



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Adopted by Governing Body: 27.02.13

Reviewed by Governing Body: 21.05.19

Next Review: May 2022

Statutory Policy: Yes

Definition

Early Years refers to the period in a child's life from birth to the end of Reception. In our school, Early Years refers to the time that a child spends in the Reception class until the end of Year Two.

Rationale

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework that sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. At Pitcheroak School it is the responsibility of the Early Years Practitioners to provide a total communication environment: to play an active part in developing, maintaining and assessing learning experiences of the highest quality, considering both children's needs and achievements and the range of learning experiences that will help them make progress. Carefully planned and purposeful play is the key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge during the foundation stage.

Aims and Objectives

At Pitcheroak School, we aim to provide a broad and enriching Early Years curriculum that is appropriate to our pupils' age, level of understanding and needs. We aim to provide a safe, fun and caring environment, both inside and out in which all children can develop their individual personalities, talents and abilities.

The objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- To understand that every child is an individual.
- To help children develop their sense of identity as individuals but also as part of a group.
- To help children to develop an awareness of others.
- To help children to develop self-esteem and a sense of being valued.
- To help children to develop skills and positive attitudes towards thinking, learning, self-motivation and questioning.
- To encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and encourage independence.
- To provide a happy, safe and caring environment that enables children to learn how to play, work and co-operate with others.
- To help children develop a knowledge and understanding of their environment by providing opportunities to investigate, explore and question.

- To enable children to communicate effectively through the use of objects of reference, visual aids, signing, talking, listening, reading and writing.
- To ensure continuity for every child.

Curriculum

Children will begin the EYFS curriculum at their nursery or preschool setting and some children may complete it by the end of Reception or Year One, while for others it may take longer.

There are four guiding principles which shape our practice in the Early Years. These are

1. **A unique child** - every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
2. **Positive relationships** - children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
3. **Enabling environments** - 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;
4. **Learning and Development** - children develop and learn in different ways and 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.

There are seven areas of learning and development that form the basis of our educational programme in the Early Years. At Pitcheroak School we have a particular focus on developing skills within the 3 prime areas of:

1. **Communication and Language** - giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and communicating with others; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
2. **Personal Social and Emotional Development** - helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
3. **Physical Development** - providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also

be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

We also develop knowledge and skills in the 4 specific areas of:

- 1. Literacy** - encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- 2. Mathematics** - providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- 3. Understanding the World** - guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- 4. Expressive Arts and Design** - enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

All areas of learning and development are important and are inter-related.

Within the Early Years at Pitcheroak School, the teachers plan activities around a termly topic, which is then broken down into a weekly focus. Planned activities encourage playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically which all help to support the children to be effective and motivated learners. We aim to give all children a wide variety of experiences and activities both in school and the wider community.

Long term and medium term planning will identify the areas of learning and experiences to ensure that essential elements are prioritised. They provide an overview for the year and identify appropriate key objectives, contexts and activities which take account of children's needs and previous experiences. Short term planning identifies specific learning experiences to ensure that tasks meet the differing needs of the children.

Play based learning

Throughout their time in the Early Years, our pupils learn through planned and purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led focused activities and child initiated sessions. Well planned structured play, both indoors and outdoors is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous self-initiated lines of investigation and exploration. Play is a vital component of children's lives and is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, and behaviour and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills.
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships and to share ideas.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play encourages children to take risks.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Outside Learning

The outside area plays an important part of the Early Years Curriculum. It enables us to promote a developing interest in the immediate environment. It encourages the use of a different range of resources and provides opportunities to extend the cross curricular work from indoors. It can provide interesting and exciting experiences and may stimulate the child's curiosity about living things. An interest in the environment can result in an increase in a child's self-confidence, and skills learnt in these sessions are encouraged in everyday life.

The Outside Learning Environment will

- Be safe, secure, welcoming and stimulating
- Promote a positive self-image
- Foster independent learning and play
- Encourage children to challenge themselves
- Maximise learning opportunities.

All children have the opportunity of spending time in our Forest School where they will be encouraged to experience and explore the natural environment. These sessions are led by our qualified Forest School Leader.

Communication

Pitcheroak School promotes a Total Communication approach to teaching and learning. Within Early Years, communication sessions are planned for and delivered to small groups on a daily basis, although communication is an integral part of the school day and is promoted in all lessons, whatever the specific focus may be. Children are supported to develop the following skills:

- Turn taking
- Attention
- Sitting and listening
- Social interaction
- Memory
- Receptive and expressive language (including making a choice)

Staff promote a range of communication modes, including objects of reference, use of symbols and other visual aids, PECS and Signalong. Children will be encouraged to use their own preferred mode of communication.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

At the end of the summer term, prior to the child starting school in September, the Head of Department may visit the children and their parents/carers in either their home or school environment. This is a valuable process giving staff the opportunity to meet the children and get to know them on an individual basis in their own environment where they feel comfortable and safe.

Any queries or worries that parents/carers may have can be discussed. As part of the admissions process the school nurse is available to talk about health issues and can explain the school's medical policy. It enables the relevant and appropriate medical forms to be explained and signed.

Each child is assessed during their first term at school against all areas of the EYFS curriculum. From this information a baseline assessment is made. On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Its purpose is to highlight success and achievement, as well as identifying areas that need further support. All staff within the Early Years are involved in daily observations and assessments of all pupils during child initiated tasks and adult led activities, in the inside and outside environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs are recorded in each child's Learning Journal.

Children's progress in the Reception Year is recorded using the Foundation Stage Profile and is regularly updated throughout the year. This data is sent to the Local Authority at the end of the Reception Year and practitioners report whether children are meeting expected levels of development, if they are exceeding expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). Children who do not achieve all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year continue to work towards them in Years One and Two. Observations and assessments form the basis of individual reports to parents in the summer term.

Alongside the Foundation Stage Profiles, progress towards meeting differentiated learning objectives is also recorded on SOLAR.

A home-school communication book exists for every child. This forms a two-way communication method between school and home, and is filled in by class staff on a daily basis.

Parents have two opportunities to meet formally with the class staff, one in the autumn term and one in the spring term. The autumn term meeting focuses on the personal, social and emotional development of the children and how well they are settling into the Early Years and wider school community. The spring term meeting allows the teacher to talk about the on-going progress of the child. Following the end of year report to parents there is an additional opportunity should parents/carers wish to meet with the class teacher to discuss the end of year report.

Learning Journals

A Learning Journal is compiled for each child in Early Years. This consists of a collection of different documents that provide evidence and record of the child's development under the areas of learning identified in the EYFS. This journal consists of photos, art-work, mark-making etc. and is accompanied with observations made by practitioners, as well as identified next steps for learning, linked to the 7 key areas. The aim is to build a unique picture of what each child knows, feels and can do as well as his / her particular interests and learning style. This picture can then be used to pinpoint learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences. The Learning Journals are shared with parents/carers throughout the year and will be sent home once children move up to Key Stage 2.

Monitoring and Evaluating of Progress

Monitoring will be carried out by the following:

- Classroom observation
- Discussions with staff
- Learning Journals

Evaluation will be achieved by:

- Progress made against termly IEP targets
- Progress made towards Annual Review targets
- Progress and attainment related to Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Role of the Head of Department

The Head of Department's duties are:

- To plan and deliver an Early Years programme which incorporates all aspects of the Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- To monitor/evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, in accordance with the school monitoring programme
- To develop and maintain resources
- To receive, disseminate and update information
- To support liaison with outside agencies
- To involve parents/carers and the wider community in the life of their child
- To attend relevant courses and network meetings

- To provide appropriate support and training for staff.

Equal Opportunities

All children have an entitlement to access the EYFS curriculum. All children will have access to appropriate resources within the school. These will reflect a multi-cultural society, without stereotyping or discrimination. All children will be given the opportunity to participate in all activities regardless of gender, race or ability.

Community Links

Working in partnership with parents/carers and with the wider school community is an essential element of the Early Years. We seek to involve parents/carers and keep them informed through our regular parents' evenings, parent engagement activities, sports festivals and workshops.

Opportunities for enhancing the Early Years curriculum by using resources in the local community are actively encouraged e.g. Links with local schools and pre-school settings, soft play centres and sports centres.

Transition

During the summer term, prior to starting Pitcheroak School, the Early Years teacher will have the opportunity to meet with pre-school providers in order to exchange information. They may also arrange a home visit with the school nurse. Every child is invited to attend Pitcheroak School for the transition day held in July. In negotiation with parents/carers, most pupils will start school in September on a full time basis. Pupils will stay in the Early Years classrooms until the end of Year 2.

When it is time for children to move to the next Key Stage, there will be opportunities for staff to share information regarding children's communication passports and their individual needs, to ensure a smooth transition from Early Years into Key Stage 2. Children will also have the opportunity to participate in a 'moving up' afternoon to visit their new classroom and to meet their new staff team and peers.