



CASTLETOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as co-operation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document which is available to download at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (Dfe 2014:1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Moving and Handling and Self care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**- Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics**- Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- **Understanding the World** – People and communities, The World and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design**- Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep 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.

Teaching strategies

We ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition into year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class or group. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, Read, Write Inc and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc...

Reading and story play is an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find that topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Our topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Although class teachers are responsible for writing plans, the EYFS plan as a team, with Teachers and Nursery Nurses all attending planning meetings giving an input wherever possible.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years base has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing workshop, maths area, creative workshop, book corner, role play area, home corner, construction area, small world area, snack area, outdoor area, malleable materials area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever their focus for the session/day is.

The outside area is an important part of the classroom. We try to ensure that the range of activities reflects the different curriculum areas and also meets the needs of individual groups of children. With Reception children the outside area is mainly used on an afternoon, however it is also accessed on a morning when applicable. In Nursery, children have open access to the outdoor area.

Assessment, observations and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual Learning Journey. We are very proud of our Learning Journeys: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations that create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings after school each day and in weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and the week ahead. Staff have iPad's which they use to capture and note observations and next steps for learning.

We have regular sessions with parents where they are able to view their child's Learning Journey. Parents are encouraged to use their child's 'Learning at Home book'. They can contribute by using Little Star vouchers. Little Star vouchers are where significant events that happen at home can be recorded, they are available in the porch and can be taken home to be completed or can be completed with the support of a member of staff. Learning Journeys are given to parents when their child enters year 1 or leaves our setting.

On entry to Nursery we carry out baseline assessments on each child. They are then entered onto the school tracking system which is updated on a termly basis. In Reception children are assessed against the government's baseline system. We also continue to track them using the school system across the seven areas of learning showing each child's development. At the end of Reception the children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Reception.

Role of staff and key worker

In Nursery the teacher's and nursery nurses are named as a child's key worker. In Reception the class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. All staff have small teaching groups during RWI and Number. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are the child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable to approach us. As well as Nursery and Reception visit days we offer workshop and drop in sessions throughout the year, such as our successful reading and RWI sessions. At the beginning of each new academic year a questionnaire is sent out to all parents asking them to share with us where they would like support and help. We then produce sessions to support their needs.

When a child gains a place at Castletown Primary School we invite them to attend a session alongside all other children who will be starting. We also invite all parents and carers to attend a meeting where the EYFS lead and the Head teacher can outline what attending our school means and the journey that each child will go on. We give each family a starting school pack that contains an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer. Over the first few days of starting school we welcome all parents into the classroom setting and they are able to stay with us until they feel happy to leave their child in our care to ensure that the transition into school goes smoothly. We have a staggered entry into Nursery but in Reception all of the children start together but we have a slightly shorter school day for the first two weeks of school. Early in the first term parents are invited into a parents meeting so that settling in can be reviewed.

We are aware that parents will be a part of our school for the next seven or eight years so it is very important to us that they feel part of the family of our school and know how much we value the education and wellbeing of their child.

In the final term in Reception the Year 1 team will meet the EYFS team and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. The classroom areas and the teaching styles in Year 1 have been developed to reflect current practices in Reception to ensure that the transition of all children is seamless.

Health and Safety

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf and the EYFS is covered in the schools Child Protection Policy.

It is important to note that staff do not have their mobile phones in the Foundation Area. Phones are securely locked away in staff personal lockers and they are only able to use them in designated zones within school. Parents must give written permission at the beginning of the year for their child to have photos taken within school. These photos are used within their Learning Journey's, for display purposes and also on the schools website.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk on a daily basis from a Government scheme. They are also offered a free school lunch.

We have a kitchen in the Nursery which no child is allowed to enter and is secured with a safety door.

We take all accidents seriously and they are logged. Children are treated by a paediatric trained first aider. Staff will contact the child's parent if the accident is to the head or staff deem it to be serious.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with school policy. There are logs held within Foundation that are signed by staff after morning checks have occurred on both the inside and outside environment.

We follow school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Joan Lumsdon, head teacher and Julie Stevens, deputy head teacher, are the designated Child Protection contacts and all concerns are discussed with them.

We are covered by the schools policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

Joy Harvey (Lower School Leader)

September 2015

This policy will be reviewed annually.