



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

“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 it’s own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” (EYFS 2013)

At Charlestown School we fully support the above statement and aim to provide opportunities that will enable our children to feel safe, to enjoy learning and to be successful.

During their time at Charlestown School every child will be given the best possible start to their education. Our school’s vision statement is *“Inspire, Enrich and Enlighten”*. We aim to provide pupils with opportunities that inspire them and enrich their lives, encouraging them to develop skills that will enable them to become independent and successful learners.

EYFS Aims

- To foster positive attitudes to learning including confidence, curiosity, responsibility and independence.
- To ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum.
- To promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning for all of our children to ensure that none are excluded or disadvantaged.
- To provide all children with a well planned curriculum which fosters enthusiasm for learning, is challenging and stimulating.
- To develop children’s knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of learning through first hand experiences.
- To provide opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning in a variety of safe and secure environments both indoors and outdoors.
- To establish and maintain a close partnership with parents/carers, families and pre-school providers in our community.
- To use focused assessment and record keeping based on direct observation of children and discussion with them and adults who work with them.
- To use this assessment to inform future planning, monitor progress and build on children’s prior learning to ensure they achieve their potential.
- To ensure a smooth and well planned transition into Year One at the end of the EYFS.

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage has four specific themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

This policy explains how our curriculum practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

At Charlestown School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

The Unique Child and Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals. All children and their families at Charlestown School are valued and treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their life experiences when planning for learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all of our children 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 based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Positive Relationships

At Charlestown School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. This centres on developing good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Positive Relationships and Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Getting to know parents and children during our 'Welcome' sessions in the Summer Term prior to their child starting school.
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in the Early Years Foundation Stage before starting at school.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries/ concerns about their child.

- Regularly sharing the children's 'Learning Journey' via Tapestry and valuing the on-going contributions to these from parents through their Tapestry uploads.
- Inviting parents and families in regularly to share in their child's learning through 'Sharing' afternoons.
- Offering at two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year.
- Sending a more detailed report on their child's attainment and progress early in the Summer term which is then followed by an opportunity for parents to meet teachers to discuss targets and areas for development.

Enabling Environments

At Charlestown School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Through observation of learning and interactions with others, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. The planning within the EYFS is based on the 17 Early Learning Goals. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children and this is indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely, safely and independently. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet and creative. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Early Years Foundation Stage has 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, learning opportunities and resources for both the inside and outside environments to enable the children to develop in all of the areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At Charlestown School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often 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 are:

- **Prime Areas:**
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Communication and Language
 - Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

- **Specific Areas:**
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the world
 - Expressive arts and design

There are three characteristics of effective learning which help us to focus on and understand how children learn. The characteristics of learning are:

- **Playing and exploring – Observing how children engage with their learning**
 - Finding out and exploring
 - Using what they already know in their play
 - Being willing to have a go

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and 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. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

- **Active Learning - Observing how children are motivated to learn**
 - Being involved and concentrating
 - Keep trying
 - Enjoying and achieving what they set out to do

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have 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.

- **Creativity and Critical Thinking – Observing how children are thinking**
 - Having their own ideas
 - Using what they already know to learn new things
 - Choosing ways to do things and finding new way

Creating and thinking critically relates to how young children make sense of the world around them by looking for patterns and gradually developing their understanding by processing repeated experiences.

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. The adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are encouraged to use the indoors and the outdoors to extend their learning.

From a very early age, our children are encouraged to learn the skills they need to take on the challenges they will encounter in their life. They are taught and learn important life skills. They are encouraged to investigate, to take risks and to be creative and critical with their learning.

Resources

We review our resources termly to ensure that they are:

- Suitable to meet the needs of the children
- In a safe and clean condition for use
- Appropriate for all areas of learning

Our resources include the following:

- A good range of quality books housed and displayed in attractive, comfortable areas.
- Sand and water with a variety of equipment.
- Mathematical and scientific equipment.
- Materials for imaginative play including some equipment for different role play areas.
- A variety of papers and tools/implements to make marks and write.
- A variety of creative media such as paint, clay, wood and junk materials.
- Small and large construction equipment.
- Ipads, computers with concept keyboards and programmable toys.
- Cooking equipment.
- Equipment for exploring growing and living things.
- Artefacts and interesting objects to handle.
- A variety of outdoor play equipment – tyres, milk crates, poles, ropes, tarpaulins etc

At Charlestown School we place great emphasis on the importance of keeping our practice up to date. We ensure that **all** staff are kept up to date with changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as current practice and pedagogy. We regularly attend external and in-house training updates. Our Teaching Assistants attend training that is held within school and led by a member of the Senior Management Team. The teachers within the Early Years Foundation Stage attend courses and conferences relevant to the Early Years. In addition to this they meet regularly as a team to share practice through professional dialogue that is focused on the practice and development of the Foundation Stage.

Teaching and Learning

The growth of Charlestown School has enabled the Early Years Foundation Stage to increase to a two form entry unit. The class rooms are situated opposite each other and share indoor provision as well as a large outside area and mud kitchen.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught by teachers with Early Years experience. In addition, both classes have a full time Teaching Assistant. We are also fortunate enough to be well supported by parent volunteers and adults undertaking their teaching assistant qualification. We recognise that children learn at different rates, therefore, we aim to provide learning opportunities which have a balance of visual, aural and kinaesthetic stimulus. We believe that our children learn best by actively being involved in activities, through first hand experiences and their

senses. We therefore provide a range of activities which are interesting, enjoyable, challenging and fun! Through these, we encourage our children to explore, experiment, question, investigate, discover, create and practice and consolidate their developing understanding, knowledge and skills. We firmly believe that if a child is excited and motivated by learning, especially in the early days at our school, then we are already helping that child to become a lifelong learner.

Play

All Children Have the Right to Play

- We believe that all children have the right to play and that play is important and fundamental to their development.
- Through play, children need to feel safe to make mistakes and have the confidence to try out and test their ideas in order to develop confidence and self-esteem.
- We understand that it is vital to treat all children with equal respect. Each child has his/her individual needs and practitioners aim to meet the needs of all children in an inclusive way.
- We encourage a culture of listening to children, respecting and valuing their needs and interests.
- Children are given time and space to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.
- We use risk assessments on a daily basis as a positive tool to enable children to develop their responses and understanding of the world around them.

Providing Appropriate Opportunities For Play

We ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to play in a secure environment with effective support from caring adults. We use the classroom and our outdoor area to enable children to access both planned, structured play activities and self-initiated, spontaneous play activities. We achieve this through the following:

- Children are engaged in relevant, exciting and absorbing play opportunities which promote meaningful learning experiences.
- Observing and planning is used to continually consider the interests of the children and their individual developmental needs.
- We provide challenging and stimulating play experiences inside and outside the setting and value these environments equally.
- We provide and value an equal balance of adult led and child initiated opportunities in all seven areas of learning. Children do not make a distinction between play and learning and neither do the practitioners.

Assessment

Our assessment of pupil progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is based on regular and close observations as well as questioning, listening and discussion with individual children. In this way, we are able to make professional judgments about what children have learnt and what their next steps need to be. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. Observations and assessment of the children's learning is recorded using the **Tapestry** software. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have their own iPad to record children's learning. This information is uploaded to a data base where it is securely accessed by the team. Observations are automatically sent to parents through their email account. Photographs and independent learning are also included in the learning journey. We involve all adults who come into

contact with the child and regard parents as especially important in this process. We therefore want to ensure that parents are able to contribute to the assessment process through an ongoing dialogue between home and school. Parents are encouraged to upload their own proud moments onto Tapestry so that staff build up a clear picture of each child's talents and abilities. This showcases any learning and achievements that their child has done at home. This could be swimming, getting dressed by themselves, writing their name or reading their new book.

On entry to school we make initial assessments of what children already know, understand and can do. Each term we track each child's progress against the *Development Matters* document.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage 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. Teachers identify whether the child is '**emerging**' in an area, has made the '**expected**' level of development, or is '**exceeding**' in all of the 17 areas of learning. Parents and Carers receive a report early in the Summer term which indicates where their child is currently achieving nationally along, with their child's next steps in learning. This is followed by a parent consultation. During the summer term each child's achievements within the EYFS are summarised and data submitted to the LA as part of the statutory assessment.

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 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.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Child Protection.

Admission

Our school follows the Cornwall Primary School Admission Arrangements as set out in the annual admissions booklet given to the parents of prospective pupils in the Autumn Term.

In our Academy we have an agreed admission number of 60 children in Foundation Stage. We offer a full time place to all children.

Parent Partnerships

At Charlestown School we believe that parents should be seen as vital partners in a child's education, and we feel that engaging and working with parents is essential in order for children to succeed at learning. We aim to make contact with all parents during the year prior to admission through pre-arranged meetings, information evenings, and the 'Welcome' sessions. Parents are given clear information about all events and children's learning through the School Prospectus, regular newsletters, the school website, schools coms service and regular letters from the teacher. We provide parents with Topic newsletters and suggested Shared Learning tasks that they can support their child with in order to further enhance their child's learning. Parents are also able to communicate with staff on a daily basis either face to face at drop off and pick up times or via the child's Communication Book, which is read and responded to daily by staff.

During the first term, parents are encouraged to spend time with children in the classroom at the start of the school day, after 8:45am and before registration time at 8:55am. During this time parents

can help the children with a range of settling down activities. As the term progresses we encourage the children to come into class independently. This fosters and develops a sense of achievement and individuality.

Parental involvement is valued and welcomed with plenty of opportunities for co-operation and collaboration, such as helping out in our classrooms and on trips. We provide a full induction and training, and ensure that all our staff are CRB checked before volunteering in our school.

We encourage parents to become actively involved in their children's learning by sharing curriculum information with them, and giving them plenty of opportunities to share information, experiences, thoughts, concerns and resources with us.

Community Partnerships

Our school has close links with the local pre-school/playgroup/nurseries. They are:

- Naturally Learning Nursery
- Happy Days Nursery
- Baby Bugs Nursery
- Local small pre schools
- Local Childminders

We foster positive links with all providers by visiting them on a regular basis, particularly during the Summer Term, where the Foundation Stage teachers read stories and play games with the children. We also invite these settings into the Academy to share key events across the year such as the Foundation Stage Christmas Play and sports day.

Starting at the Academy

During the Autumn Term in the year prior to the child starting school, contact is made with the Pre School providers from whom the majority of the intake comes. Three open afternoons are organised so that prospective parents and children are able to visit and familiarise themselves with Charlestown School.

Our 'Welcome' sessions begin in the Summer Term. These provide opportunities for the children to visit the Foundation Stage classrooms with their parents and to spend time playing and getting to know the Foundation Stage staff.

Many factors are taken into consideration when allocating children to individual classes: the ratio of boys and girls, ratio of Autumn, Spring and Summer birthdays, friendship groups and previous siblings taught are some examples.

In July the parents are invited to an information session when they meet with all the staff who will be with their child. They are given information about routines, are able to discuss any concerns they may have, and are given information about what the forthcoming year will involve for their child.

We hold a Parent/Teacher meeting for every parent and carer in September, prior to pupils starting, where we can learn more about each child and discuss any questions and concerns parents and carers may have.

There are also opportunities for parents to attend sessions throughout the year that will ensure that they have a good understanding of the EYFS. We provide information sessions about the EYFS, how we teach reading, writing and maths as well as how they can access Tapestry and be part of their child's Learning Journey throughout the Reception year.

Transition to Year One

The EYFS aims to provide Year One teachers and parents with reliable and accurate information about each child's level of development as they reach the end of the EYFS. This will enable the teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet all children's needs, to support their continued achievement more fully.

At Charlestown School we ensure that our children are well prepared for transition between all classes. The transition from the Foundation Stage to Year One is part of a broader whole-school approach to achieving good curricular continuity and progression in pupil's learning. In addition to the transition mornings, where the children spend sessions with their new teacher, Foundation stage children spend time with the Year One teachers during outdoor play opportunities throughout the Summer Term. This enables Year One teachers to build in strategies that will help and support the children, and provides an opportunity for the children to familiarise themselves with the Year One staff and to prepare themselves for the next stage in their learning.