and the characteristics of effective learning. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. Classroom teachers undertake cross-school and local cluster group moderation. The Foundation Stage leader analyses EYFS data in conjunction with the head teacher.

Planning: Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. As such practitioners use assessment and observation of children to plan appropriate activities and resources – responding to the needs, achievements and interests of children. Weekly planning will reflect children's interests from the previous weeks.

The Learning Environment: "Children must have access to a rich learning environment which provides them with the opportunities and conditions in which to flourish in all aspects of their development." ("Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook", 2013). The EYFS environment 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 environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Reception class has access to an outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It enables the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active. Activities and resources are planned in for the children to access outdoors, to allow the children to develop in all aspects of learning.

Learning and Development: At Cranbrook Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are inter connected.

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 Stages 1 and 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.

Characteristics of effective learning: “The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child’s learning and in becoming an effective learner” (2013). Through ongoing observation of child-initiated play practitioners will build a picture of a child as an independent learner. The characteristics of learning represent the processes involved in learning rather than learning outcomes.