



Early Years Policy

Reviewed – May 2017
Next review – May 2020

Coxheath Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Aims

At Coxheath 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 develop their potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. 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
- 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
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

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

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by the Characteristics of Effective Learning : Playing and exploring; Active learning and Creating and thinking critically.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds' and Jolly Phonics; teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy and shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Development Matters statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways, and contribute to the child's individual 'Learning Journey' profile book. At the end of the reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The Foundation Stage has enclosed outdoor areas, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Observation and Assessment

Observation and assessment begins from the end of Term 6, the term before the children are due to start school. At Coxheath Primary School our aim is to visit and observe the children in their preschool setting, meeting with their key worker and obtaining their record of transfer. The children then attend arranged visit days in which the class teacher is provided with the opportunity to make their initial observations and judgements.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents throughout the year. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening and details of child's achievement and next steps are shared.

Within the final term, we provide parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher in preparation for Year 1.

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, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill /or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all children as individuals at Coxheath Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed 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 in doing so, work 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, family members and other care-giving providers to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways such as coffee mornings, 'Stay and Play' sessions, parent interview and workshop sessions.

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

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

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. 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 child-minders.

Children and their parents attend introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive a welcome pack containing photos of their class teacher, teaching assistant, class logo and school logo. Included in this welcome pack are also some activities together with a summer book which includes an 'All about me' sheet and an opportunity for children with their family to record events and activities of their summer.

In the final term of Early Years, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.