

# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY



## 1. RATIONALE

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a distinct stage of education for children aged from three to five years. The earlier stages will be covered in nurseries and through child minders. The final part of this stage is covered while children are in reception classes, from the age of four.

“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.” (DfE, 2017)

Learning for young children goes on everywhere, not just in planned activities but also in everyday tasks such as when children wash their hands, play in the playground and have their snacks. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage cannot be organised into neatly packaged sections: opportunity for learning exists everywhere. It is at this early stage that children begin to develop characteristics, such as persistence and independence, to enable effective learning.

Children learn both indoors and outside through:

### Adult led activities

These can be whole class, small or large groups or for individual children. These activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of the children. Through these activities new skills are taught and modelled and children can practise these skills or develop their understanding in a supported way.

### Adult initiated activities

These activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of children but the children have some choice and may develop their own line of enquiry.

### Child Initiated activities

These are activities that children select and carry out themselves. They may use one resource or a range. It is an opportunity for them to follow their own interests and reinforce skills they are learning. It is during this type of play that children really show what they understand and are capable of independently. It is through observing this type of play that the adults can adapt planning to suit the children’s ever developing needs.

Through the above opportunities children will learn to

- respect others
- listen to others and respond appropriately
- talk effectively to others
- explore new objects/ideas
- take part in new experiences
- practise newly acquired skills
- recreate experiences
- apply skills
- experience challenges
- learn to take risks
- develop persistence
- develop independence
- begin to form strategies to solve problems.

And most importantly of all they will have fun and often not be aware that as they play they are learning.

## **2. PRINCIPLES (EYFS Statutory Guidance)**

**A unique child** - recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Positive relationships** - describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. It focuses around respect, supporting learning and the partnership with parents.

**Enabling Environments** - explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The focus is on observation, assessment and planning, the learning environment and transitions.

**Learning and Development** - recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

At Crawley Ridge we recognise that:

- Every child is unique and therefore needs to develop as an individual, in his/her own way and at his/her own pace
- Children need to make choices and experience success, risk and failure
- Children need to learn to understand and cope with emotions
- Children learn from first hand experiences (active learning)
- Children need to develop socially and emotionally with others to be able to:
  - Make good relationships with others
  - Develop consideration and respect for others
  - Learn a sense of responsibility

Gain self-confidence, independence and learn self-control.

## **The importance of play**

“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.” (Statutory Framework for EYFS - DfE, 2017, para 1.8)

One of the most important ways in which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding is through play. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. When children have the opportunity to choose activities they can become responsible for their own learning. The appropriate intervention by adults skilled in questioning the children enables learning to move forward.

## **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS indoor classrooms are organised in learning areas which allows children to explore and learn independently. These areas include role play, small world, writing, creative, construction, malleable, reading and investigation. Each area is clearly labelled and organised to allow children to easily access a wide range of rich resources. Children have access to both the inside and outside environment throughout the day. The outdoor area is equally important with many children choosing to learn outside. The children have access to a range of activities including construction, role play, a mud kitchen, sand pit and water. There is also opportunity to develop gross motor skills through the use of the trim trail, bikes, scooters and more. This ‘continuous provision’ is supplemented with additional resources throughout the year to stimulate and motivate the children and take learning forward.

## **3. PROCEDURES/ GUIDANCE FOR USE/KEY ISSUES**

### **3.1 Staff**

At Crawley Ridge we acknowledge the need to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge and experience of how children develop and learn. The Reception team consists of skilled teachers and classroom support assistants, all working closely together with parents.

### **3.2 Parents**

At Crawley Ridge we recognise that parents are a child’s first educators. Parents have a key role to play once their child starts school. There needs to be:

- Regular contact between home and school
- Shared ideals, boundaries and behaviour strategies
- Consistency between home and school
- An understanding of the stage of development their child has reached

### 3.3 Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Our curriculum is based around the areas of learning as identified in the “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” 2017 and is a continuation of the pre-school curriculum. The areas of learning and development are separated into 7 areas.

The first 3 have been defined as “crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.” (DfE, 2017.) These form the Prime Areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional development

There are a further 4 areas with a more specific focus, through which the above 3 areas will be strengthened and practised. The Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

In addition to the above areas of development are the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL). The Characteristics of Effective Learning are a crucial part of children’s development. They describe the way in which children engage with other people and their environment. They “underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.” (Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage p4.) In essence it is through these skills that children become effective life long learners.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and are confident to adopt a ‘have a go’ attitude
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

### 3.4 Planning

Careful planning of the curriculum is crucial.

With effective planning we recognise the importance of:

- The whole child: spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual, and moral development are interrelated
- Self-motivation, self esteem and the nurturing of learning behaviours
- Young children learn best through experiencing things and trying them out
- Previous knowledge as a starting point
- The potential of every child
- The adults and the children with whom a child plays and works are of central importance
- Children learning continuously whether from planned events or through spontaneous experiences
- Making education exciting and developing a love of learning.

At Crawley Ridge, the Reception staff plan as a team and produce:

- Long term plans - ensuring full curriculum coverage as indicated by the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- Medium term plans - usually topic based with suggested activities for each half term.
- Short term plans - detailed timetables and specific objectives for each week.

We use the Development Matters (DfE, 2012) document to support planning. This breaks each area of learning down into age related steps of development working towards the early learning goals which most children are expected to meet by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All planning is shared, evaluated and adapted as and when necessary. The areas of learning and development are covered through a range of topics. These topics are relevant and exciting and can also be taken from the children's interests. All plans include opportunities for outdoor learning.

### **3.5 The Organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

We have two Reception classes each with a mix of gender and ages. Each class has their own class teacher and shares a team of teaching assistants. The two class teachers plan and work together across the year group. Children will have opportunities in all areas of the EYFS to provide a rich environment. We aim to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. By the end of the summer term, it is our aim to have children confident and fully prepared for Year One, no matter what their age.

### **3.6 Assessment and Recording**

Children are assessed on intake to give a baseline for future assessments. Throughout the year staff make observations of children while they are engaged in a range of child initiated and adult led activities. On a day to day basis these observations are used to plan children's next steps. They are also used to build a picture of where children are in relation to each age band and at the end of the year to assess against the early learning goals.

Throughout the reception year children are assessed as 'emerging/developing/secure' within an age band e.g. 40-60 months. At the end of the year all children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals as 'emerging/expected/exceeding'. Children should be working at an 'expected' level or above at the end of the year.

### **3.7 Reporting**

We strive to have an open door ethos in the Early Years Foundation Stage and all parents are encouraged to discuss with us any matter relating to their child throughout the year.

More formal reporting times are as follows:

- October and February: Parent interviews to discuss progress and to set targets for the rest of the year.
- July: End of Year Reports. Parents are welcome to arrange an interview to discuss their child's end of year report.

### **3.8 Special Educational Needs and Disability**

It is through such tasks as assessments and careful observations that children with special needs are identified as needing support. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator will be made aware of such children and, with the class teacher, will monitor their progress and needs within school.

Further details of special educational needs can be found in our SEND policy.

### **3.9 Induction/ Transition**

At Crawley Ridge Infant School we recognise that starting school can be a difficult time for children and parents. We therefore plan this time carefully to support children and families to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle quickly and happily.

To ensure the best transition we :

- make contact with nurseries/pre schools to discuss essential information on every child and visit where possible
- hold a series of parent meetings to share information and help prepare and support families
- offer an induction day for children to visit the classrooms with an additional story time session with the children's new teacher
- stagger entry time on the first day of school
- stagger entry from part to full time over the first three weeks in the autumn term
- discuss any individual needs or important information by offering 'Teacher- Parent' meetings within first two weeks of term

## **4. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader is responsible for monitoring the quality of provision for the children. This policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed by staff and headteacher on a 2-year cycle.

## **5. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

- Early Years Foundation Stage Booklet
- Admissions Procedure and Induction.
- Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Single Equality Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety

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