



Early Years Policy

<i>Status & Review Cycle</i>	Statutory Annual
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1. The EYFS Statement of intent

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

At Claygate Primary School (CPS), we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and parents.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

At CPS, we know excellent education in the Early Years is crucial to achieving our mission. Regrettably, gaps in development between disadvantaged children and their peers open up well before school age. We are committed to closing this gap and ensuring equal life chances for all right from the start.

Early Year's providers currently have a legal requirement to meet the standards set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. This framework sets out:

- The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep children safe and promote their welfare.
- The areas of learning and development.
- An assessment framework that will include parents in conversation about their child's progress.
- Expected levels that children will attain by the end of the EYFS.

There are four principles which underpin the EYFS and shape practice:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The framework covers the education and care of all children in EYFS including children with special educational needs and disabilities. CPS has a SEND Policy which is dedicated to supporting children throughout their time at CPS.

We are convinced that an Early Years curriculum which prioritises the 'Prime Areas' of learning can best prepare children for success throughout their life at school and beyond. According to the Development Matters document, the prime areas are 'fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.' The document asserts that the specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design 'grow out of the Prime Areas.'

Ofsted inspects and regulates children's services in the UK. Inspection of EYFS settings in schools are supported by the school inspection handbook, while separate EYFS settings are inspected according to the Early Years inspection handbook.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The governing body has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.
- 2.2. The governing body has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- 2.3. The governing body has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 2.4. The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 2.5. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 2.6. The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the head teacher, has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

- 2.7. Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- 2.8. Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

3. Aims

At CPS we aim to meet each child's needs by:

- understanding that each child is unique and so providing for the whole child, their health, both physical and mental, their feelings, thinking and spiritual development through excellent safeguarding and the prioritisation of the prime areas of learning
- ensuring close communication and work with parents/careers to develop complete understanding of each child and to communicate progress and next steps with families clearly and effectively
- ensuring each child has the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve success and to build a thirst for lifelong learning
- teaching the foundations of reading, writing and mathematics that will develop basic skills and also enable access to the wider curriculum
- providing a stimulating environment, indoors and out, providing many opportunities for children to be curious, ask questions and to be eager to discover and learn
- providing opportunities and time for children to pursue their own interests and time to interact and share with others
- providing opportunities for each child to make choices and decisions to develop their independence
- providing multi-cultural experiences including resources and stories which reflect different cultures and values and through teaching that is conscious of and promotes fundamental British values
- creating a purposeful atmosphere, where teachers can focus on teaching and pupils on learning

4. What children learn

The CPS Early Years curriculum content is carefully planned to follow the guidance from the EYFS Framework. The curriculum, therefore, comprises seven main areas of learning and development.

Prime Areas of Learning		
Communication and Language	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development
Listening, Attention and Understanding	Self-Regulation	Gross Motor Skills
Speaking	Managing Self	Fine Motor Skills
	Building Relationships	

Specific Areas of Learning			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
Comprehension	Number	Past and Present	Creating with Materials
Word Reading	Numerical Pattern	People, Culture and Communities	Being Imaginative and Expressive
Writing		The Natural World	

Characteristics of Effective Learning		
Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and Thinking Critically
Children investigate and experience things as well as 'have a go.'	Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.	Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We ensure our pupils are provided with a quality, meaningful and balanced curriculum through:

- focusing on the needs of the pupils, their learning and care.
- enabling pupils to recognise their own value, that of others and their place in the world.
- encouraging exploring and risk taking.
- ensuring a responsive, adaptable approach to learning which recognises the importance of effective opportunities.

- building resilience through promoting challenge and sustained effort.
- developing pupils' independence, autonomy and collaborative learning skills.
- encouraging a "growth mindset" which sees mistakes as positive learning experiences.
- providing practical, play-based learning experiences based on quality interactions that lead to sustained understanding.
- promoting a wider curriculum which allows all children to succeed.
- working with parents to develop a shared, valued approach to their pupils' learning.

5. How children learn

At CPS we promote the characteristics of effective learning and support children to learn through:

- Playing and exploring
- Learning actively
- Creating and thinking critically

Where appropriate we link these skills to the CPS values.

Teachers make professional judgments about the balance between activities led or guided by adults and those initiated by children. This balance shifts towards more whole class teaching opportunities as children move towards Year 1.

Adult directed activities are those which are directed by the adult and can be useful in the teaching of specific skills such as demonstrating how to use tools or equipment. In CPS Reception classes, daily teaching of literacy and mathematics starts from the outset and is a key part of our curriculum.

Adult guided activities are those which the adult initiates. These activities are often playful or experiential. They are open ended and should motivate a keen interest in learning.

Child-initiated experiences take place within an environment that both adults and children set up based on the child's own motivation and remains under the child's control.

6. Enabling Environments

Children have daily access to well-planned stimulating learning environments, indoors and outdoors. These environments give children opportunities to be active and physical and also quiet and reflective.

The Early Years' environment – inside and outside is viewed as a whole, providing different areas where resources, materials and activities are easily accessible and used independently.

The areas of learning in the environment should include:

- Role play
- Writing opportunities across the provision

- Creative area
- Small world
- Construction
- Fine motor opportunities
- Mathematics
- Gross motor opportunities
- Reading area
- Music and performance area
- Investigation area
- Water area
- Sand kitchen
- Mud kitchen
- Mini Woodland area

At CPS we believe that outdoor activities are essential as they provide opportunities for the acquisition of gross motor skills, taking risks, fostering a love of nature and the environment, large play, which is not possible indoors, learning experiences suited to the outdoor environment and physical fitness.

In addition to this the children will have access to the Mini Woodland area on a weekly basis to:

- Foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, children and the wider community.
- Encourage the use natural resources for inspiration, to enable ideas and to encourage intrinsic motivation.
- Develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the child.

7. Target Setting

At CPS we believe that progress and attainment matters. Teachers need to know what children's starting points are and should have a clear idea of where pupils need to be by the end of the year. Through the year teachers review each child's targets to support their attainment and progress and where appropriate identify intervention groups.

Ensuring high expectations - Teachers have high expectations to all children and make appropriate changes and adjustments to ensure that all pupils achieve their best.

Recording and reporting - Regular communication and reporting to parents is important. This goes hand in hand with the work both formal and informal that happens to create a relationship with parents.

- Parents are encouraged to review and interact with each child's learning journal which charts their learning and development through regular 'Parent Pop-Ins'
- Parents receive a baseline report, and reports of attainment based on the child's birthday and half-birthday month.

- Parents are invited to termly parents' evenings; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day.
- To encourage communication and language between school and home, class dojo is used regularly to share any upcoming events, exciting things that have happened during the school day as well as sharing pictures of the fun learning opportunities and experiences that your child engages through photographic evidence.

8. Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping teachers recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process.

Assessment is based on ongoing observation which reports the progress each child is making from a baseline on entry. These observations are achieved through teacher judgment and co-discussion with all members of staff. All practitioners contribute to the observations and an individual child profile is built up which informs the EYFS Profile - the statutory assessment at the end of the Reception year.

At CPS, we use OPAL – 'Observation of Play and Learning' to assess children in EYFS. Opal is a model of effective, meaningful and principled assessment of young children's learning. This model of assessment ensures that all children are supported in reaching significant milestones matched for their age and depending on their birth month. Observations are made to inform our everyday practice and curriculum. By gaining an insight into children's thinking, feeling and needs, we can plan our environment and actions to provide future possibilities for learning through our continuous provision. In both Nursery and Reception, children are assessed against the milestones

Reception Assessment

The class teacher makes regular summative assessments throughout the Reception Year across all aspects of learning and development and tracks children's progress in each aspect of the three prime areas and each aspect of the specific areas (17 aspects in all). The teacher uses the following tools:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – to be completed in the first three weeks of the term.
- Teacher baseline assessment – to be completed by 1st of October 2025 and shared with parents via Class Dojo. Baseline assessment is based on the child's age milestones. This will establish the starting point and areas of strength and weakness as well as identifying three individual targets.
- Data assessment – Assessment to be completed based on the child's birthday month on OPAL assessment spread sheet.
- Learning Journals – each child has a learning journal to record their learning and development
- Observations – all Reception staff contribute to each child's assessment by supporting the class teacher to complete written reports.

9. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The level of progress children are expected to attain by the end of the Reception Year is defined by 17 early learning goals.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals (ELG). Teachers indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). (See table)

Assessment Rating	EYFS Judgement
1	Emerging (anything below ELG)
2	Expected (attaining best fit ELG)
A	Not assessed <i>Long absence, late arrival in summer term etc.</i>

Table – EYFS judgement and scores to assess the child's level of development

There are 17 ELGs. A child can therefore score a minimum of 17 points, or a maximum of 51 points. The national measure will be the average of every child's total point score.

'Good Level of Development' (GLD):

Children will be defined as having reached a good level of development at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the 'expected' (i.e. a score of '2') in the ELGs for:

- All Three Prime Areas (PSED, PD and Communication and Language). There are eight Early Learning Goals across the Three Prime Areas of Learning
- The Specific Areas of Literacy and Mathematics. There are four Early Learning Goals across these two areas including: reading, writing, numbers and shape, space and measures.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework has clear guidance on the health and safety requirements including ratio and capacity arrangements for EYFS. In addition, we have whole school policies in place that meet EYFS requirements such as: Safeguarding and intimate care, Health and safety, Allergies and medical, Accidents, SEND, Employment and staffing, Admissions, Complaints, ICT and technology (including staff use of photographs and mobile devices), E-safety, Trips, Whistle blowing, No smoking/vaping, Food and drink, Confidentiality, data protection and information sharing, Looked after children and Late collection.

10. Staffing

A robust Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable. Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive a full induction to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff undertake appropriate training and professional development to ensure all children receive the best quality learning experience. As necessary, all members of staff have the opportunity to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

There will always be at least one member of staff on the school premises who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the school medical room and Nursery buildings.

The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.

11. Equality and Impact Statement

We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of all aspects of equality, as laid down in the Equality Act (2010). This will include, but not necessarily be limited to: race; gender; sexual orientation; disability; ethnicity; religion; cultural beliefs and pregnancy/maternity. We will use an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment to monitor the impact of all our policies and the policy may be amended as a result of this assessment.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board and the head teacher. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.