



# John Clare Primary School

*Inspire - Nurture – Celebrate*

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## Editions and Revisions:

Reviewed	September 2024
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## **Aims**

At John Clare Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS '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.'

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 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 in different ways and at different rates.

## **Principles into practice**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Shape our practice based upon the 4 over-arching principles: A unique child; Positive relationships; Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults; Learning and development.
- Work hard to make the child's first experience of school happy, safe, positive and fun.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and out.
- Provide a curriculum firmly based on active learning to meet the needs of the individual child including opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the child's needs and interests, informed by observation and assessment.

## **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas:

### **Communication and Language**

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

EYFS Statutory Educational Programme: The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day, in a language-rich environment, is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.

### **Physical Development**

- **Fine motor**
- **Gross motor**

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

- **Self-regulation**
- **Managing self**
- **Building relationships**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) 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 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

The specific areas are:

### **Literacy**

- **Comprehension**
- **Word reading**
- **Writing**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

The school uses the Supersonic Phonic Friends scheme to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics.

### **Mathematics**

- **Number**
- **Numerical Pattern**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.

### **Understanding the World**

- **Understanding the world**
- **Past and present**
- **People, culture and communities**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. 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**

- **Being Imaginative**
- **Creating with media and materials**

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have 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 crucial for developing their 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.

We write long and medium term plans using the EYFS curriculum, based on a series of topics each of year, which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans, as well child-led interests, are then used to inform our adult-initiated inputs as well as continuous provision in the environment encouraging child-initiated learning.

Practitioners working with the children below age-related expectations will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways, including whole class, small group and one to one learning throughout the school year. They have daily phonics sessions using Supersonic Phonic Friends, daily maths sessions and daily carpet inputs based on the specific areas of learning. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach in both the indoor and outdoor classroom, as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.'

### **The characteristics of effective teaching and learning**

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

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

### **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children’s development and learning to inform our future plans for both the needs of individual pupils and the class as a whole. We also record some of our observations of the children’s learning on Seesaw, an online learning platform.

Formative assessment (ongoing assessment) is an integral part of teaching and learning in early years. It involves building relationships, knowing the children and recognising their achievements on a day-to-day basis. Formative assessment then supports practitioners to make judgements of the children’s capabilities in the seven areas. Children are assessed according to the appropriate Development Statements and their progress is tracked termly using the school’s internal tracking system. The child’s progress is reviewed every term to ensure coverage and progression. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening to discuss their child’s attainment and progress within the year. Within the final term, we provide the parent’s with a report based on their child’s attainment. We aim to support all children in achieving the Early Learning Goal (ELG) for each of the 17 areas of learning so they are best prepared to begin Year 1 with an overall good level of development.

The EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child’s development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting school in the EYFS.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

These are submitted to the Local Authority each year.

Teachers will use information from parents/carers, nursery and other adults with significant interaction, to form a well-rounded assessment of the child’s development.

Teachers are not required to document, journal or provide evidence for their assessments, but instead will spend more time building relationships with children and deepening their knowledge of the individual child, and moderate with other teachers for best practice. Assessment should not interrupt the teacher from spending time with the children, however concerns of particular areas for development or noteworthy achievements should be noted.

## **Safeguarding**

Mobile phones are not permitted within the EYFS Unit by either staff or visitors.

Equipment that is used for recording pupils work is controlled by the 'ICT Acceptable Use Policy' and only school equipment must be used and once used for EYFS Profile/evidence photographs will be deleted.

## **Health and Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies and procedures in place to ensure children's safety, including a specific outdoor risk assessment.

Paediatric first aid trained staff are available within school and offer support to other staff who are also first aid trained.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the daily provision of a free nutritious snack and following set procedures when children become ill.

To promote independence in the children we encourage families to toilet train their children ready for starting school.

## **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at John Clare Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that can meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that children can strive to achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and we do this working closely with parents and outside agencies.

## **Parents as Partners and the Wider context**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways throughout the school year. We invite parents into school to attend various workshops throughout the year to support learning at home. Parents are able to view regular learning updates from the classroom on Seesaw. This encourages children to share their learning at home and discuss what they have learnt. We encourage parents to read with their children at home and offer incentives for children to do so.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

## Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning at a pace which children feel comfortable and secure in their new environment. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

To enable a positive transition:

- Children are invited to attend stay and play sessions in the Summer Term to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners, in a fun and relaxing way.
- The class teachers visit children and parents at home to develop a relationship in a familiar, safe environment.
- We liaise with children's key workers from nursery/childminders, and visit the onsite nursery to read a story and build relationships and familiarity.
- Where extra transition is required, we visit the children in their pre-school setting (offsite nurseries) before they start school.
- EYFS children are allocated a Year 6 'buddy' who make contact with the children, through a letter, during the Summer Term and then provide support to them at playtimes and lunchtimes when they begin school.
- There is also an information meeting to support parents with ideas of how to prepare their child for starting school and a welcome pack is sent home.
- We use Seesaw to show pictures of the environment and encourage children to upload pictures from their holiday, to talk about in the first few days of school.

Children start school on a full-time basis (one or two half days may be required to allow time for home-visits) to allow children to settle into their new environments and routines as soon as possible, with minimal disruption.

In the final term of their reception year, the respective teacher and Year 1 teacher liaise to discuss the individual children, their needs and analyse the assessment data to inform planning. The children also attend stay and play sessions in their Year 1 class to develop familiarity with the classroom and staff. These actions enable a smooth transition into their next stage of learning.