

**Cumnor House School for Boys  
and  
Treetops Nursery**



**Early Years Policy**

## **Introduction**

At Cumnor House Boys' and Treetops Nursery the Early Years Foundation Stage applies to boys and girls who enter one of our nurseries at age 2+ and to boys who enter our Reception class in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a firm foundation for future learning and development. It sets out clearly the Early Learning Goals which most children will achieve at the end of the final year which is referred to as the Reception year.

## **Rationale**

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'*

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE 2014:5)

At Cumnor we provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- 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 guardians; and
- **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

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE 2014:6)

## **Aims**

At Cumnor House we aim to provide teaching and learning experiences of the highest quality to help our children make excellent progress towards and often beyond the Early Learning goals.

We aim:

- To build on what children can already do and on what they know

- To provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where children feel included, secure and valued.
- To ensure that children are happy and enthusiastic by providing a well- planned purposeful play-based curriculum where experiences will build on what children already know and do.
- To ensure that each child receives a broad and balanced education through rich and stimulating play based activities which match the different levels of children's needs.
- To promote children's intellectual social, spiritual, emotional, physical, cultural and moral development.
- To prepare children to meet future challenges throughout the school, through adult-led and child-initiated experiences.
- To provide effective learning and development for young children through high quality care and education.

### **Outcomes**

As a measure of our aims, on entering a Reception or Nursery class at Cumnor Boys, you will see:

- An appropriate play-based curriculum which offers continuity and progression.
- Children who are responded to as individuals
- Children who are developing confident attitudes and relationships
- Children supported and encouraged when faced with new experiences
- Time and space for active exploration both indoors and out
- A meaningful context for learning which is well planned and resourced
- A high adult/child ratio with adults that understand the importance of play, who get enjoyment from playing alongside children and who learn from it.
- Qualified/experienced adults, who foster curiosity and enjoyment, observe, assess and listen to them, respond appropriately and have high expectations.
- Parents/Guardians and Early Years staff who work together in partnership.
- A stimulating environment with easily accessible resources.
- Children given the opportunities and support to become independent learners and to develop their creativity and imagination.
- Experiences which enable children to appreciate the multicultural society in which they live.
- Appropriate good quality materials and resources which reflect careful planning enabling children to interact at their own level of development and allow for progression.
- Adults who respect and value children's play/learning and are able to interact sensitively
- Adults that have the time to observe children and monitor their development in all areas of the curriculum to inform future planning

### **The Curriculum**

The EYFS Curriculum reflects the premise that young children learn effectively through play. Through purposeful play children explore and develop learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on four guiding themes. These themes guide the work of all early years practitioners and are grouped into four themes.

### **A Unique Child**

- We recognise that each child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

### **Learning and Development**

- We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as Gold Award/good work assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive Relationships**

- We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and therefore aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We work in partnership with parents regularly informing parents of their child's progress and of ways in which they may support them.

### **Enabling Environments**

- We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will also enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Resources are organised so that children can access them independently and take responsibility for tidying away.

### **Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

We acknowledge that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We give all our children every opportunity to achieve their best. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, children with special educational needs, children who show exceptional potential, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all 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
- Making reasonable adjustments to ensure all children have equal access to resources and learning experiences.
- Working together with parents and professionals;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environments in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;

- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their peers;
- Monitoring children's progress closely, taking action to provide early intervention where necessary.

## **Learning and Development**

Teaching and learning in the EYFS is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. Practitioners plan and organise a range of experiences and opportunities which give children the chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the learning environment. We organise the learning environment into topic areas and make links across all seven areas of learning.

The seven areas of learning and development are divided into prime and specific areas. There are three "prime areas", and four "specific areas". The prime areas are:

### **Communication and Language**

This is broken down into three sub sections which cover Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. At Cumnor we place a strong emphasis on developing competence in speaking and listening.

### **Physical development**

This covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. Physical development is implicit in all areas of the EYFS framework. Teaching concentrates on children's developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

This area has three sub sections. These are Making Relationships, Self-confidence and Self-awareness and Managing Feelings and Behaviours. The outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play and co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.

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

### **Literacy**

This area of learning has two subsections of Reading and Writing. The objectives ensure success in early reading and writing skills. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for spelling are skills that are promoted through our Read, Write Inc. programme.

### **Mathematics**

This is broken down into two subsections. These are Number and Shape, Space and Measure. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Mathematics. They focus on achievement through practical

activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

### **Understanding of the world**

This is a major area of learning and enquiry focussing on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.

### **Expressive arts and design**

This covers art, music, and drama. This area of the EYFS framework focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. Observations are recorded in the children's individual learning profiles. 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 prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or guardians and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the Special Educational Needs Co ordinator.

We support children in using the following three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

The characteristics describe the different ways children learn rather than what they learn. They begin at birth and are lifelong characteristics critical for building children's capacity for future learning.

- **Playing and exploring –**

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 balanced of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

- **Active learning –**

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 thinking critically –**

Children should be given an opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can 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 allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### **Planning in the Early Years**

*'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year One.'*

*(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014:9)*

### **Long Term Plans**

Long term plans are drawn up yearly and they provide an overview of what we intend the children to learn by the end of the school year.

### **Medium Term Plans**

Medium term plans are made half-termly and identify specific learning intentions and ideas for activities. This planning is flexible and is constantly being added to and adapted to suit the children's needs and development.

### **Short Term Plans**

Short term plans which are completed on a daily/weekly basis and ensure a balanced curriculum. Weekly planning meetings in each phase ensure that the children's individual needs, interests and abilities are well planned.

These plans individualise focused activities with a learning outcome. Differentiation is planned for across the curriculum to ensure that all the children's individual needs are met.

### **Observation and Assessment**

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways, and contribute to the child's individual 'Learning Journey' profile e.g. photographs, teacher comments, teaching assistant comments, 'Wow' moments, and other parental contributions. Upon entry to Reception, every child has a baseline assessment and their development in months is recorded. At the end of the Reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This shows each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Observations and assessment procedures include:

- Spontaneous observations, which record changes, achievements and significant events.
- Planned observations carried out by the child's key worker or teacher to support progress judgements.



- Individual and group tracking which allow the practitioner to highlight areas of development.
- Progress Check for Two Year Olds.
- Ongoing significant observations as the child engages in adult directed, supported and child initiated play (both indoors and out).
- Photos to capture significant achievements.
- Samples of work and workbooks in Literacy and Numeracy
- Parental observations and feedback on their child's learning.
- Reading assessments in Reception linked to our Ruth Miskin Literacy Programme.
- Children in Reception are set individual targets by their class teacher which are shared with each boy and his parents. These are reviewed every six to eight weeks.
- Children are encouraged and supported to evaluate their own progress through sensitive questions and responses from members of staff. Staff give children the opportunity to express their own preferences, interests and abilities including what they are doing and what they found challenging.

From these observations and reports, next steps are identified and planned for. All observations are measured and identified against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and Early Years Outcomes document. These assessments are shared with parents and Year 1 staff.

### **Home/School Partnership**

We aim to provide positive relationships within an atmosphere of mutual trust and support. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role, in educating the children. We encourage a partnership with parents and aim to achieve this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our setting;
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher/Key Person before starting school.
- Inviting Reception children and parents to transition events during the year before their child starts school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to meet and talk about their child's progress and individual targets;
- Using Home/School contact books;
- Providing the nursery/school brochure which includes relevant information about the setting and staff before the child starts;
- Information to parents about their child's Key Person and the important role they play in their child's care and education;
- Providing a weekly school newsletter and through parent notice boards;
- Parents' Evenings in Autumn and Spring Term;
- Monday 'drop in' sessions in Reception;
- Inviting Reception parents to a Reading Evening to discuss the reading scheme;
- Inviting Reception parents to a 'Curriculum Meeting' early in the first term;
- Providing opportunities at the beginning and end of each day for parents to talk to a practitioner or teacher;
- Providing Reception parents with three written reports on their child's progress throughout the year. Nursery parents will receive a report at the end of the year;
- Encouraging parents to share their knowledge and expertise in the classroom;
- Providing a curriculum information overview at the beginning of every term, outlining our curriculum plans for the term, and suggesting ways in which they can help their child whilst in Reception;



- Providing email addresses for teachers and Head of EYFS and Head of Nursery, for communication.

Our induction and admission procedures are designed to welcome and settle children and their families into the school community as quickly as possible.

### **English as an Additional Language**

For children whose home language is not English, staff will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

*'When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, practitioners must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, practitioners must explore the child's skills in the home language with parent to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay'.*

*(Statutory Framework for EYFS, DfE 2014:9)*

### **Continuity of care**

- The curriculum for Nursery through to Reception is carefully planned according to children's individual needs. Records are kept to monitor progress. Progress is reported to parents both formally and informally.
- Children and parents moving to Reception meet the new teacher and support staff several times during the year before they join. New children joining Reception are offered settling-in session.
- Good practice is shared with regular liaison. Children's progress files are passed to their new teacher or Room Leader as they move through Nursery and into Reception
- All staff act in accordance with the behaviour policy. It is important that young children learn to work and play co-operatively and constructively and they relate positively to their peers and adults.
- The Cumnor Way is promoted throughout the school.

### **From EYFS to Key Stage One**

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and staff with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The Profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with the Autumn, Spring & Summer Term reports. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development.

### **Conclusion**

The EYFS aims to provide every child with a rich and diverse experience through a range of activities. It is hoped that this will provide a foundation for life-long enjoyment of learning.