

Early Years Policy

Colehill First School is a Rights Respecting School. As such it is committed to upholding children's rights and promoting their responsibilities under the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The contents of this policy are fully in keeping with this commitment.

The Nature of Early Years Education

For the purpose of this document we define the Early Years as the youngest children in school, i.e. the four and five year olds in their Reception year, i.e. the later Foundation Stage.

Early Years education should involve practical and varied experiences, opportunities for choice, and, above all, promote the enjoyment of learning. It builds a bridge from home to the next stage of education i.e. the National Curriculum years.

How Will We Meet the Needs of the Children?

1. By ensuring a smooth transition from home to school based on close partnership with parents and pre-school settings.
2. By building firmly upon the valuable experiences which children have already encountered before entry to school.
3. By providing a caring, secure environment, with sensitive adult support, in order to promote positive development of the whole child and establish a secure basis for learning in school.
4. By encouraging independence and self-awareness within an atmosphere which promotes acceptance, confidence and self-esteem.

Entitlement

All children in the Early Years have the right to a balanced, child-centred curriculum enabling them to make maximum progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

The three **Prime Areas** of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum are:

1. Communication and language and literacy.
2. Physical development.
3. Personal, social and emotional development.

The four **Specific Areas** are:

- a) Literacy (including reading and writing)
- b) Mathematics (including numbers, shape, space and measures).
- c) Understanding the world (people and communities, the world, technology).
- d) Expressive arts and design (exploring and using media and materials, and being imaginative).

Implementation of Prime Areas

Communication and Language

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Develop their skills in speaking, listening and understanding through a wide range of experiences.
- Develop communication skills, responding to adults and to each other, using a growing range of vocabulary and verbal language skills.

Personal, Emotional and Social Development

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Make a smooth transition between pre-school and school settings.
- Participate fully as a member of the school community.
- Develop an awareness of self, gender, culture and uniqueness, while gaining an awareness of the effect of their behaviour on others.
- Develop attention skills and perseverance.
- Develop positive attitudes and dispositions.
- Share, co-operate and collaborate, to interact, discuss, listen and be listened to.

Physical Development

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Acquire a variety of skills, control and co-ordination in using a range of equipment on a large and small scale, including pencils for writing and drawing.
- Establish positive attitudes towards a healthy, safe and active way of life.
- Develop appropriate self-care skills including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

Implementation of Specific Areas

Literacy

Children will be given opportunities...

- In reading, to:
 - read and understand simple sentences.
 - use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately
 - read some common irregular words
 - demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
- In writing, to:
 - use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds
 - write some irregular common words
 - write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others.

Mathematics

In number, children will be given opportunities to:

- count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20
- place numbers 1-20 in order and give one more or one less than a given number.
- add and subtract two single-digit numbers using quantities and objects
- solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

In shape, space and measures, children will be given opportunities to:

- use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems.
- recognise, create and describe patterns.
- explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

Understanding the World

In 'people and communities', children will be given opportunities to:

- talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members.
- understand that not all children enjoy the same things, and show sensitivity to this.
- know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

In 'the world', children will be given opportunities to:

- find out about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things.
- talk about the features of their own immediate environment and explore how environments might vary from one another.
- make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

In 'technology', children will be given opportunities to:

- recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools.
- select and use technology for particular purposes.

Expressive Arts and Design

In 'exploring and using media and materials' children will be given opportunities to:

- sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing these.
- safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

In 'being imaginative' children will be given opportunities to:

- use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes.
- represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.

Cross Curricular Learning

Activities are based around topics or themes, which introduce skills and concepts from all areas of learning. Through a balance of teacher-led learning and child-initiated exploration, the children practise and consolidate their skills, and build their conceptual understanding. The experiences offered will be engaging, purposeful and multi-sensory. They should relate to the children's own experiences, interests and dispositions.

Equal Opportunities including SEN

As part of our commitment to equality, we recognise that it is the right of all children to experience a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum, appropriate to their needs, in order to enable them to reach their full potential, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background or ability.

Health and Safety

We will promote a cohesive approach to safety within the Early Years which is in line with the school's policy. As part of this, children are closely and actively involved in learning about how to assess risk and keep themselves safe.

The Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is designed to work progressively towards the Early Learning Goals.

Long Term Planning

Our long term planning is in the form of a curriculum map which identifies broad themes and incorporates skills, attitudes and concepts to be addressed. It identifies the types of learning experiences the children will encounter during their first year at Colehill. Further detail is set out in the EYFS programmes.

Medium Term

This is organised into a framework of half termly units of learning, with the flexibility to address children's own interests and questions. Learning objectives are linked to key concepts and skills, which are identified within the half-termly overview. Educational visits are included when appropriate. Exemplars of planning documentation can be found in the planning folder on the shared staff Google Drive.

Short Term

Core learning activities are planned in detail each week. Details of differentiation, grouping, adult focus and assessment opportunities are recorded. Additional learning opportunities are planned to enable the children to engage in self-directed, purposeful learning activities.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment and record keeping follows the requirements of the EYFS. Learning journeys are recorded in detail for each child the evidence is kept electronically in pupil evidence folders on a secure web-based system.

The children are assessed on entry using an agreed Dorset baseline derived from the EYFS profile, and ongoing assessment takes place through the year indicating progress in all 17 areas of the EYFS. The school participates in termly moderation across our Multi-Academy Trust and attends at least one Local Authority moderation event annually. Full LA moderation takes place at least once in every three year period and / or when there is a change of teacher in the EYFS class.

Classroom Management and Organisation

Learning Environment

Children are placed within a single reception class and are grouped within both mixed ability and specific ability groups as and when appropriate. The classroom is an environment which caters for all needs. It is set up to encourage different zones for the different areas of learning, there is a writing area, reading corner, ICT area, investigation area, creative area and a role-play area. We have developed an outside woodland learning classroom which encourages the development of a range of skills, including practical maths, reading, writing, creative role play, and activities to develop gross motor control.

Displays are frequently changed and are used as learning tools as well as displaying children's work. All equipment is labelled and stored in appropriate places for the children's use and to encourage independent skills.

Timetable

Children are taught using a variety of teaching and learning experiences with a flexible timetable allowing specific times for more structured teaching and learning to take place. Reading, writing, and mathematics sessions are incorporated into daily activities from the Autumn Term. Letters and sounds sessions are taught discretely on a daily basis. ICT skills are also taught discretely but children have further opportunities to use and apply them in investigation sessions through the week.

Routines

Routines are important for such young children and include:

- Use of daily 'helpful hands' and 'health and safety inspectors'.
- Morning register session including a time for discussing and recording the date, weather, birthdays and news.
- Milk time, during which children take it in turns to share their home learning diaries.
- Calm and routines for beginning / end of day, use of the cloakroom and lining up.
- Use of stickers and marbles are an instant reward for achievement, kindness or tidiness.
- Use of the 'Learning Line' model to exemplify how to respond to challenges and to build resilient learning attitudes.

Adults

Class R has an experienced full time teaching assistant to support with teaching, facilitation of learning and assessment. We welcome the help of other adults within the class enabling more focused learning / assessment opportunities to take place.

Resources

Resources are accessible to the children and match the needs of the very young. Provision of resources is reviewed and extended on a regular basis.

Partnership

Starting School

We have a pre-school group called "Twiglets" which eases the transition into school. It is run by the Reception teacher with help from two classroom assistants. Children can come along on one afternoon a week for a 3 week period during the half term before they start school. They work in their first classroom following the same curriculum and routines that they will meet in school. During the summer holiday they can fill in an "All About Me" booklet which is brought to school and discussed with the class teacher.

Informing Parents

Parents are encouraged to talk and meet with the class teacher on an informal basis. They are also able to communicate via a reading log and diaries of experiences. Parents are invited to attend an introductory talk on the curriculum in Class R in September. In addition, they are invited to regular parent teacher consultations and are provided with a written report at the end of the year.

Home Learning

Please refer to the whole school home learning policy.

Links with Pre-School

Colehill First School serves a catchment area served by a wide range of pre-school provision. The Reception teacher visits all feeder pre-schools in the summer term prior to the new school year.

Links to Key Stage 1

The Early Years curriculum dovetails with curriculum planning and provision offered within Key Stage 1. All subject leaders liaise with the Early Years leader with regard to policy and scheme of work.

Special Needs and Disabilities

Children identified as having SEN and / or disabilities are placed on the SEND register and the Inclusion leader monitors provision offered within the school.

External Agencies

Similarly other agencies such as School Health, Speech Therapy and Social Care are involved as and when appropriate. Records are kept of all such contact and progress is monitored regularly.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once every two years, or more frequently if necessary, by the Early Years leader and the Local Governing Body.

Reviewed: February 2017