

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year.

Aim for the Early Years Foundation Stage are to provide:

- quality and consistency in our setting, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- partnership working between teachers/ practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

We adhere to the EYFS 2021 specific requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The **Learning and Development** cover:

- the areas of learning and development inform the activities and experiences for our children
- the early learning goals that children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)

The **Safeguarding and Welfare** provision covers the necessary steps we take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Our Curriculum allows every child to progress successfully through the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop a natural curiosity to foster a lifelong love of learning. Through observation and assessment, well planned activities and opportunities the staff encourage children to gain pre-school skills with the minimum of pressure and lots of fun. A balance of child initiated, and adult led activities encourages the children to discover a wide range of subjects through play and exploration and prepares them to progress confidently onto the next stage of their learning. We aim to provide a challenging and enjoyable environment where staff support children's learning and look for ways to extend their knowledge and interests. We use open ended questioning to promote active learning and critical thinking, increasing the ability of children to offer appropriate responses and extend their own learning.

We observe the **four guiding principles** that shape our practice.

- 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** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates and we take into account the education and care of all our children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing three prime and four specific areas

Prime

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

Specific

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring

We have a curriculum where children are provided with opportunities to; find out their own interests, explore and try things out, make their own choices and decisions, play collaboratively with peers and adults, develop a 'can-do' attitude to learning and use what they know and experiment through play as well as teacher led activities. We have stimulating resources which are accessible, open ended and can be used and combined in a variety of ways and are relevant to the children's interests.

Active Learning

Children are provided with opportunities for self-chosen play and self-directed activity. We get to know our children well and observe and reflect on a daily basis, both formally and informally, on what rouses the children's curiosity, looking for signs of deep involvement. Therefore, we can provide activities and experiences that are related to their interests and areas of enthusiasm.

We ensure children are given the time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities. Children are given verbal and emotional support to help them to persist and keep trying in order to achieve their aims. We give positive feedback to behaviour that shows children's learning processes – such as concentrating, trying different approaches, persisting and having new ideas.

Creating and Thinking Critically

We establish boundaries in space, time, resources, choice and supportive relationships that children can explore within. We support children's interests over time, remind them of previous approaches and encourage them to make connections between their experiences.

We build in opportunities for children to play and explore with ideas and resources before or after a planned task. Adults also try to be sensitive conversational partners and co-thinkers to children's problems, showing and talking about strategies and sometimes modelling the creative process. Children are encouraged to learn together and from each other. We try to foster a learning community which focuses on how, and not just what, we are learning.

Inclusion

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator. (Please refer to the SEND and Inclusion Policy for greater detail). The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through planning and support.

Assessment & Record Keeping

Each child has a progress assessment profile, or learning journal, that is based on the 2021 EYFS framework. These documents are used to summarise the children's progress and track their development. We currently use an electronic learning journal called Blossom, we use this to track the children's development by doing, formative and initial assessments when new children start, and the 2-year checks. Observation and Assessment is rigorous and involves all members of staff. We make regular assessments of children's learning and ensure that future planning reflects on what the children have already learned, as well as identifying individual interests and needs. Each child has an individual tracker and each class has a group tracker. Every child has an initial assessment within 2 weeks of starting in the environment, evaluating their abilities and needs on arrival as a baseline. The formative reports are completed twice a year in the Autumn & Spring term/s to consolidate progress tracking; and we have an open parent's evening twice a year to inform parents of their child's development. All these assessments are sent to and discussed with the parents by each child's Key Person or teacher, allowing for written communication from the parents to be included in their child's profile. The Profile is given to the child's next stage of education to assist with transitions.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that is exciting, stimulating and encourages lifelong learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community and the wider world, and encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer. The profiles and photographs or videos reflect the children's individual learning.

Prime Areas of Learning

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive 9 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary.

With our modelling and guidance, our children will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and managing personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to behave socially, make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts effectively. These skills will provide a solid foundation on which children can build and achieve at 'big' school and in later education and life.

Physical Development

This is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop at stages throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, we support our children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.

Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being.

Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination. We offer repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with support as needed, to allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's interactions are a strong focus as they form the foundations for language and cognitive development, and we promote a language rich environment with plenty of adult role modelling and commentary.

We read frequently to children, engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, as well as providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teachers, enhanced by sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy

We want our children to develop a life-long love of reading, both through language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension begins in the very young and develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (fiction & non-fiction) they read with them, and learning and using rhymes, poems and songs. We develop skilled word reading via decoding and recognition of familiar printed words. We develop writing through spelling, handwriting and articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing.

Mathematics

We support our children to develop a solid foundation in number to support the development of the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically later on.

We want them to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. We provide frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using a variety of objects, for organising counting to develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary on which mastery of mathematics will be based. The curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that our children develop positive attitudes and interests in Maths, looking for patterns and relationships, spotting connections, 'having a go', talking to staff and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

We guide our children to make sense of their physical world and their immediate and wider communities by offering a breadth of personal experiences, increasing their knowledge and sense of the world around them – this will include a range of visits & trips as well as visitors across each academic year. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of our children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. We ensure regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is vital for developing understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

The Early Learning Goals

The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs). These goals support our staff to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about our children’s development, and their readiness for Year 1.

When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement; this is noted as sufficient evidence to assess a child’s individual level of development however we will maintain sources of written or photographic evidence as we see fit to reinforce.

We, as a staff will meet the individual needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children’s learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- providing resources that reflect diversity, avoid discrimination or stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children’s progress, and providing support as necessary

- extending child initiated ideas and activities.

Interpretation

In this policy, the term “senior manager” means the School Head and their designated deputies.

This policy applies to all employees in all Schools (save for Schools with their own procedure which shall prevail) and other work environments within Chatsworth Schools.

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