

# The Croft Primary School



## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY 2021

### Introduction

*'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 - Department for Education September 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At the Croft 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 the Croft Primary School we value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. This EYFS policy states information and procedures that may be different for the Reception children compared to the rest of the school. However, the Reception children and staff are part of the school and follow all school policies.

### Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences that provide them with the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their own ideas.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop to the full; socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a caring, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

## The Curriculum

The Reception curriculum is ambitious, carefully sequenced and puts the development of language at the heart of the curriculum. It is designed to meet the needs of the children at the Croft and the requirements of the educational programmes in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2021). Four guiding principles shape our practice. These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- children develop and learn at different rates.

Our curriculum reflects the seven areas of learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The prime areas are;

- **Communication and Language** - Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development** - Moving and Handling and Self Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour and Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

- **Literacy** - Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** - Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- **Understanding the World** - People and Communities, The World and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - Exploring and Using Media and Materials and Being Imaginative

## Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception Teacher plans activities for the children with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their own achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

## **Planning**

At the Croft we recognise that young children's learning is often driven by their interests so our planning is flexible and based upon themes which respond to the needs, achievement and interests of the children. Teachers use schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for groups or individual children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards and those meeting the expected outcomes for their age. Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way and we plan for the children to revisit and deepen their learning; mastering new concepts. Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the Letters and Sounds programme and in line with school policy.

## **Teaching strategies**

We ensure there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although some of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to the child builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

## **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe that children learn best by taking part in activities and experience that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities in their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

## **Teaching**

We include direct, carefully planned, adult-led experiences for children in the form of structured adult-led group and whole class activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on board. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place.

We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in a traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still, completing tasks independently etc.

### **Assessment**

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using the Reception Baseline Assessment Framework (which became statutory from September 2021) and by making observations of the children. 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. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information 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 teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we are able to share with parents at parental consultation meetings.

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.

### **Assessment at the end of the EYFS - the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**

In the summer term of Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The EYFS Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs). The Profile provides parents and teachers with a picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Reception 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 inside and outside area across

the day, whenever possible. The Reception class has its own outdoor area complete with trim trail. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on a different scale 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.

### **Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to 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 teacher and other key staff and learn more about the Reception day.

**New class sessions** - The children are given two opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend a morning or afternoon in their new class, firstly with their parents then at the second session parents can leave their child. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them. Arrangements are also made for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery or pre-school setting whenever possible.

**September Intake** - When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first and second week, children will attend for the morning or afternoon session only. Children staying for the morning session will stay for lunch. Children will swap sessions in the second week.
- During the third week, and thereafter, children will attend for the full school day unless staff and parents or guardians agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child.

**Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)** - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 and 2 children. The Reception children take part in all whole school activities such as Big Breakfast and World Book Day. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning 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 2021)

At The Croft, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- 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;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- 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 to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (see The Croft's Safeguarding Children Policy).

### **Other Useful Policies**

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

- The Early years Prospectus
- Reception Class newsletters
- Personal Care Policy
- Keeping Children Safe In Education 2021

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed in 2023 or as necessary.

Adopted: September 2021

To be reviewed : September 2023