



## Early Years Policy

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Date to be reviewed	June 2024
Signed: Chair of Governors	
Signed: Headteacher	

## Our Vision

At Chantry Community Primary School we aim to provide every child with the skills to become confident, independent and creative lifelong learners. Our priority is that our provision provides a high level of engagement and active learning through a range of skill based activities.

## Our Principles

We strive to meet every child's entitlement and to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible future life chances.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) states four guiding principles which should shape practice in the early years. These are:

- 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.
- the importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## Ethos

Throughout the EYFS we focus upon the characteristics of effective teaching and learning to plan and provide challenging and thought-provoking activities to suit the needs of the children within our school. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

All children are unique and we recognise that all children learn at different rates. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The development of children's personal, social and emotional skills underpins all learning and nurture independence and strength. We believe in fostering curiosity and an inquiring mind, encouraging children to question the world around them.

We provide a positive environment in which children's experiences and interests are reflected in activities to build confidence and self-esteem. We build positive partnerships with parents and carers and view all adults as invaluable partners in a child's growth.

### **The Foundation Stage**

The foundation stage begins at the age of three years, when many of our children are in pre-school settings, although some will stay at home with family until they begin school. This stage includes all children in reception classes of primary school (Year R). We work alongside the Early Years Hub and focus carefully on the transition of children from Year R to Year 1.

Early Years education is concerned with the needs of the whole child encompassing the social, emotional, physical, aesthetic and intellectual development of the individual, with no area standing in isolation from the others.

During the whole of the foundation stage, children are guided through each of the seven areas of learning.

The prime areas are:

- PSED,
- Communication and Language and
- Physical Development.

The specific areas of learning are:

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

This learning is broken down into age and stage categories for example 3-4 Year olds and Reception aged children. The children move through at their own pace and with all of their learning focused on their next steps and moving them forward. The different areas of learning lead to a set of Early Learning Goals, which are a series of expectations for achievement by most children by the end of the Reception year.

During the EYFS, children work towards the Early Learning Goals. The teaching within the foundation stage includes a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs. The framework of planning encourages purposeful activity, with appropriate intervention by adults to aid children's learning and understanding. The opportunities provided will include those which are carefully guided by adults as well as activities which children initiate themselves.

### **Our EYFS Curriculum:**

- is distinctive, innovative and strategically planned
- is regularly reviewed in the light of national developments, new thinking and research and developments
- introduces challenging, engaging and real-life problems
- strives to encourage and develop a love of learning
- lets learning happen within a child centred approach
- ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning at every stage of development
- ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning across the curriculum
  - ensures all areas of learning are regarded with the same level of importance and are interlinked in learning
  - includes fundamental British values to teach children a sense of self and belonging; enabling them to learn and stay true to the values that make people good members of the community
  - encourages children learn to live together peacefully, with each of them playing a valuable role in the multi-cultural world in which they live

### **Assessment**

The foundation stage assessment profile is linked to the seven areas of learning. The children are observed and assessed via practical activities and play opportunities. These on-going assessments provide a framework for planning to enable the teacher to provide opportunities through which children will move forward in their learning.

The profile information is examined at periods through the year and shared with parents and children. EYFS profile information is shared with Year 1 colleagues from Term 5 in order to support each child as they continue the journey of learning into Key Stage 1.

Assessment gives many opportunities for early identification of children who may need extra help. Intervention groups are put in place to support children as needed. Significant achievements in learning are celebrated and shared with parents. Equally, achievements at home are shared by parents with Reception staff.

Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher twice a year in a formal parent consultation meeting and receive a written report on their child's achievements and their Early Learning Goal achievements at the end of Term 6. Throughout the year we hold Open Learning Weeks where parents and carers are invited in to join in with the learning taking place in the classroom. More informally we meet with parents throughout the school year as and when necessary to discuss their child's particular needs.

## **The EYFS Environment**

The Reception area is carefully planned to ensure all areas are used to enable learning for every child. The children have the choice of where they choose to learn. All activities are based upon current assessment and all have a main learning intention that can be accessed with and without adult support. Our basic provision is linked to the age related expectations of the cohort. We encourage child initiated activities and adapt our continuous provision accordingly.

We enhance our provision through objects, prompts, conversation and questioning. Appropriate resources in the EYFS environment are stimulating and relevant. The resources are provided to create rich learning opportunities through a range of highly structured, adult led, child led or child initiated learning. Child initiated activities may be instigated when the child brings something to the setting. This might lead to the provision of resources, stories and pictures to support this interest.

A whole class focus is linked to activities within the EYFS setting. These are adapted continuously to meet the needs of the unique child. Attention to children's adaptation of activities is encouraged and creates extended learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves through self-selecting tasks and activities. The activities offer opportunities for extended learning and are structured to develop their learning

## **Planning**

We use the development statements in Development Matters (DfE 2021) to identify next steps for each child to deepen, challenge and extend their learning. During planning sessions, discussion takes place to ensure activities allow for characteristics of effective learning to be demonstrated and embedded. Planning is based on children's interests. The long term planning states the Learning Journeys followed throughout the year. These are subject to change according to cohort interests. Planning takes into account children with individual needs in line with our Inclusion Policy.

Pre-planning sessions with the children are timetabled into the week prior to starting a new learning journey. Activities based on skills may be led by adult facilitators in the classrooms. These activities let learning happen through creative opportunities, a supportive environment and a sound pedagogical understanding.

Opportunities for active learning are carefully planned and created through the children's current interests and high-quality texts. These themes help to meet the evolving needs of the children as they progress through the foundation stage. Through providing quality texts we hope to build a language-rich environment, in which children begin to understand that print carries meaning.

### **Transition to school.**

Beginning school is an exciting and challenging time for children and their families. New expectations and routines will be encountered and many children will need time to adapt and adjust to their new environment.

At Chantry we aim to make the transition to school a happy one. We have created good links with our main feeder nurseries and endeavour to build new relationships with pre-school establishments that are new to our school and for children in their care. To ensure the best possible transition we:-

- value the parent as the first educator of their child
- make contact via phone with every feeder pre-school within our new intake to discuss essential information on every child
- visit as many pre-schools as possible to meet children in a familiar setting
- share important information about our school during new-parents meeting
- use written information sent by pre-schools to inform early planning
- hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children in June and July
  - share information in a transition meeting with key adults for children with additional needs
- visit every parent and child whenever possible, before beginning school
- stagger entry of whole cohort in September to enable calm, quiet and more individualised start to school

We know that through play children explore, investigate, create and imagine, solve problems and practice newly acquired skills. While using what they know they also try out new ideas and skills. During play children communicate with each other, learn about the needs and feelings of others, as well as learning to express their own thoughts needs and ideas. The social aspect of play is fundamental to a happy and secure beginning to school life.