



EARLY YEARS POLICY

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1. Introduction

At East Crompton St George's C.E Primary School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life, in order for them to fulfil their potential. We believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning which must be acknowledged and built upon. 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. A strong parent partnership will provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Foundation Stage extends from birth to the end of the reception year. Entry into St George's school is at the beginning of the school year in which a child turns five.

2. Our Core Purpose

At East Crompton St George's Primary School, we provide high quality teaching that is quality assured within a culture of challenge, nurture and respect. We support all children to shine their LIGHT and be the best they can be from their own individual starting points. Our curriculum is designed to enable as many children as possible to achieve a good level of development by the end of the year, becoming ready for year 1 and the National Curriculum.

3. Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Four guiding principles shape practice in our early years setting at St George's, which are directly related to our school vision and values. 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, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between teachers and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

4. The Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

4.1 Communication and Language

The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

4.2 Physical Development

By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is linked to early literacy.

4.3 Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through the four specific areas.

The specific areas are:

4.4 Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

4.5 Mathematics

Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. The curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

4.6 Understanding the World

The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visits, to meeting important members of society such

as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems fosters their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

4.7 Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. The children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

In planning and guiding what children learn, teachers must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. 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 achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

These are interlinked throughout the curriculum and teachers ensure quality interactions develop children's playing, thinking and learning. Teachers balance this interaction with times that they need to allow children to solve problems independently through trial and error developing perseverance and independence.

5. Teaching and Learning

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our 'teaching and learning' policy. They apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2. The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have knowledge of how children develop and learn and how this must be reflected in their teaching.
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors.
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

- The good relationships between our school and other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school.
- The clear aims of our work and the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of practice to inform improvements.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

At East Crompton St George's Primary School, we provide a language rich environment where high quality talk is valued. Early reading is taught using the phonics scheme Read Write Inc. Read Write Inc ditties and then books are sent home to ensure the children are reading material that is reflective of their phonic knowledge. Reading and comprehension skills sit alongside the development of children's speaking, listening, attention and understanding skills. We ensure that the children are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary in a language rich environment. Teachers strive to instil a love of learning within all children with daily reading of carefully chosen books to excite, engage and develop vocabulary in the children. Teachers closely monitor the children's progress in reading and interventions, where required, are implemented in response to this. Writing starts with the phonics lessons, ensuring that the children are aware of sounds in words and the order of sounds. This then progresses to writing phrases and sentences using their knowledge of phonics. Maths is taught using Maths No Problem. There are discrete sessions each day followed by guided group work led by the teacher. The children are then encouraged to develop these skills in play-based opportunities in the learning environment.

6. Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. Play is developed in the indoor area on a small scale and in the outdoor area on a larger scale. They practise and build up ideas and an understanding of the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

7. Planning

The teacher of reception plans adult focussed, group activities and independent activities based on the learning needs of the children. Children have access to high quality provision that has been planned for both indoor and outdoors. There are challenges set within the areas of provision to enhance the learning children have been engaged with throughout the week. During children's independent time in provision, the staff in the classroom will work alongside the children interacting in their learning and enhancing this with purposeful questions. When planning the teacher considers the vocabulary and learning opportunities that can be enhanced within each area.

8. Assessment

Regular assessments of pupil's learning takes place. This information is used to ensure that future planning reflects individual needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is through observations and interactions with the children. The software 'Learning Book' is used to co-ordinate and share this information within school and with parents.

The reception baseline is carried out within the first six weeks of the children starting reception. At the end of the reception year the children are assessed against the early learning goals. The children are assessed as meeting the expected level of development or not yet reaching the expected levels (emerging). The results of the EYFS profile are submitted to the local authority in the summer term.

Parents are informed of the children's ongoing progress three times a year. Parent's evenings take place during the autumn and spring term and reports are sent home in the summer term. Parents are also encouraged to speak to staff at any time to discuss progress or any issues.

9. Inclusion

We value the diversity of all individuals within the school and view school as an inclusive community of professionals, pupils and parents. All children at EC St George's school are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability and all children and their families are valued within our school community. We believe that early identification of additional needs is crucial and work closely with parents and outside agencies to support this.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them learn effectively
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Employing resources that reflect diversity and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for those children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary

10. Transitions

EC St George's School supports each child in transition. This is achieved through the following ways:

- The Reception teacher works closely with the nursery or other pre-school setting to gather as much information about the children entering Reception as possible.
- Transition documents are sent to us from the relevant nurseries or pre-schools. These are useful in providing us with information about the stage of development of each child.
- Each child has the opportunity to visit the school prior to starting.
- Parents and children are invited to 'stay and play' sessions to ensure that the children quickly become comfortable with their new environment.
- We aim to help each child develop the confidence to progress smoothly to Year 1 at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers meet to discuss the profile of each child which allows the year 1 teacher to understand the learning needs of the children within the class.

11. The Role of Parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- Inviting all parents to an information meeting before the school is chosen as a setting for their child.
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Gathering information from parents before their child starts school about their child's progress so far.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class.
- Providing various activities that involve parents e.g. phonics workshop.
- The learning journey 'Learning Book' is a useful tool for both staff and parents to share observations of the children.

Parent's evenings take place in the Autumn and Spring term with a further opportunity to meet in July to discuss the child's individual profiles. Further meetings, formal or informal may be arranged where necessary, at the request of the parent or teacher.