

St Andrew's CEVC Primary School, Great Yeldham

Early Years Policy



Revised by Jenny Gallagher
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St Andrew's CEVC Primary School
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Vision Statement

' In Essex, every learner is entitled to a curriculum rich and varied, challenging and inspiring, which enables every individual to fulfil her or his potential to the highest possible standard; so that all, for the benefit of all, are able to shape their destinies and create a better world.'

Every Learner: A framework for the Curriculum ECC, 1992

'Children's early learning is a distinct phase of education which should provide an essential and firm foundation for children to regard themselves as the powerful and successful learners which they are. Most children have the capacity to learn rapidly, given positive conditions for nurture and enrichment from adults. Parents and professionals in partnership together need to provide for enjoyable, secure and stimulating childhood.

Early Years Curriculum: EDAS, Guidance for Schools

Rationale

Children need experiences which encourage all aspects of development: spiritual, emotional, social, physical and intellectual. The adults who share the responsibility for providing these experiences - parents, teachers, teaching assistants and the many other providers of early education and care - must work together in partnership, recognising the equal but different strengths which each gives to the child. Parents teach children about life, handling emotions and communicating with others. Professional Early Years teams recognise and extend these foundations, using knowledge of child development, observation and assessment to provide a relevant, broad and balanced curriculum which takes close account of the diversity of children's developmental stages, needs and capabilities.

The early years curriculum is about structured active learning which is relevant to the developmental stages of each child. Children are active participants because they learn best from doing and through direct sensory experience. It

is important for early education to help establish positive, confident attitudes to learning and to encourage each child to have a good image of him/herself as a learner, since this curriculum is the first step in a long and continuous process. A wide range of curricular experiences should be provided in order to stimulate the children's imaginations, sustain their interests and extend fully pupils of all abilities. This involves achieving a balance between directed and self-chosen activities. Young children's learning is holistic, with all activities relating and connecting coherently; learning takes place everywhere and throughout all activities, covering the six essential areas of experience.

"To young children the world is one. They are active, they are curious, they want to explore and experience. They run from one part of the field of experience to another quite regardless of the fences we put round what we call subjects" Christian Schiller, 1979.

The Early Years curriculum should encourage and enable children to become independent and responsible within a supportive, secure and happy environment. The most effective Early Years curriculum pays careful attention to planned continuity and progression.

Aims

At St Andrew's we intend to educate each child to the highest level of attainment, having regard to his or her aptitude and ability, with particular emphasis on motivation through interest and direct experience.

Great value is placed on the early years of schooling, when it is crucial for a child to develop a healthy, well motivated attitude towards learning, good social skills, a keen and caring moral awareness and a positive self image. These early years should provide the child with a sound, solid platform on which future education will be based.

We aim to:-

1. Make early learning happy and fun with lots of play.
2. Create a stimulating environment in which children feel secure, confident and valued, and where parents feel happy to entrust their children.
3. Ensure a smooth transition between home, pre-school and school.
4. Extend the children's experience of using language with different adults and children.

Principles for Effective Early Learning

- Start from what the child CAN do.
- Place **play** at the heart of children's learning, recognising that through play children can practise, consolidate and master their learning. Play develops children's ability to co-operate, to negotiate, to express fears, anxieties or sadness and to laugh.
- Provide each child with a sense of achievement, through an appropriately differentiated, planned curriculum for all children, including those with special needs.
- Match activities to the individual child's stage of development in all areas of learning.
- Provide activities which give the child opportunities for exploration, investigation, imagination and creativity.
- Encourage autonomy, independence and confidence.
- Take account of, value and build upon previous learning, involving parents as valued partners in the learning process.
- Enable children's natural curiosity and interest to develop through the provision of a stimulating environment where questioning, hypothesising, testing theories and refining ideas are the accepted ways to learn.
- Take full account of the child's interests, home language, family and culture.
- Lay foundations for values, using children's own experiences and the positive role models presented by adults.

(from 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage')

Organisation of Early Years

Early years children are part of the new 'Foundation Stage' which covers nursery schools, nursery classes, day nurseries or pre-school groups and reception classes.

Admissions

The school admits Early Years children in September following their fourth birthday. Parents are informed at the Summer term induction meeting, prior

to their child's start, that St Andrew's operate an Early Years Policy that is not statutory till the term in which the child is five years old.

Transition from Pre-school into Foundation Class

As children come to the end of their time in the pre-school, we are careful to prepare them for their move to their new surroundings and full-time education. The first two weeks of the Autumn term are organised to accommodate the Autumn term birthdays full-time and the Spring and Summer birthdays $\frac{1}{2}$ day only. All parents are expected to attend at least two sessions during this induction period to work alongside their child and their teachers.

Staffing and Training

The adult/child ratio will be: approx. 1:13, and will consist of a class teacher and a teaching assistant. In addition sessions will be mostly attended by voluntary helpers e.g. parents or governors. The Early Years co-ordinator and the headteacher determine the training needs of staff and attempt to address these in the planning of curriculum and staff development. Where appropriate staff will attend training sessions and will be encouraged and supported in cascading the information to the rest of the school's teaching staff.

Induction

At St Andrew's we have an open door policy and parents are encouraged to come and have a comprehensive tour and consultation with the Early Years teachers and headteacher on an individual basis when making their decision about choice of school. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child, with the classteacher, during the June induction meeting and at the September workshop sessions. The staff and parents then start to forge a partnership on shared interest and trust. This helps the school get to know the pupils and enables the school to make any special arrangements e.g. food allergies.

Premises and Resources

The Early Years children are accommodated in a classroom within the main school building. An area is fenced off to provide a secure area for the class to use as an outdoor classroom. The classroom has direct access to this area. The children also make use of the school hall.

The classrooms are of adequate size and have access to the following facilities:-

- * plenty of natural light - windows
- * there are toilets located within the classroom
- * 2 hand basins

- * laundry and kitchen facilities
- * furniture which is the right height and size for the children
- * cloakroom facilities in the classroom
- * computer provision
- * separately defined areas eg library area, art area

Outdoor Classroom

Outdoor activity will be a planned, integral part of Early Years provision and as such will be available to all children. Planning should not see the indoor and outdoor provision as separate but as inter-linked areas where children may move to pursue activities and select equipment to meet the needs of a particular day. Planning of this quality means effective and efficient use is made of all the space.

When planning, adults need to link the indoor and outdoor classrooms in a variety of ways:

- ◇ **Transferring the inside outside.** Elements from inside can be moved outside.
- ◇ **Parallel provision.** A theme being investigated indoors can be moved outside.
- ◇ **Contrasting play.** Small scale indoor activities can be contrasted with opportunities for larger representation outdoors.

Snack Time

During the first 2 terms the children will be provided with a drink at morning snack time. The school is registered with the 'Free Fruit and Vegetable Scheme' and therefore fruit and/or vegetables are provided free.

Forest Schools

St Andrew's, through the 'Healthy Schools' agenda, is a Forest School. The Forest School approach is a Scandinavian initiative which has been adopted by the school, with the guidance and support of 'The Dawes Hall Centre'. It involves our early years children visiting a secure and safe woodland i.e. 'Spencers Spinney', on a regular basis throughout the year for a range of fun and exciting outdoor activities which are age appropriate and in easy walking distance from the school.

Development of Home/School Links

The school recognises the value of strong home/school links and the role they play in the education of the children. Partnership is an essential element in ensuring that all children receive the best from their time in school and parents are encouraged to take an active part in that partnership.

- ◆ In the term before the child starts school, the parents will be invited to visit the school for an Induction Evening, which will enable them to familiarise themselves with personnel and the building. Parents are invited to this meeting with the class teacher and head teacher informing them about the Foundation Stage Assessment, why and how it is administered.
- ◆ There is recognition of the expertise of parents and other adults in the family and this expertise is used to support the learning opportunities provided within the Early Years classroom.
- ◆ Parents are given a plan of work for each half-term.
- ◆ Parents contribute to and are fully informed of their child's progress and achievements including Foundation Stage Assessment.
- ◆ Parents are invited to interviews with staff on parents evening, on a termly basis.
- ◆ Parents are invited to attend school functions and take part in events.
- ◆ Opportunities for learning provided in the school are sometimes continued at home, e.g. reading and sharing books, and experiences initiated at home are sometimes used as stimuli for learning in the school.
- ◆ Parents are informed weekly of the areas of study that have taken place. Activities are suggested for parents/carers to support their child's learning. Parents are also informed of next week's theme.
- ◆ Parents have the opportunity to use the 'drop in' sessions (Class teacher Surgeries) after school if they feel the need to discuss any concerns they may have about their child.
- ◆ There is a strong and active parent/teacher association (PTA) and all parents have automatic membership and are invited to join the committee and take part in events.

Curriculum Planning

Planning for the Early Years classes takes place on a long, medium and short term basis, as with the rest of the school. Planning is informed by the document 'A Curriculum Framework for the Foundation Stage' and when appropriate the National Curriculum Strategy. All planning is displayed on the information board in the Early Years classroom.

The Curriculum: Early Learning Goals (ELG)

Play is the natural way in which children learn. The role of adults in children's play is to plan, assess, organise and value the learning which takes place. Staff will be clear about their learning intentions for each child in all planned activities. To be effective play should be the integral, accepted way for learning. Remember, "Play is a child's work", (Susan Isaacs).

The ELG set out the expected achievements of the majority of children by the **end** of the reception year, laying secure foundations for their future learning.

The ELG are six areas of learning.

- * Personal, social and emotional
- * Language and Literacy
- * Mathematics
- * Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- * Creative
- * Physical

See appendix A for content of ELG.

How the school intends to implement the ELG.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children will gain confidence and maintain enthusiasm and motivation through enjoyable and carefully planned play activities.

They will be encouraged to become independent, to look after their own possessions, to respect the belongings of others, to share and cooperate in tidying away at the end of each activity. They will take responsibility for various activities that enhance the life of the class e.g. serving and sharing food.

They will develop awareness of their own needs, views and feelings, and those of others, through circle time, listening to stories, through role-play and drama activities and through general social interaction.

They will learn to take their turn in using favourite toys and games and to be polite, well mannered, and considerate at all times.

Children's spiritual and religious awareness will be fostered through class discussions, relevant stories and hymns and through celebrations like Christmas, Harvest Festival and Easter and visits to church. They will learn to appreciate the beauty of the world around them during walks, through observing living things and by taking part in activities such as listening to music and looking at pictures. They will learn to value the love shown to them in family relationships, and those developed with friends and at school. They will learn to care for animals and to value all living things. Children will be given opportunities to learn about different religions and their celebrations e.g. Diwali. As part of a Christian community they will have opportunities to learn of the wider world and to develop their own response. They will learn the need for concern for others, to love, forgive and be forgiven.

Language and Literacy

Children will receive and develop new ideas, and explore their understanding through speaking and listening to others. They will be encouraged, by a stimulating environment, to look, think and express themselves in different ways. They will be encouraged to ask questions and will be given time to express themselves clearly.

There will be opportunities for listening to and participating in songs, rhymes and poems. Role-play and drama activities will give opportunities to use imagination and to interact with others.

Children will be encouraged to listen to stories for gradually longer periods of time, and to respond to words they hear, extending their vocabulary and exploring the meanings and sounds of new words. They will sometimes make up their own stories, learning to speak clearly and with confidence to an audience.

From the beginning of their time in early years they will take home books to look at, so that they will come to regard them as a source of excitement and pleasure.

They will be encouraged to write as part of role play activities, composing 'pretend' letters, filling in forms as part of post office play, and making shopping lists. They will name their paintings and drawings and will have opportunities to use a variety of writing materials, pencils, crayons, felt tips, finger paints, sand trays etc.

Walks in the locality will give the children opportunities to observe writing on road signs, in shops, on notice boards and on cars and buses. Labelling in classroom displays will enable children to recognise familiar words and letters. They will be encouraged to contribute to displays like the letter table.

Computer games suitable for the younger age group will introduce children to a wider vocabulary, letter sounds and simple spelling as well as encouraging them to listen to instructions.

Towards the end of the reception year children's language experiences will become slightly more structured and formal in readiness for the National Curriculum. Phonics and sight words are experienced daily using Early Reading Research (ERR).

Mathematical Development

Children will develop mathematical ideas through play, and through general classroom activities such as helping with the register, giving out pencils etc.

They will learn to count through sorting and matching games, bead threading, shop and café play, board and computer games. They will take part in counting rhymes and songs; play games like skittles which will aid early addition skills and bingo which will help number recognition.

Experiences that involve measuring will provide varied opportunities for the children to develop an understanding of quantities of weight, time, length, area and volume. These may be derived from cooking activities, sand and water play, and 'pretend' cooking in the home corner, block play, plasbricks, and other constructional activities which will provide scope for exploring concepts of shape, position, length and weight. Children will be encouraged to identify shapes and to look out for shapes in the environment.

In the playground physical activities, obstacle races and manoeuvring ride-on toys will help to develop children's spatial awareness.

Towards the end of the reception year children's mathematical experiences will become slightly more formal in readiness for a numeracy lesson in key stage one.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Children will find out about features of the world they live in by investigating their environment through walks in the locality, through observation and through discussion.

They will learn about living things and their life cycles through projects like 'Minibeasts', through observing things like frogspawn and tadpoles and through listening to stories like 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'.

They will learn about seasons by observing the weather changes they see in the environment (leaf fall, frost, the position of the sun in the sky etc.). They will be encouraged to bring in things to add to the seasonal display; conkers, dried leaves etc. and to explore these things with all their senses, frequently making observational drawings.

They will build and construct with a wide range of objects and be given opportunities to experiment with a variety of materials; dough, plasticine, clay, junk etc. and to learn to use a range of tools.

They will learn about uses of everyday technology by using the computer, learning simple keyboard and mouse skills. They will be shown how to use tools safely, such as scissors and when preparing food.

The children will gain an understanding of past and present in their lives through class chats, news time, celebrations like Christmas and birthdays, and events like bonfire night, Harvest etc.

Creative Development

Children will explore colour, texture, shape and space through a wide variety of art and craft activities; drawing, painting, marbling, modelling and printing. They will be encouraged to contribute to display in their own room and in other parts of the school and will learn to appreciate the work of well-known artists. They will have opportunities to use an art package on the computer.

Role-play will give the children opportunities to use their imagination and to take part in a rich fantasy world. This will take place in the form of hospital play, post office and so on. Block play will give opportunities for the children to build 'pretend' buses, trains, Noah's Ark, space ships and anything else they like to imagine. Children will act out well-known stories and rhymes and will make and play with puppets.

A love of music will be encouraged by singing songs, playing percussion, improvising and composing. Children will make their own percussion instruments. They will learn to handle instruments properly and treat them carefully. They will listen to music and talk about it, and will learn self-expression through movement to music.

Physical Development

Children will learn to move with confidence, imagination and safety through indoor and outdoor play activities. They will have opportunities to run, jump, climb, dance and to generally explore the possibilities of their bodies. Children will develop gross motor control by outdoor games and by using large PE apparatus, the climbing frame, mound and slide. Bodily control will be

encouraged by providing challenges like obstacle courses, and games that involve changes of speed, direction and movement. Children will be encouraged to express themselves through movement and music, stories and songs.

Fine motor control will be developed through using equipment to increase dexterity during enjoyable and productive activities like painting, drawing, modelling, cutting and sticking, and using malleable materials like play dough and clay. Constructional toys like lego, duplo, and klickko also help to strengthen hands. Pouring activities will be practised during snack time and also during water and sand play. Children will learn to dress themselves using a range of fasteners, and learn a variety of everyday skills that will enable them to become independent.

Hand eye co-ordination will be developed through activities with small PE apparatus e.g. balls, beanbags, hoops, quoits and skipping ropes.

Children will be encouraged to be aware of their bodies and they will learn about ways they can stay healthy through discussions and through role-play situations such as doctors and nurses, dentists and cafes. They will be told about sensible eating and encouraged to bring healthy snacks to school. They will learn about the importance of keeping clean and washing hands.

Special Needs Education

Children with special needs are identified and diagnosed by the school. The advice of outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist, may also be sought. They will begin the Essex Stages of Assessment process, and if appropriate have Individual Education Programmes (IEP). These include children who are underachieving as well as the very able. Appropriate programmes of work are tailored to the children's requirements and parental co-operation is sought. (See special needs policy)

Differentiation

We aim to make sure that everyone makes progress and gains positively from their early years experiences. To meet the needs of individual children, their work, resources provided, the level of adult support and the outcomes expected may vary. At all levels we plan to give opportunities for success.

Equal Opportunities

Our Early Years provision seeks to ensure equal opportunities for every child. The children will be encouraged to experience a range of different role-play activities, challenging stereotypical roles.

Assessment, Recording, Reporting and Monitoring

Foundation Stage Profiles (statutory requirement) will be carried out during the child's year in reception, by the class teacher. This is to find out what the child knows, understands and can do, so that the teacher can plan effectively for individual needs. It also provides assessment opportunities from which to check progress as the child moves further up the school. Parents will be informed of the child's progress at a parents' evening during the first term. Parents' evenings will be held termly to discuss the child's progress. See Developing Home/School Links section for informal contacts and discussions.

The children's progress in all six areas will be informally monitored, discussed and evaluated as part of an on-going process. The children will be encouraged to evaluate their own work and share their successes with a variety of audiences e.g. KS1 assembly and class assembly which parents are invited to attend. Reading records, phonic checklists and high frequency word checklists are kept for each child. Mathematics is assessed and recorded according to the ELG which are in line with the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) for reception. Regular observations, reflecting an area of learning from the ELG, will be recorded for each child. Assessment of each child's progress will be regularly recorded using the Foundation Stage Profile Booklets and electronically using Foundation Stage Target Tracker. This will form the basis of reporting to parents. All Early Years staff will be included in this process.

In addition close liaison takes place between the Early Years Leader, the headteacher and the feeder playgroup to ensure continuity, progression and a smooth transfer for Early Years children into the foundation class.

Health and Hygiene Issues

The school endeavours to promote good practise in health education as outlines in 'Every Child Matters'.

The responsibility for health and hygiene issues rests with all adults working with young children. The basic rules of hygiene for cooking and eating food

must be adhered to - clean aprons, sterilised surfaces, and thorough hand washing before and after.

A bank of spare clothes is kept for children who become messy for any reason.

Sand in trays and pits needs to be clean. Dirty sand can be a breeding ground for infection and new sand should be introduced frequently.

Children should always be trained to wash hands after a toilet visit. Adults should always wear gloves when dealing with any body fluids - blood, urine, faeces or vomit. A secure first aid kit is kept within the classroom, the whereabouts of which is known to all adults working with the children.

The practices outlined here are to minimise the risk of cross infection. Cleaning fluids, sterilising agents and disinfectants etc. must be kept securely away from children at all times. Personnel in Early Years must emphasise this constantly.

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