



Catshill First School and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school children can join our Nursery when they turn 3 years of age either full time or part time. Children begin Reception the September after their 4th birthday.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and confident learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each child to reach their full potential.

At Catshill First School and Nursery we:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide 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 enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide 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 upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. 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 celebration 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 aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and Development

Our Early Years Foundation Stage has a Nursery classroom with a Nursery garden attached and two Reception classrooms which have access to a third classroom 'The Imagination Station', a Reception playground and a Reception garden. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environments are set up to enable children to access and use equipment independently.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** area of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Catshill First School and Nursery all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage we plan activities which ensure each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures a broad and balanced curriculum so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Learning Through Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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 achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout Nursery and Reception children knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in Nursery and Reception has a 'Proud Folder' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work as well as an online journal through the use of 'Tapestry'.

Children in Nursery and Reception are assessed during their first 6 weeks at school. The children's knowledge, skills and understanding will continue to be tracked throughout the Foundation Stage and assessed against the ELG's at the end of Reception to establish an end of Foundation Stage achievement and learning profile for each child in preparedness for their transition to Key Stage One.

Transitions

At Catshill First School and Nursery we recognise that starting school and moving classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Both Nursery and Reception hold a meeting in the term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. In Nursery and Reception parents are offered a school tour. We also invite parents and children to Stay and Play sessions. This gives children a chance to meet with their teachers and become familiar with the Early Years environment and gives parents time to ask questions. After the Stay and Play sessions Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their teachers in their classroom on two occasions on their own to help them prepare for their new experiences. Reception teachers contact the children's previous setting and visit our local settings to share information and get to know them in a safe a familiar environment. Some children may need additional transition sessions. These are discussed and arranged with parents based on children's needs.

At the beginning of the school year new Reception children begin part time for the first week to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment. Early Years staff support children in the first weeks of term to become familiar with the new routines before starting school full time.

At the end of Reception children have the opportunities to meet with their new teachers prior to starting Year One. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

Community Links

At Catshill First School and Nursery the Foundation Stage we build strong links with our community including visits to the local shops. We have built a link with our local library and visit frequently throughout the year. Parents are invited to join us on some of our visits.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer weekly 'Share, Learn and Play' sessions where parents can share their child's learning and have time to talk informally with the Early Years staff. We also offers parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

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 provide every child in Nursery with a reading diary and Reception with a 'home learning book'. The purpose of these books is so that teachers can provide information on children's experiences in school and parents can share information about their child's experiences and achievements outside school. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of the child in for everyone.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey and are invited to become volunteers in school. We also invite parents on our visits to the local library. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records and recording home learning in their book.

Early Years teachers invite selected children and their family (disadvantaged, nurture, family focus, speech and language) to take apart in our Book and Cook group where they make food based on a story. This is run by the Early Years teachers and promotes speaking and listening skills, healthy choices, literacy, love of books and stories and positive relationships.

Formal parents meeting are offered termly, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's Proud Folders. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2017) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each Foundation Stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

Staff in the Foundation Stage adhere to the Staff Handbook 2016-2017 ensuring mobile phones are not used during learning time and are stored away in the staff cupboard. Staff only use the schools Learn Pads and Hudls to record observations of the children and to take photographs. Tapestry Online Learning Journal is used to record and store children's observations online securely.