



Calstock and Stoke Climsland Schools Federation

EYFS Policy

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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the EYFS, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Aims

At Calstock and Stoke Climsland Schools Federation we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2024':

'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential'.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (2024)

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS, 2024' and the four overarching guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and carers
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported

- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors

The Curriculum

Each school has their own EYFS curriculum which has been designed to reflect our beautiful and unique school environments. Both curricula share the same guiding principles and features, including the seasons of the year and the nature around our schools. They aim to teach the children how their environment compares to other places, cultures and nature in other parts of the world. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

The Calstock and Stoke Climsland EYFS curricula have been written in accordance with the latest version of the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework \(2024\)](#) and [Development Matters \(2023\)](#). We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

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 both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

We have developed our curricula by giving communication and language skills a high priority. This is in line with Development Matters 2023:

“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively.”

A high priority is also given to the teaching of reading. We aim to teach children to read and develop a love of books as soon as they arrive at our schools and books are used to teach projects and to enhance our whole curricula. We follow a systematic approach to phonics teaching using Read, Write, Inc. Please see our Federation Phonics and Early Reading Policy.

We underpin our curriculum with the Personal Social and Emotional Development of all our children. We strive to enable children to be safe, happy, confident individuals. We support the children to learn the skills of self-regulation and introduce rules and boundaries through modelling good behaviour and reflection time. We teach the children the federation school values: empathy, equity, integrity, inspiration, gratitude and

perseverance. These values underpin our whole curriculum and teaching style throughout the Reception year. These values then follow on throughout the school.

The EYFS curricula are based around cross-curricular projects which link closely with the educational programmes for each area of learning as set out in the EYFS framework. Each project is planned and included in the curricula for specific reasons and we want to ensure that all children leave the Reception Year ready to start the KS1 curriculum. All of the projects have resources and activities ready to use in the enhanced provision. Projects are introduced with a good quality storybook or age-appropriate non-fiction text. Using books in this way teaches children that books and reading form the basis of all learning.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework:

‘Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities’.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children’s play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further. In planning and guiding children’s activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as much as possible.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

We believe in the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning as set out in the EYFS Framework. These 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 achieving

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

The federation EYFS curricula are ambitious and aim to teach all children the skills and knowledge in order that they reach the seventeen Early Learning Goals described in the EYFS Framework (*see link in appendices*). We teach through a range of teaching methods including child-initiated learning, whole class teaching, group teaching, investigations and problem solving together. As many activities as possible are play-based; however, there is also a need for direct teacher-led activities to ensure children gain essential knowledge and skills. All activities are expertly modelled and children are given sufficient time, support and resources to repeat and practise them.

Assessment

Within the first six weeks of starting school, the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is carried out for each child in Reception, following the DfE guidelines. In the Reception year children make rapid progress and assessment for learning is crucial. The teacher will continually reflect on best teaching and learning approaches for the children and for the cohort and adapt as appropriate to support individual needs and involves both the teacher, teaching assistants, parents and children, as appropriate. The phonics lead will also carry out regular RWI phonics assessments of the Reception children to ensure that the children are in the appropriate group and have phonically matched reading books to ensure good progress. Summative assessments are completed by the teacher during the first term half-term when the teacher completes a first assessment (baseline/on entry). The further assessment points are at autumn 2, spring 2 and then the final assessment in the summer term to complete the EYFS profile assessment. These assessments allow the teachers to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for

individual children and groups of children. We record each child's level of development throughout the year and record whether each child is on track or not on track at certain points of the year.

Children will be judged at either an emerging level or at expected level, in each Early Learning Goal, in each strand within each area of learning. The exceeding level no longer applies. This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the local authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements. This information is also shared with the child's Year 1 teacher who 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. Parents and carers receive an annual written report that offers detailed comments on each child's holistic progress across all areas of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace and have high expectations for each child so that they are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential. We work closely with the parents and carers to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered.

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and teaching and learning is adapted and scaffolded accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and teaching assistants plan programmes together and where needed will liaise with the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and any outside agencies. Assessment procedures will be adapted and might include the use of a developmental journal. All children will then have the EYFS profile assessment completed at the end of the Reception year.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe and feel 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 help children to self-regulate and manage their emotions appropriately and Personal Social and Emotional Education is at the heart of everything we do.

Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe and when their individual needs are met. Children need the opportunity to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our suite of safeguarding and child protection policies which have been written in accordance with '**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023**'. The safety and welfare of our children is paramount across the federation. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety and that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. We have a dedicated safeguarding team which includes a Designated Safeguarding Lead and three Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. Staff have access to the 'My Concern' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children
- Promote good health
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately

- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience

We promote the good health of the children by participating in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme and our Reception and KS1 children have the option of a universal infant free school meal. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have systems in place to ensure that all children receive the correct meal. We make sure that children with allergies or other dietary requirements are catered for in conjunction with our catering providers.

Fresh water is readily available for all children and children also bring in a water bottle so that they can help themselves to water at any time. We allocate significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

All members of staff who work with Reception aged children in our classes have a recognised paediatric first aid qualification in line with the EYFS framework 2024. Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for Class Dojo observations and assessment purposes).

Structure and Staffing of the EYFS

The EYFS consists of one Reception Class at Stoke Climsland School and at Calstock we have Class 1 which includes mixed age groups in the class. This can consist of a Reception and Year One or Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, depending on the class structure that year. Each class is taught by one qualified primary school teacher with EYFS training and experience. The classes also have a full time, experienced EYFS teaching assistant. Extra teaching assistants are employed for children who have an Education Health and Care Plan. PE is taught by a sports coach in each school.

Children at Stoke Climsland School can arrive into the classroom at 8:45 am every morning and children are picked up at 3.00pm. At Calstock school the children arrive at 8:45am and are picked up at 3:15pm. At the start of the year reception children have a steady start at getting used to the school environment and routines. When the class teacher feels that it is appropriate for the cohort, the children join in with whole school activities. At Calstock School the children have lunch breaks with the rest of the school and join the rest of the school for playtimes. The class join the main school for assemblies and other whole school events. At Stoke Climsland School, the children have lunch breaks with the rest of the school. The children attend whole school assemblies and morning playtimes to suit the needs of the cohort. In the summer term this expectation increases to aid transition into KS1.

Parental Involvement

We recognise the importance of parents and carers as children's first educators. We strive to create and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Making contact with parents and carers before their child starts school and sharing our planned transition schedule, induction sessions and welcome packs (please see section on transition)
- Inviting parents into school for 'parent phonics' sessions to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions. If EYFS staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will also approach parents and carers to discuss them

- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each half-term project which highlights how they can support their child at home
- Sharing our learning journey through class floorbooks for project work and maths
- Encouraging parents and carers to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books
- Regular photo sharing of learning and valuing parents contributions to learning
- Inviting parents into school for our half-termly 'Open Classroom' sessions to share our project learning
- Sharing photos, updates and 'wow moments' on Class Dojo (our online communication and home learning platform)
- Offering two, parent-teacher consultation meetings per year to discuss their child's progress and wellbeing and give an opportunity for parents and carers to ask any questions
- Send a written report home in July on their child's attainment, achievements and their child's EYFS profile
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as special events, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day
- Welcoming our parents and carers as volunteers into our schools and also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences

Transition

Starting school can be a big step for young children and their families. We plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and so that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

We have a tried and tested induction programme which includes:

- A welcome letter to parents and carers detailing key dates and gathering information on pre-schools attended
- Visit to pre-schools/nurseries and/or a phone call to discuss each child
- An induction evening for parents and carers. The teacher gives parents practical information such as the ethos of the school, vision and values, information about equipment and uniform needed. Each family receives a welcome pack which includes key information and the admission form
- At least 3 'Stay and play' sessions in the summer term so that the children can get to know the teachers and school staff with their parent or carer present
- An offer of a home visit or phone call in the summer term or at the beginning of the academic year so that families can discuss any concerns or share any individual needs
- A gradual introduction to the school day. The children will have a gentle start to school to learn school routines, to allow children and staff to also get to know each other. Teaching and learning will focus on the prime areas of learning, but will also follow the RWI teaching expectation for 'Making a Strong Start'

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. At Calstock, the teacher will discuss this with the EYFS Lead. The children's assessment data and writing books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class or remain in Class 1 at Calstock. The EYFS profile is completed with and shared with the Year 1 teachers and EYFS Lead to aid the transition process. At Stoke Climsland, children spend a number of sessions towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom or with the Year 1 teacher in their current classroom to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Lead is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher, Head of School and Reception team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Reception teams have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified. This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Early Years Lead every 2 years. At each review, the policy will be shared with the governing board. The Early Years governor will liaise with the EYFS Lead termly to discuss the EYFS Action Plan and relevant school improvement plan sections.

Appendices:

- [Link to Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework \(2024\)](#)
- [Link to Development Matters 2023](#)
- [Link to Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2024](#)
- [The Reception Baseline Assessment](#)