

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Colburn Primary School's Vision for the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children learn by playing and exploring with friends. We strive to ensure that all children have the language and skills, in particular personal and social skills, to become confident, capable, resilient and independent learners. We believe that every child is unique, that children learn in different ways and at different rates and that children need positive relationships.

We provide:

- Supportive, knowledgeable, skilled adults who are responsive to the interests of children and make the most of every opportunity to move learning forward, building positively on what children already know and can do.
- A rich, well planned, challenging environment both indoors and outside, enhanced by appropriate enriching experiences in the wider community.
- A learning environment where children can engage in self-chosen activities, in which they can experience success and where the process of learning is recognised as being more important than any 'product'.
- Short focused adult led sessions which develop children's knowledge, skills and understandings at times which do not interrupt their play.

We work in partnership with all families; by sharing experiences and knowledge, we work together to gain a full picture of each child's unique development, to meet their needs and enable them to reach their full potential.

As Outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage;

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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."

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our setting children may join from the age of 3. The unit uses Early Years Outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage to support its planning and assessment. At the end of their time in the unit the children join Y1.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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; and

- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

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, at varying rates and that a child's positive attitude and disposition to learning is influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to celebrate children's efforts in the learning process.

Inclusion – "Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender."

We value and celebrate the diversity of individuals within the school and the wider community. Everyone is treated fairly. We want to develop close, open and trusting relationships with all members of the wider community, particularly parents/carers.

In our setting we know that every child matters. We give our children every opportunity to follow their own pathway to learning and development and to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning learning experiences. In the EYFS we meet the needs of all 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:

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of every child is valued and celebrated;
- Using resources which reflect diversity, are free from discrimination and stereotyping and develop each child's current need and interest;
- Working and playing alongside the children as co-constructors of learning, in order to support, develop, sustain and extend their thinking;
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's interests, experiences and knowledge, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and our in-depth knowledge of child development;
- Providing a wide range of creative learning opportunities that motivate children and help them to learn enjoyably and effectively;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the setting 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 our Child Protection 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".

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.
- Provide the correct number of appropriately trained adults as well as ensuring that all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their need both indoors and outside.
- Provide each child with a 'Key Person' whose role is to help ensure that their individual needs are met, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.
- Ensure that the premises, including outdoor space, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to empower children to value themselves and develop the skills and attitudes that will keep them safe including self-confidence and an awareness of risk.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Our Key person system supports and enhances this process.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents 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 setting;
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their key person prior to starting at our setting.
- Offering parents daily opportunities to talk about their child's interests and progress and enabling parents to share and contribute to their children's records and assessments.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's key person about any concerns they may have.
- Arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that helps parents find out about life in the setting and how they can best support their child. For example, stay and play sessions that are open to all family members.
- Providing opportunities for parents to leave comments relating to the children's interests at home, which are used to inform planning.

All practitioners aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Everyone takes equal responsibility for each child's learning.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's thinking, learning and development. We always begin by observing the children and assessing

their interests, development and learning, before planning for a balance of child initiated and adult-led activities and experiences that build on and extend the children's learning.

Observation

We use the term observation to describe the process of watching and listening to children very intently. As we observe we try to identify and note the detail of what the children are doing or saying. We also continually gather information and develop what we know about the children all the time by playing and engaging with them, and by talking with other people, including parents and practitioners that know the children really well, as often as we can.

Assessment

Once we have observed children we consider the detail of what we have seen and heard and decide what we think the observation tells us about the child. We also gather information about the children by talking to other practitioners, the children's parents and most importantly of all the children themselves. This helps us celebrate learning and decide how we are going support the further development of each child. We analyse the information we have observed, along with the information we have gathered from other practitioners, from other settings and from parents.

Planning

From the information we have gained we plan for the next steps in children's learning and development. Whilst, we complete longer observations occasionally, we also make sure that children's learning and development is supported, through daily supportive adult interaction. As aware and responsive practitioners we respond to children's needs **in the moment**, helping them to follow their own pathways to learning. Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions for tomorrow or next week. In this moment of curiosity, puzzlement and interest the 'teachable' moment presents its self.

No plans are written weeks in advance.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning 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 setting has an 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 the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Children access resources independently and are encouraged to use them as creatively as they wish. Again, we ensure that the learning opportunities and the resources available enable the children to develop across all areas of learning.

Learning and Development

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 teaching and learning policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school/setting. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects the learning experiences provided;

- the range of skills and approaches that practitioners use to support and develop children’s learning e.g. giving clear explanations, making appropriate and timely interventions, extending and developing 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

Early Years Outcomes in the Early Years Foundations Stage highlights three characteristics of effective learning. These are linked to the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment. They are **‘playing and exploring’, ‘active learning’, and ‘creating and thinking critically’**. They underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner not only within the EYFS but throughout their life. These characteristics are not objectives which can be taught but are there within all individuals and must be nurtured, encouraged and valued if they are to do develop to their full potential.

Playing and Exploring

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and pre-occupations. 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.

Creating and Thinking Critically

“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 setting to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. Three areas have been identified as being 'particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive'. These three **Prime Areas** are:

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

There are also four **Specific Areas** of learning these include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The **specific areas** are:

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

All of these areas of learning are implemented through planned purposeful play and through a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities that are appropriate to the child's level of development. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other.

This policy has been checked and approved by governors.

Last reviewed: October 2016

Next review due: October 2018