

Creech St Michael Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

‘Together we love to learn and grow’

“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.”

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, most children join us in the September of the year in which they are five, on a part-time basis to begin with. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of a term after a child’s fifth birthday.

The EYFS is based upon four themes, each linked to an important principle:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

The Themes

A Unique Child: At Creech St Michael Primary School each child is valued as being a unique individual. As practitioners we aim to nurture and develop the whole child, supporting and encouraging children to flourish and develop in all areas – personally, socially, emotionally and academically. Teaching and learning is based on the understanding that each child develops in individual ways at their own rate. We believe in taking time to get to know our children and families in order to truly personalise teaching and learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals and their families within our school. Children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. We believe every child matters and give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. Staff, as role models, are aware of their influence in promoting positive attitudes. Through our PSED activities and in our day-to-day practice children are encouraged to recognise and celebrate their own unique qualities and characteristics.

In the EYFS we meet the needs of all of the children in our care, including those who are more able or gifted and individuals with special educational needs or specific learning difficulties and disabilities, giving additional support where appropriate. For children who require an Individual Education Plan teaching staff work closely with the school SENCO, parents, and if appropriate outside agencies to coordinate support and promote learning. Targets for individual development are identified and carefully monitored.

For children who receive additional help and support from specialist services on entry to school, the induction process is carefully planned and individually tailored. A School Entry Plan meeting will take place in the summer term with parents, SENCO, teaching staff and professionals from outside agencies and our on site pre-school where appropriate.

On occasions in which children start school in September and have an obvious need for additional support that has not previously been identified, teaching staff in conjunction with families and the school SENCO quickly make referrals to outside agencies for support. This early identification of the need for support is crucial in ensuring all children fully access the EYFS.

Keeping Safe and Health and Wellbeing Please refer to our 'Safeguarding Policy and 'Health and Safety' Policy.

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them".

We endeavour to meet all of these requirements by:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of all children.
- Promoting good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Teaching children about healthy eating and keeping healthy.
- Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Explaining clear and consistent boundaries to help children understand why rules exist and distinguish right from wrong.
- Recognising and responding to signs of abuse or neglect.
- We ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- We ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- We ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships At Creech St Michael we aim to establish caring, respectful and professional relationships with our children and their families. We recognise that when children feel safe and secure in their relationships with staff, and their peers, children respond positively to challenges and feel confident to try things out. Within relationships of this kind, teachers are able to support and extend each child's learning and judge when to introduce new skills.

Learning to respect each other is central to developing friendships. Here at Creech St Michael we aim to set an excellent example for our children. Through our relationships with each other as staff and through open and friendly professional relationships with children and their parents, we hope to model respect. In our day-to-day practice we support children in developing friendships, encouraging them to show consideration and care for the thoughts and feelings of others. Where needed, we run specific social skills intervention groups to model positive play and support children in their interactions with peers.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We strive to encourage an open two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and staff. We hope to be approachable and to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. We value the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Regular chats and informal conversations about daily goings on, a child's well being and achievements, offering an "open door" policy. This may be through telephone or childminder where parents are working.
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts school.
- 'Play and Stay Sessions' - Children have the opportunity to visit their new classroom four times in the half term before school begins, firstly with parents. Within these 'Play and Stay' sessions children meet teachers, support staff and Key Stage One peers.
- Children from our onsite preschool are regularly invited in for storytime during the summer term and Early Years children enjoy returning to pre-school to share their work and learning from school.
- All parents are invited to our induction evening in the term before their child starts school. A pack is provided for all parents, with information about how to prepare children for starting school.
- Encouraging parents to put together an 'All About Me' book over the summer holidays. Parents, together with their children, can begin to build up a scrapbook of pictures and photos linked to their home and family life that the child then shares with the class teacher when he/she starts school.
- All parents are invited to attend an open evening in the first half term where staff outline our approach to teaching and learning in the early years along with ways to support children in their learning outside of school.
- There are formal parent – teacher consultation meetings in the autumn and spring terms. In these meetings teachers report on children's attainment, referring to examples of work, observations made during planned play and the EYFSP highlighted scales reference sheet.
- WOW wall. Each early years class has a WOW wall for parents to celebrate children's achievements outside of school and contribute towards foundation stage profile evidence.
- At the end of the year parent's receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress, along with a summary of their foundation stage profile scores.
- Termly letters informing parents of specific activities and themes for learning are sent home & also available on our school website.
- Parents/ family members are invited to join us for Family FUNs sessions weekly – to help practise skills with their child, meet other parents & to see how we improve physical development through PE.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in class or during visits.
- Encourage parents/carers to support children's learning by building on learning at home through sharing of reading books and topic related activities.
- Parents receive a 'Time for Talk' letter fortnightly to give them an outline of what their child has been doing in class, so that this can be discussed further & built upon at home.
- Photos of the children's work, them learning through play and 'WOW' moments are updated regularly on class pages on the website.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants. We have good links with Creech St Michael Pre-School. Leaders from the school and pre-school setting meet half termly and pre-school children are children re-visit the preschool to show their progress. The EYFS leader meets with pre-school staff to discuss new intake children and carry out observations. Our early years classes attend the pre-school nativity and other events. Similarly staff and children from the preschool are invited to events held within school.

Enabling Environments *The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.*

At Creech St Michael, we understand and value the importance of creating safe, stimulating indoor and outdoor environments that enable our children to learn and develop. Through observation and interaction with the children in our care, we develop an understanding of children's individual needs, interests and levels of achievement. Using this understanding we carefully plan challenging and engaging activities to both support and extend learning. We have a fantastic outdoor environment, some of which is covered, which we

use whatever the weather. We also have waterproof trousers and jackets for children to wear in wet weather. All children in Reception take part in Forest School sessions, using our lovely fields and supergrounds area.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Creech St Michael observation is one of the most important day-to-day aspects of our practice. We work from our observations, to analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about a child's progress. All members of staff, both teachers and teaching assistants, are skilled in making observations, linking what is seen or heard to the EYFS curriculum and Development Matters. Observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFSP and track the learning journey of each child. Each child has a 'Learning Journal' into which evidence across the learning strands is presented, linked to Development Matters. Teachers and Teaching Assistants keep written observations also. Opportunities for observational assessment are both planned and spontaneous. Formative assessment informs our everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment. Assessments by different members of staff are moderated against each other and with other schools when this is possible in order to ensure consistency.

Development Matters summarises all of the formative planning and assessment undertaken. It summarises children's achievements at different levels in the 7 key areas, working towards the early learning goals. The profile is completed on entry to school, using Pre-School Entry Transfer Forms and initial assessments made by class teachers. Following this initial input of data, the EYFSP is then completed at the end of each term. Moderation of assessments takes place across the parallel classes and through local cluster group moderation meetings. Data is analysed at both class and whole cohort level by the Early Years Leader, Head Teacher and class teachers. This data is carefully analysed to track progress and identify areas for future priority and resourcing.

Planning

Good flexible planning is the key to making children's learning exciting, effective, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning is responsive and always informed by observation and assessment. Planning within the EYFS has a number of strands- long, medium and short term planning. Long term planning ensures even coverage of all areas of the curriculum. Medium term planning is based around half termly themes. These themes provide a starting point and direction for learning, classroom organisation and resources, without being too rigid. Half term themes also help to link learning within EYFS and Key Stage One (this is particularly important in mixed age classes). Parents are informed of our half termly themes through our curriculum overview letters and given opportunities to link learning between home and school. Within a half term topic, individual teachers' planning varies across the classes in response to children's levels of interest, achievements and learning needs. Short term planning takes the form of both weekly and daily plans with clear differentiated learning objectives, detailed outline of activities and deployment of adults and resources. The use of Teaching Assistant time is carefully planned for on a daily basis.

The Learning Environment

As a team we strive to create an emotional environment that is warm and accepting of everyone. A place in which children feel confident to have a go, take risks and try new activities or experiences. As a team of staff we understand that it is when children's emotional and physical needs are met they are more ready to take advantage of the play and learning opportunities on offer. The Early Years area is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We understand that children learn in different ways and at different rates and plan accordingly. The classroom space is flexibly arranged to provide opportunities for a range of play and learning experiences where children can be active, be quiet and also rest. Resources within the indoor classroom environment are carefully organised, well maintained and accessible to children within learning areas. Children are encouraged to select and use resources and equipment independently within their play. The early years unit has its own enclosed outdoor play area. We plan carefully for the use of the outside space, encouraging free flow between the indoor and outdoor environments to give children first

hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Being outside gives children the opportunity to play and explore on a large scale, using all of their senses and being physically active and exuberant. Our outside space includes a sensory garden with willow tunnel and grass mound. There is fixed, wooden apparatus for physical play, sand and water trays, digging areas and planting beds, a beautiful storytelling chair & reading area, a large chalk board and mirror. Within this area children also have access to a range of equipment for gross motor and physical play, including trikes and bikes and balancing and building equipment. Writing and physical development are two key areas that we are trying to promote and improve within the Early Years at our school at present. New resources have been purchased and children are constantly encouraged to celebrate their writing and mark making within the classroom, by displaying their work on our 'Writer of the Week' Boards and by giving the children access to post it notes to let them annotate their own work and photographs within the class room . We are also striving to improve these areas by working closely with parents and our onsite pre-school. Both Early Years Classes have class teddies that go home weekly, accompanied by our class diary, to encourage them to have a go at writing about their weekend.

Learning and Development:

Learning through play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

At Creech St Michael we put play at the heart of our practice and work hard to provide a rich and enabling environment in which children direct the pace, length and focus of their play. We know that children learn through first-hand experience, in activities they have chosen. Through play children have the opportunity to practice and apply skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside others as well as individually. Play facilitates communication and interaction with others, negotiating plans, sharing ideas and taking turns to talk as they investigate and solve problems. In our setting Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in observing children's play. Practitioners use their knowledge of the children in their care, to know when to subtly and supportively intervene in play to extend learning and development. Adults take a genuine interest in children's play, clarifying ideas through the use of open ended questioning and helping children to make connections in their learning through creative and critical thinking.

Across the parallel classes reception children engage in 'Busy Time' throughout the day. During Busy Time children actively choose and direct their own play. They flow freely between inside and outside and select resources independently, accessing a wide range of planned play opportunities, carefully linked to EYFS goals and objectives and the needs and interests of the children. Children are encouraged to celebrate their success and experiences during Busy Time through the use of a Busy Time book or by displaying their work on the class Busy Board. Each child has a Busy Book where they record their activities during Busy Time, this may include sticking in their creations or taking photos to be stuck in at a later date. We also have 'Busy Boards' in the classrooms where children can display photos or work produced during busy time and can annotate this work themselves. Children take ownership of their play during Busy Time and help to plan for future play based experiences.

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Areas of learning

The EYFS is made up of 7 areas of learning:

Personal Social and Emotional Development (MR, SCSA, MF)
Communication, Language and Literacy (LA, U, S)
Literacy (R & W)
Understanding the World (P&C, W, T)
Physical Development (M&H, H&SC)
Expressive Arts & Design (EUMM, BI)
Maths (N & SSM)

All areas of learning and development are connected to one another and are equally important in supporting a rounded approach to developing the whole child. Supporting children across all of these areas will give them a solid start to their education that will benefit them throughout their lives. In each area Early Learning Goals (ELG's) set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that young children should have acquired by the end of the reception year. We aim to deliver all areas through flexible, planned purposeful play, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.