



CUMWHINTON SCHOOL EARLY YEARS POLICY

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end Reception year. For the purpose of this policy 'Early Years' refers to children in their first year of school. (Reception)

The four guiding principles of the EYFS are:

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

As an Early Years team, it is our aim that children will leave the EYFS as **confident, independent and reflective learners**. We have created an ambitious, inspiring and high quality text based curriculum underpinned by the principles of The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) and the non-statutory guidance document 'Development Matters' (2021).

Through building positive relationships with skilled staff, we aim to help children become competent learners. Play and exploration is fundamental within our Early Years.

Our happy, safe and stimulating environments, both indoor and outdoors are carefully planned and resourced to allow children the opportunities to:

- Develop their communication and language skills
- Expand their confidence, independence and resilience
- Learn through active play and exploration
- Extend their skills/ abilities by testing them out in a range of situations
- Enjoy learning and have fun
- Build positive relationships with adults and peers
- Seek challenge and learn from mistakes
- Develop their gross and fine motor skills

- Gain the basic skills, knowledge and understanding required to become confident, competent life-long learners.

EYFS Curriculum Implementation:

Our Reception class follows the EYFS statutory framework alongside the non- statutory guidance Development Matters (2021) which supports children's learning in seven areas of learning and development.

The three prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

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

The teaching of these areas of learning is practical and playful with support and challenge provided by adults in class sessions, small group sessions and working with individuals. There is a combination of adult led, teacher taught sessions as well as stimulating continuous provision opportunities to encourage curiosity, adventure and challenge. Throughout the areas of learning and the heart of our curriculum are the **'Characteristics of Effective Learning'**. At Cumwhinton, we strive to develop these key characteristics of **'Playing and Learning'**, **'Active Learning'** and **'Thinking Critically'** in order to give the children skills that they will draw upon throughout their lifetime of learning. All these skills, knowledge and vocabulary that we teach are presented to the children throughout the year through a quality text based curriculum.

We recognise that the classroom environment both indoors and outdoors at Cumwhinton plays a key role in supporting and in extending children's development. Therefore we have created a vibrant yet stimulating environment that provides opportunities for child initiated activities, which reflect the topic they are learning and the EYFS areas of learning. We have well resourced areas both indoors and outside which are accessible and open-ended so that they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. We incorporate children's interests into the areas and encourage them to be independent and reflective learners while accessing the provision.

An Inclusive Curriculum.

At Cumwhinton we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. Children **develop and learn at different rates**. We adhere to the EYFS framework which covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We aim to help children reach their full potential by taking into account their vast range of life experiences when planning for their learning within the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations linked to the needs of our individual children so that most achieve the Early Learning goals by the end of their Reception year.

We help them to do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Where appropriate we are able to access resources to support assessment in a child's first language.

We strive to support all of our learners through our skilful teaching approaches and enabling environments. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and, in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies such as speech and language.

Curriculum Enrichment:

At Cumwhinton, it is important to us to make sure that throughout their time with us, children will experience a wide range of different experiences and opportunities. Gradually widening children's experiences begins in Reception and continues throughout our school so that children are provided with rich and engaging experiences that promotes Cultural Capital across school. Ofsted (EY Inspection Handbook 2019) defines Cultural Capital as *'the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success. It is about giving children the best possible start to their early education.'* (EY Inspection Handbook 2019)

For us education is not just restricted to the classroom. We aspire to make our EYFS curriculum more meaningful and embed learning in a range of ways, including:

- Enrichment themed days throughout the year where children are invited to take part in hands-on learning both indoors and outdoors linked to this.
- Providing opportunities for children to showcase their talents in a variety of ways including taking part in a Christmas performance and participating in whole school music performances.
- Special visitors come into school, including parents, to share their specialist knowledge and expertise. This includes a visit from local emergency services.
- Monthly visits to Stocks Wood which is a wonderful local forest school. Our staff work closely with staff at Stocks Wood to plan exciting learning experiences linked to the EYFS Curriculum that take them on an exciting woodland journey throughout the year. For more information on Stocks Wood please follow this link www.stockswoodoutdoorcentre.co.uk
- Additional visits both off site and within school that enable us to bring learning to life for our youngest learners.

Early Reading and Phonics

At Cumwhinton, we are eager to instil a love of reading in children from a young age. Learning to read is one of the most important things a child will learn to do at our school. We want our children to love reading and to want to read for themselves. Therefore, we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

As part of our curriculum, we have carefully planned out which key stories our children will know and love by the time they leave the Early Years. Each half term, the children in the Early Years are introduced to a selection of books, which they read continuously over the half term during our daily story time sessions. This repetition allows our children to understand the story structures, characters, vocabulary, and key themes, as well as learn to love well-known children's stories. In addition to this, we have also carefully mapped out phonics curriculum 'Read Write Inc' which the children begin during their first few weeks with us.

When children start they will be taught Early Reading and Phonics as a whole class. In these sessions they will focus on fundamental pre-reading skills whilst being introduced to new sounds from the Read Write Inc programme. By October half term children will begin to work in smaller focused phonic groups where they will begin to bring home blending books. After they progress through these they will begin the reading scheme we use throughout school. Reading books will be changed once per week on specified days with additional reading for pleasure (library books) sent home.

Maths Mastery

At Cumwhinton, we teach maths in Early Years following the NCETM maths mastery approach to ensure high expectations for all our children. Successful teaching of maths in the EYFS lies within the context of high-quality classroom provision based in our indoor and outdoor learning environments. Our mathematically rich environment provides a range of contexts for our children to explore concepts using different representations on multiple occasions, using concrete, pictorial and abstract resources.

It is vital that we focus on deepening our children's mathematical understanding, reasoning, problem-solving and fluency. We aim to develop well-rounded, confident mathematicians. As a setting, the emphasis is placed on enjoying mathematical ideas, language, and activities and having regular high-quality, purposeful interactions with confident adults.

Our children are encouraged to communicate their mathematical thinking in various ways, including manipulation of resources, gestures, pointing, body language, mark-making and talk. This allows our children to acquire a secure and long-term understanding of key mathematical concepts, meaning they can progress effectively when moving on to more complex topics.

Maths in Reception is planned in many ways, including whole-class focused sessions, adult-directed small group work, continuous provision, and well-planned interventions. Our

curriculum is designed to focus on the six key areas of early mathematics, collectively providing a platform for everything children will encounter as they progress through their mathematical learning at primary school and beyond.

These areas are:

- Cardinality and counting
- Comparison
- Composition
- Pattern
- Shape and Space
- Measure

Observation, Tracking and Assessment

At Cumwhinton, on-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. All our assessment in the Early Years supports children's learning and development and ensures progress for all. Our on-going, daily observations and interactions with the children give us an accurate picture of the strengths, needs, interests and next steps for all of our children.

Observations

Our skilful staff in Early Years observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. They also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers which we very much welcome. Observations of children's achievements and significant 'wow' moments are collated in their Seesaw learning journal. Parents/carers receive a notification when an observation has been added to their child's learning journal, they can then view and comment on this observation along with any related photographs or videos.

At Cumwhinton, we do not carry out any long observations or in-depth written observations of the children within our setting. We value the importance of play and high-quality interactions with the children, and as a result, we do want staff time to be taken up with unnecessary recording. We empower practitioners to talk confidently about the children and their development without having to complete excessive paperwork.

Statutory Assessment Requirements

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline

Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS** (end of reception), staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting 'expected' levels of development
- Working towards expected levels of development

The profile reflects on-going observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/carers and with the child's Year 1 teacher. This is to ensure that subsequent learning in Year 1 builds on the children's prior knowledge.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Internal Assessment Requirements (Non-Statutory)

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in our Reception takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. The assessment cycle is completed termly and involves the teacher, teaching assistants, parents, and children, as appropriate.

At each assessment point, we record each child's level of development and record whether each child is 'on track, below or well below expected level of development to meet the 17 Early Learning Goals at the end of their reception year. When assessing, staff use their knowledge of children, carefully mapped out checkpoints and the end-of-year expectations document, to make a 'best fit' judgement for each child.

We assess our children internally at the following points in the year:

1. **Baseline** (on entry to each year group) These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.
2. End of the **Autumn term**
3. End of the **Spring term**
4. End of the **Summer term** (In reception this is before the closing date of the EYFSP submission. (June)

Pupil progress meetings are held following each internal data submission and are used effectively for in-depth discussions about the children's achievements, progress, and next steps. If a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how best to support the child both in school and at a home.

Working with Parents

At Cumwhinton we recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning.

We ensure that parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through the following ways:

- A detailed and inclusive transition programme (see below) communicated to parents shortly after your child place has been accepted at our school.
- Inviting parents/ carers in to attend parental involvement experiences throughout the school year, curriculum workshops, termly Stay and Play sessions, Star Achiever assemblies, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering two parent-teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress and well-being are discussed (1X in the Autumn term and 1X in the Spring term). At these meetings, the child's class teacher will facilitate discussion about the child's progress and work in partnership with parents/carers to set next steps and offer support and advice of how everyone can work together to support these both at school and at home.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment, progress, and attitude at the end of each year group. At the end of the reception year, parents are informed of their child's attainment against the EYFS profile. This information helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities when leaving EYFS.
- Sharing photos, updates and 'wow moments' on Seesaw (our online communication and home learning platform). We also reach out to parents throughout social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram (with parental permission).
- Regularly sending out ways to support your child's learning in Reception through Seesaw, including keeping you informed weekly on what your child has been learning about in Reception. This helps parents consolidate any relevant learning at home.
- Operating an open-door policy at the end of the school day for parents/carers with any queries or concerns.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to be a volunteer on any school trips and by welcoming parents in to talk about their own professions and/or share any skills that may enrich the curriculum.

Transition Arrangements

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children. Therefore, at Cumwhinton, transitions are carefully planned for, and significant time is given to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily. At times of transition, we acknowledge each child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

Shortly after confirmation of a place at Cumwhinton parents will receive a welcome letter from our head-teacher outlining our transition programme. This includes:

- Stay and play sessions where you are invited to visit the EYFS classroom and stay with your child to explore the provision, meet staff and find out more about our school.
- Following this a home-visit will be arranged, this is an opportunity for our staff to visit your child 1-1 in the security of their own home. It allows us to gain more insight on your child which helps us to make their first days run more smoothly.
- Our Reception teacher will telephone any nursery settings that your child attends so that all essential information is shared between providers.
- On occasions where a child may need additional transitional support we will liaise with parents and pre-school settings to ensure this is in place.

- Following this parents will receive an invite to join Seesaw which is our safe online learning app where we can begin communication with you.

At the end of Reception we recognise the importance of ensuring this effective transition continues. Therefore towards the end of Summer Term in Reception children will have the opportunity to meet Year 1 staff more regularly and spend time in their new classroom.

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Signed: L.Anderson Date: 24.4.23