

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 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

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year at school. At Cholsey Primary School children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Cholsey Primary School, the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development are highly valued. However, it is also promoted that early childhood is valid in itself as a part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage in education.

Aims and Objectives:

Cholsey Primary School aims to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. A broad and balanced curriculum is offered, that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. All learning is underpinned by the schools CARE values of Curiosity, Aspiration, Respect and Enthusiasm.

Cholsey Primary School:

- Has the highest aspirations for every child, believing that they should be empowered to take ownership of their learning and their environment.
- Nurtures children’s natural curiosity, joyfulness and intrinsic creativity as powerful motivators across all areas of learning and development.
- Has adults who have sensitive and skilful adult–child interactions that focus on extending thinking, broadening communication and introducing challenge.
- Encourages warm, authentic relationships between staff, the children and their families.
- Provides a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provides 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 will enable choice and decision making; fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Uses and values what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Provides 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:

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

A Unique Child

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

Inclusion

Cholsey Primary School celebrates the diversity of individuals within the school and believes that every child matters. All children at Cholsey Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued.

Children are given every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. This is achieved by taking account of all children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage realistic and challenging expectations are set, keyed to the needs of all children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the phase. This is achieved 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 learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy).
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and to enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

Cholsey Primary School recognises that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. Staff develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

Parents as Partners – Parents/carers are children’s first and most enduring educators – this is established by:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at Stay and Play sessions and induction meetings;
- Providing a handbook of information about commencing Reception at Cholsey;
- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in Reception Class for an induction visit and Stay and Play sessions before starting school;
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have;
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment;
- 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 the Foundation Stage weekly news, which details the weekly learning in phonics and maths and the theme for the forthcoming week;
- Sending home ‘Wow Moment’ slips designed to enable parents to record outstanding achievements;
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading;
- Sharing regularly the children’s ‘Learning Journey’ with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers;
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child’s progress is discussed;
- Sending a written report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of their time in reception;
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc;
- Inviting parents to a range of activities throughout the school year such as a phonics tea party, 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.

Note: Covid 19 safety restrictions mean some of the above are unable to currently take place.

Staff - All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Enabling Environments

Cholsey Primary School recognises 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 that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

A learning environment is planned, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. Materials and equipment are used that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. Children are encouraged to make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent learning. Resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early year's settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. At Cholsey Primary School, children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. 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.

The three Prime areas are:

- 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.

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.

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with school policy. They also participate in a daily maths mastery session.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Cholsey Primary School the environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and Exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active Learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children are encouraged and supported to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

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 Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. There are some themes that are planned for that can be found on our whole school curriculum map. Other areas of learning are developed from the children's interests and the adult plans using enhancements and provocations to develop the learning.

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 Learning Journeys.

Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test. 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.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. Regular assessments of children's learning are carried out, and this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These folders contain a wide range of evidence that is shared with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

Target Tracker grids are updated four times a year. This data feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. Each child's level of development is recorded using the Target Tracker statements within the Development Matters age-bands.

At the end of the final term in Reception the child's level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. A summary of these assessments is sent to the Local Authority for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. This information is shared at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. These are completed in the summer term.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc.

Children have access to both the inside and outside area across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor area. Cholsey Primary School also has its own nature reserve and can offer Forest school sessions to all children. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

Teaching & Learning Styles

The features of effective teaching and learning in Cholsey Primary School are defined in the Learning and Teaching Policy. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

General features of good practice in Cholsey Primary School that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;

- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The positive relationships between Cholsey Primary School and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining;
- The clear aims of work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve it;
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children therefore it is planned carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer Term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to

- To go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction into reception.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)

Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon and many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in whole school assemblies, met the Key Stage 1 staff, who spend time visiting the children in the FS setting and the children are taken for informal visits to the Year 1 space on occasions during the Summer Term. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a session in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017)

All staff at Cholsey Primary School understand that they are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. The school aims:

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- To promote good health;
- To manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;

- To ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- To maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe

It is important that all children in the school are 'safe'. Cholsey Primary School aims to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. Children are provided with choices to help them develop this important life skill. They are encouraged to take risks and to understand the importance of keeping themselves safe, by being taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. The physical and psychological well-being of all children is a priority. (See Cholsey's Safeguarding Children Policy).

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day. They have access to water at all times.

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. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

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. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Reception at Cholsey. (see Personal Care Policy)