

'~?}::



Crockham Hill C E Primary

School

Giving children the best possible start to the rest of their lives.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Review Body:	Teaching and Learning Team
Leadership Group Responsibility:	Headteacher
Type of Policy:	Non-Statutory Document
Review Period:	3 years
Reviewed:	November 2024
Next Review:	November 2027

Approved by the Curriculum and Learning Committee on 6th November 2024

This policy supports our values of Respect, Empathy and Aspiration. It has been adopted so that all members of our staff know what standards we expect. This supports our school vision by helping us to create a safe and secure learning environment, in which challenges every child to succeed while recognising their individual needs and aspirations.

RESPECT EMPATHY RESILIENCE ASPIRATION

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

EYFS Policy & Philosophy

We believe early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. The purpose of this policy is to describe our Early Years curriculum and show how Crockham Hill Primary School strives to give each child the best possible start in life. We greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. At Crockham Hill, all teaching staff deliver an EYFS curriculum through immersion in high quality teaching alongside an enriched environment. Our philosophy is to nurture every child's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, developing both skills and confidence as they take their first steps on their own unique journey of lifelong learning. At Crockham Hill we consider the relationship between home and school to be paramount in the development and well-being of children in our care. We don't just welcome children, we welcome families.

Intent

The intent for our children is to enter the next stage of their education ready to tackle new challenges with confidence and a positive mindset.

ENGAGE our pupils in a stimulating environment led by the children yet carefully organised and managed by adults. Providing a curriculum responsive to individual starting points and needs.

INNOVATE our children to take the lead in their own learning, encouraging confidence to explore new ideas, think about problems, take risks, make links and seek challenge.

DEVELOP high levels of engagement, curiosity, collaboration and cooperation. Highly adept at managing their own behaviour in the classroom and in social situations.

EXPRESS themselves with confidence in a meaningful way. Respecting the opinions and values of themselves and others.

Implementation

Our approach is influenced by the work of educationalists, researchers, psychologists and practitioners who have guided our knowledge of how young children learn and how adults can support their learning.

"Knowledgeable practitioners appreciate that adult-led learning offers a child something different from, but complementary to, child led learning and it is one without the other that leads to an impoverished educational experience." Fisher, 2016.

At Crockham Hill provision is underpinned by a complementary relationship between adult led, adult-initiated and child led learning. We are ambitious in our approach using a continuous cycle of observation and assessment, planning/teaching, alongside structured and systematic lessons and guided work.

We want our children to leave early years as happy, confident, resilient learners who are kind to others and care for their environment. They will feel safe and secure which will enable them to engage in learning and work independently or collaboratively. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Crockham Hill Primary School, we will:

- ✓ Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging curriculum both in the indoor and outdoor classrooms and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- ✓ Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- ✓ Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress from their baseline.
- ✓ Develop strong, valuable relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- ✓ Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

At Crockham Hill we follow the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024). Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice.

These are:

1. **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. 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.
4. Children **develop and learn at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

A Unique Child

At Crockham Hill Primary School we recognise that every child has their own learning journey and therefore progress at different rates. We recognise that children have strengths in different areas and always try to relate learning to their interests in order to support them in developing across all areas. Each child's achievements are celebrated through encouragement from all staff and class rewards. This enables them to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations set to meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies to match the learning styles of our children.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities linked to our Skills based Curriculum, ensuring children have a good scaffold for future learning.
- Adapting our teaching and learning where needed to ensure children make maximum progress.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) through pupil progress meetings and provision mapping.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Crockham Hill Primary School we welcome families – not just children. We recognise that children learn to be resilient, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parental involvement - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first educators and we value building positive relationships with them throughout their child's education through the following:

- ✓ Making contact with parents/carers before their child starts school at our parent walkabouts, induction sessions, welcome packs and pre-school visits.
- ✓ Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- ✓ Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in school before the year starts.
- ✓ Inviting the children for a week of mornings plus lunch time to ease transition into full days at school.
- ✓ Inviting parents to phonic and reading workshops to see how their children will begin learning.
- ✓ Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- ✓ Written contact through reading records and weekly newsletters
- ✓ Sharing photos, updates and reward points on Seesaw (our online communication platform).
- ✓ Publishing termly topic knowledge organisers on the school website.
- ✓ Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress and wellbeing is discussed.
- ✓ Sending a written report on their child's attainment, progress and attitude at the end of their time in reception.
- ✓ Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.

- ✓ Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, special events, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- ✓ Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

Enabling Environments

At Crockham Hill Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment which is well resourced and organised, enabling them to be independent learners and providing opportunities to extend their own learning.

We plan a learning environment using materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

EYFS learning and development requirements

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving.

These are called the prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social, and emotional development.

Four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas

These are called the specific areas:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Crockham Hill are three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. 'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. 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 practise and build up ideas, 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.

- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. '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 some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

***'What children learn is important, but how children learn is even more important if they are to become learners in today's society.'* How Children Learn, Nancy Stewart (2011)**

Planning

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the revised Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals.

Observations - Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys.

Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the staff assesses the ability of each child using a mixture of the statutory government baseline and also through teacher observations. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We record each child's level of development throughout the year and record whether each child is on track or not on track to meet a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the year in July. Children will be judged at either an emerging level or an expected level in each early learning goal.

Within continuous provision our assessment strategy is 3-fold.

1. Observation

Throughout 'continuous provision' observation forms a fundamental aspect of the pedagogy of EYFS at Crockham Hill Primary School.

“Young children demonstrate language, mathematics, science, creativity, physicality – sometimes all within one activity – and the task of the practitioner is to make sense of what is seen, to recognise any significant steps in learning that may have taken place and to identify where help and support are needed to make further progress” Jan Dubiel, 2014

Observation and responding to children's thinking inform our planning of enhanced experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment for thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we capitalise knowledge of children's interests to ensure high levels of engagement.

Adults take note – when a child does or says something that demonstrates progress or skill in a particular area

2. The Leuven scales

Alongside the use of observation as an assessment tool we also rely upon the pioneering work of Professor Ferre Laevers (1980s) to understand how focused and comfortable the children are in our setting. The scales of well-being and involvement act as a measure of deep learning. Using the scales has an empowering impact on ensuring our learning environment is highly effective. The 5-point scale measures:

Well Being refers to feeling at ease, being spontaneous and free of emotional tensions and is crucial to good mental health. It is linked to self-confidence, a good degree of self-esteem and resilience.

Involvement refers to being intensely engaged in activities and is a necessary condition for deep level learning and development.

3. Summative Assessments

In addition, to the continuous cycle of observation and formative assessment which informs each child's next steps, summative assessments are carried out for phonic development, the stable order principle in number and an assessment of each child's stage of development for each of the 7 areas of learning. These take place termly and informs planning of subsequent teaching and learning.

The Importance of play

Learning through play and practical hands-on experiences underpins our approach to teaching and learning in Early Years. Through play, children develop a number of skills such as language, creativity, social and intellectual skills. Children are able to practise and learn new skills and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Independent learning takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world. For most children their play/independent learning is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults. Adults model and provide time, space and appropriate resources which inspire independent learning opportunities and the imaginations of the children. They observe play and join in when appropriate, watching and listening before intervening. They will often ask children questions about the independent learning in order to develop their language and communication skills. All staff value child-initiated learning and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This

begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable enhancements and experiences to extend the children's learning. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. Outside learning is as important as the learning that takes place indoors. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant in our natural surroundings. We provide resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. An enormous amount of attention and effort goes into the design of furniture and into the organisation of space and materials in order to maximise the ease of use by the children. We wish to provide opportunities for the children to question, investigate and explore, as well as to inspire them. The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely, safely and independently. There are areas where the children can be active and areas where they can be quiet. The classroom is set up to enable children to independently find and locate equipment and resources to aid their learning in whichever way possible.

Safe guarding and Welfare

It is important to us that all children in our school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and help them to 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 will need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of our children.

At Crockham Hill CEP School we understand that we are legally required to comply with specific welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. Our school's safeguarding policy is applied equally in the EYFS. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the headteacher, Mrs Lisa Higgs, with her deputy head, Mrs Ghislaine Lakin-Hall, deputising in her absence.

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding 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
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the School's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.

In line with the School's Equalities Scheme we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All

staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and should use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

Health and Safety

Our school's Health and Safety policy applies equally to the EYFS. In particular we ensure the following

- fresh drinking water is available at all times
- children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- fruit is available during the morning session and at lunchtime
- a first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept
- a fire and emergency evacuation procedure is taught to the children early in September
- our Child Protection Policy states how mobile phones and cameras are to be used whilst children are in the school.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. Where children have specific needs a health care plan should be agreed with parents for their care.

Parent Engagement

Parents are the first and most important influence on their child's development and future outcomes.

Children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. Therefore, the school and the parents all have crucial roles to play. The impact on a child's education is greater if parents and schools work in partnership.

At Crockham Hill, parents are invited to be involved in every step of a child's journey in education. Beginning with an invitation for their child to attend several 'transition' sessions before the Autumn term commences and a pre-starting school meeting. We use an online learning journal, 'Seesaw' to record, track and celebrate progress made by each child. Seesaw enhances this special time in a child's life and captures children's experiences as well as monitors development and learning. Text, images and videos can be uploaded by parents to share learning and experiences from home via PC, tablet or our mobile app - anywhere there's an online connection. Every entry helps to create a complete story of a child's time at school.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- an information event for parents in June/July where they receive information which highlights school start and finish times, the EYFS curriculum, practical matters such as uniform and informs the parents of the school's vision and aims.
- a 'Meet the Teacher' meeting in September during which a brief overview of life in the class is given
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns.
- inviting parents to attend occasional and informal meetings providing information about

other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Early Reading, Maths and Phonics.

- ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during taster sessions.
- formal meetings with parents and a formal report at the end of the school year.
- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between the child, school and parents/carers such as reading army, trips, home learning, Sports Day etc.
- written contact through reading diaries.
- asking parents to sign permission slips for visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school.

All staff involved with the EYFS develop good relationships with the children by interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In Reception the teachers are the main 'key person' for each child with the TA carrying out a supporting role alongside the teacher. A warm welcome each day often leads to a deeper knowledge and understanding of each child and their family. As stated earlier, 'it is knowing the child and family that opens up endless possibilities for interactions that deepen the emotional bonds between a practitioner and a child, and lead, in turn, to educational opportunities to support and extend learning.' (Fisher, 2016)

The Induction Process

During the Summer Term prior to starting school the following September the following visits are conducted:

- wherever possible, Foundation Stage staff will visit pre-school settings from which September's intake will be taken.
- each child and their parents and carers will be invited to spend some time at Crockham Hill CE Primary School in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the learning environment.

When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first complete week, children will attend for the morning session only and will have a staggered start dependent upon term of birth and by the end of the week they will stay for lunch.
- During the second week and thereafter, children will attend for the full school day unless Foundation staff and parents or guardians agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child.

If parents wish to request a start date at a different point in the school year they should arrange to meet with the headteacher to discuss their child's needs. If a different start date is agreed then a separate induction programme should be arranged where appropriate.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1 and moving into Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Year 1 teachers are given a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the

three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Impact

The most recent statistics show 80% of our children leave the EYFS with a Good Level of Development (GLD). This is above the national expectation in the UK.

Children enter Key Stage One ready to begin the next chapter of the educational journey. They are equipped with a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress through school and life.

In 2017, a 'Study of Early Education and Development: Good Practice in Early Education' was published which outlined 3 themes that underpin effective practice that are aligned with our ethos and development.

At Crockham Hill we;

1. Tailor practice to the needs of the children - the child is at the centre of our practice. We have a clear vision of what we want to achieve for the children in our care, and these clear goals inform all areas of our practice.
2. Invest in skilled and experienced staff - that support children to reach their full potential.
3. Operate an open and reflective culture – our culture is driven by continuous improvement. We seek out other settings and professionals to learn from, share and reflect practice. We recognise the knowledge and expertise of our own staff and value open discussion and staff consultation; and embedded within our school is a culture of self-evaluation as a means of driving continuous improvement.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor for the EYFS. This Governor has opportunities to observe EYFS practice and provide feedback to the Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Headteacher and senior leadership team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy