



Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date of Review	September 2024
Date of Next Review	September 2026

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1. Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Our Fledglings Class contains only Reception-aged children which allows our Fledgling pupils to get a well-rounded Early Years experience, underpinned by the four guiding principles of the foundation stage framework: the **unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, and staff's understanding and awareness of **learning and development** in the Early Years. Our curriculum is practical, book-led, and language-rich in order to nurture confident and engaged learners, with a love of reading and a strong basis of speech and language skills on which to build as they move through school, having recognised this as a particular and growing need within our area. We hope all children will start full time in the Autumn Term but in some circumstances, Spring and Summer birth children may agree a part time start after consultation with school. We also offer a flexible entry for children with additional needs or those that need longer to settle in when needed, as a happy start to school is of paramount importance.

Intent

2. Vision statement

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full potential and we know that children's experiences in the early years can greatly impact upon their future. Feeling secure, safe, and happy provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents and we want our families to know that their children will be safe and able to thrive at Clifton.

We strongly believe that children learn best through play, and we recognise the importance of first-hand experiences in developing children's intrinsic motivation to explore, discover and learn. We also know that this type of learning is most successful when built upon a basis of secure and positive relationships with peers and with adults, and on strong communication and language skills. Our book-led and language-rich curriculum is therefore practical, exploratory and floats of a sea of talk. This is further supported by our small class-sizes which allow staff to develop a deep knowledge of each child and for the children, and their interests, to be central in shaping the curriculum. It also enables a high-level of dedicated and meaningful time to be spent by adults on developing relationships, building language, nurturing individual interests, supporting individual needs, and empowering children to recognise and celebrate their individual and group achievements, and to be active participants in their own target-setting.

At the heart of our vision is our whole-school ethos of wanting our children to be **ready, respectful** and **safe**.

Ready – we want our children to be confident, motivated and equipped to learn, having developed a strong set of personal, social, communication and academic skills on which to build as they move through school.

Respectful – we want our children to value being part of a class team, to respect difference, and to be able to respectfully challenge each other in a way that helps everyone to learn and thrive.

Safe – we want our children to feel physically and emotionally safe at school and to communicate with us if something is not right. We also want them to be able to calculate risk, have a go at something new, and to feel secure to make mistakes in their learning and their friendships, from which they can grow.

3. Aims:

To achieve our vision for the early years, staff work towards the following aims for our children, regardless of their starting point.

We want our children to:

- feel happy, valued, and have their own interests and aspirations
- know how to keep themselves and others safe at school and at home
- communicate effectively with others in play, conversation, and more formal learning
- have opportunities to explore and develop their skills, knowledge, interests, imagination, creativity and thinking across all curriculum areas
- be able to learn both independently and collaboratively; thriving on challenge, being determined, and bouncing back after difficulties
- think critically, make decisions, manage their own needs, and select the resources they need to support themselves
- articulate their learning, decisions, and achievements, supported by our 'Super Learner' characters: the Explorers, the Triers and the Thinkers
- make substantial personal, social and academic progress from their individual starting points
- be valued citizens within the community, with a growing awareness of diversity beyond our small, rural village
- demonstrate, in an age-appropriate way, the attributes central to 'The Clifton Way' (Curiosity, Understanding, Teamwork, Perseverance and Self-Awareness)

Implementation

Teaching and Learning:

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely, safely, independently, collaboratively, and creatively. There are areas where the children can be both active and still, and there are opportunities for children to sit, lie, stand and kneel when learning. The classroom has been developed using natural and neutral tones to avoid over-stimulation and is organised into learning areas, where children are able to locate and use equipment and resources independently. They are welcome to move resources between areas and to develop their learning as they choose, with these spaces not acting as walls but as starting points. There are designated quiet areas and group learning spaces in addition to the continuous provision opportunities. Children also have access to an enclosed outdoor classroom which is again organised into learning spaces. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors and the space enables children to use their senses, develop their physical skills, communicate, collaborate, and find out more about the natural world. Fledglings also have regular opportunities to access the playground, field and Forest School, as well as going on walks around the village and into the countryside. Weekly enhancements and learning invitations are added to both the indoor and outdoor classrooms linked to topics, Books of the Week, children's interests and to develop specific skills and knowledge identified by staff through observation, engagement and regular professional discussions about pupils' learning.

The Curriculum

At Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School we value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are deeply inter-connected. In Fledgling Class, children learn through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. They access continuous and enhanced provision daily and take part in whole-class teaching, group activities, and one-to-one support, alongside their self-directed 'Choosing Time.' Our curriculum draws upon the statutory Early Years Framework (2021) and associated educational programmes and early Learning Goals, as well as the Development Matters (2021) objectives, staff knowledge of how children develop and learn, and the objectives laid out within the additional schemes from which we work. These include Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, Black Sheep Narrative Press, White Rose Maths, Word Aware, Jigsaw, Jasmine, Charanga and the Worcestershire RE syllabus.

We have developed our own Clifton Early Years curriculum document which compiles the educational programmes, Development Matters statements, Early Learning Goals and scheme-specific expectations for each of the prime and specific areas of learning into one place, accompanied by an exploration of what we want this area of learning to look like at Clifton, in terms of the knowledge and

skills we want our children to develop, key vocabulary linked to that area and some possible learning experiences which may achieve this. It is a guide to ensure breadth, depth and richness of opportunity for our children, not an assessment document or tick-list for achievement, as we view children's learning like a web with many strands, rather than a straight line, and we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. It also aims to support other subject leaders' understanding of what learning looks like in the Early Years.

The majority of statements within our curriculum document are skills-based so that the content covered remains able to follow children's curiosities, needs and interests, with broad and open-ended half-termly topics being chosen based on these, and on any identified language gaps and social or learning needs within the cohort. 'Books of the Week' are then chosen as 'sparks' for each week's learning, upon which elements of group activities and enhanced provision, both indoor and outdoor, will be based, and from which specific vocabulary, language, learning and social development opportunities can be planned. These topics are not fixed, and it is expected that topics and Book of the Week selections will be adapted and updated regularly. This will ensure that they are current, diverse, and linked to the specific needs of individual cohorts and the evolving community within Clifton-upon-Teme, as well as exposing children to the diverse and ever-changing world beyond our small, rural, and largely homogenous village.

In addition to accessing continuous and enhanced provision, children also engage with daily whole-class Phonics sessions (with fidelity to the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Scheme) and Maths opportunities, as well as regular handwriting support sessions, reading groups, and weekly writing and maths adult-led activities to develop specific skills. Daily carpet time sessions also support the delivery of topic learning, PSHE and RE and children will take part in PE and Forest School sessions, some assemblies, and the opportunity to read weekly with an 'reading buddy' from an older class. Children will also access a minimum of two Story Time sessions a day and will hear stories read by different members of staff regularly.

The characteristics of effective teaching and learning

Our curriculum is underpinned the characteristics of effective teaching and learning as outlined in the statutory Early Years framework (2021). These 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 characteristics are central our view of effective practice and to the way in which we develop 'the whole child' at Clifton. Staff plan and provide teaching and learning opportunities for children to engage in exploratory, active, creative and critical thinking and learning, and there is a focus on developing a shared 'language of learning' in the classroom that allows children to understand and discuss their learning experiences.

To achieve this, children are introduced to six characters called the 'Super Learners' in Reception: 'the Explorers, the Triers and the Thinkers.' They start the day with a song about them and staff use the characters to describe and model different attributes of effective learning in lessons, conversations and in children's learning play. Children's positive learning behaviours are recognised on the Super Learners recognition board (in line with the school's positive relationships and behaviour policy) and through daily conversation with staff and peers. In addition, focus elements of effective learning behaviours and specific learning-behaviour vocabulary are identified in medium term planning for staff to model and nurture through their teaching and in their interactions with children to support both their practical learning behaviours and their ability to talk about them.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- strong partnerships between teachers and families which help our children to feel secure and develop a sense of well-being and achievement, and in which families are made aware of children's successes and targets
- good relationships with the settings our children come from
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- encouraging and enabling children to talk about their learning using a shared 'language of learning' with which they can verbalise their own and others' achievements and be active participants in their own progress and target-setting
- supporting the development of positive relationships and behaviours in line with school policy; through praise, encouragement, feedback, achievement awards, assemblies, positive communication with parents, Clifton credits and our 'Super Learners' recognition board. Negative behaviours are managed through de-escalation techniques, direct teaching around emotions, self-management, and choices, and using the policy's 'stepped' response approach
- using diverse resources which are free from discrimination and stereotyping, and which expose children to a broader and more diverse demographic
- planning challenging activities for all, based on our deep understanding of children's abilities and understanding levels, and with an awareness that these may differ in different aspect of learning
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary through intervention, challenge, adapted provision, or seeking further support
- early identification of additional needs and effective working with the SENDCO, outside agencies, families and medical professionals to provide additional support, swift and targeted interventions, and adaptations for those who need it

4. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities:

We strive to ensure that all children and families feel welcome and treated fairly at Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School regardless of race, religion, culture, background, or ability, and we aim to take into account children's ranging life experiences within our planning and teaching practice. We plan for the individual needs of individual children and embrace the opportunities that differing needs, backgrounds, cultures, languages and experiences of pupils can bring.

As a largely homogenous and mono-cultural setting, our Early Years curriculum has been designed to be reflective of diversity; to actively promote the British Values of tolerance, mutual respect, individual liberty, democracy and rule of law and to be inclusive of all people, including those with any of the protected characteristics outlined in the 2010 Equality Act. This includes opportunities to see, explore and discuss race, religion, gender, ethnicity, disability and different types of families within teaching and learning, including same-sex families, adoption and step-families. Children will also explore different cultures, religions and ways of life, including settled and nomadic lifestyles, within Carpet Time sessions (Topic, Story time, PSHE and RE) as well as being able to see and discuss diverse people, lives and communities in the books we share, the people and countries we study, the resources in our classroom, the conversations we have, the places we visit and the people who visit us. Staff do not shy away from addressing stereotyping or misconceptions and take care over the language they use in the classroom. With limited forms of diversity in the school community, it is up to staff to open windows to the world for our children and to promote respect, equality, and tolerance.

For children with additional needs, staff in the Early Years work closely with the school's SENCO, families and with outside agencies to identify and support pupils' needs within the classroom and to provide the support, intervention, and adaptations they need to thrive and reach their full potential. Our curriculum also includes texts and significant figures from history with disabilities and additional needs, and opportunities to discuss and celebrate physical and neurological differences.

Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium are known to staff who work to ensure that their needs are met, and that the allocated funding is supporting and enhancing their personal and educational experiences and opportunities at school.

5. Home / school links:

At Clifton, we recognise that positive attachments and secure relationships support children's self-esteem, confidence, and achievement. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contributions they make and the insights they have into their children, aiming to develop strong links with our families to best support our children.

We nurture these links through:

- providing an induction meeting, transition pack and multiple transition days during the Summer Term before children start with us in Reception, as well as additional phone calls and meetings as required
- always having a staff member available on the door in the morning and afternoon to speak to families, and a clear system to organise additional phone calls or meetings if these are required
- working closely, honestly, and transparently with parents of pupils with additional needs
- home-school communication diaries which are checked and responded to regularly
- informing and involving parents in what their child has and will be learning through photographs and information of the school's website
- sharing 'Books of the Week' with parents through a QR code system to allow them to share and discuss the books and stories with their children at home too
- our 'WOW Moment' slips on which families can record their child's significant moments and achievements on for them to bring into school, share with their peers and put into their learning folder
- termly parents' evenings to discuss pupils' progress and experiences at school
- family workshops throughout the year to support families with phonics, reading, maths and speech and language
- a formal, written end of year report including attainment, progress, characteristics and targets for each child
- Family Story Club in which parents can join their child for a story time and share books together, as well as engagement with our class library and weekly book recommendations with QR codes to recordings of stories from the class teacher
- a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents including singing showcases and art exhibitions

6. Health and Safety:

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe.' Staff are responsible for maintaining a safe classroom environment, undertaking relevant risk assessments, and identifying any changing hazards or faulty equipment. In addition to this, we aim to educate children on boundaries, rules, and limits, and to help them understand why they are in place. Children are supported to take sensible risks both indoors and outdoors, whilst being taught to recognise and avoid hazards. This includes practical tasks such as allowing children to build and climb with large scale equipment and exploring Forest School. Within such activities, children are provided with regular options and choices to help them develop the skills of assessing risk and making safety decisions independently. We also educate children on staying physically, mentally, and emotionally safe. Throughout their time in Fledglings Class, children will engage with taught sessions and regular discussions relating to aspects such as staying fit and healthy, emotional health, managing emotions, staying safe online, Pants are Private, stranger danger, road safety and who they can talk to if they do not feel safe or if something is happening to them which they do not feel is right. Children with toileting needs are supported by staff in our classroom toilets and needs/protocols are agreed with individual parents.

Welfare

At Clifton-upon-Teme Primary School, our primary duty is to keep children safe, including complying with the safety and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. As such:

- Fledglings operates under the school's Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment Policies, with staff recording and monitoring all concerns using the MyConcern online system and communicating with the designating safeguarding lead and deputy lead. All staff are safeguarding trained in Early Years.
- all children have an assigned key person whose role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the children become familiar with the setting and to build a relationship with families. Due to the small class-size and staffing in Fledglings, this is the class-teacher for all pupils.
- class sizes do not exceed legal ratios. They are significantly below the maximum 30 pupils per school teacher.
- our curriculum promotes good health, including healthy eating, fitness, keeping clean, and good oral hygiene.
- a system to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication is kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Parents are informed each time a medicine is administered to a child.

- fresh drinking water is available at all times and healthy snacks are provided midmorning. Children under five receive free milk and those over five have the option to pay for this.
- children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- a first aid box and pupils' individual medicines such as inhalers are accessible at all times and stored in a clearly labelled cupboard. A record of accidents and injuries is kept, and all incidents are reported to parents, in line with the school's First Aid policy. Teaching assistants are paediatric first aid trained.
- Early Years staff members adhere to the school's positive relationships and behaviour policy when managing pupils' behaviour, including correct record keeping and informing parents of any positive handling of pupils to keep them or others safe from harm.
- Early Years staff adhere to the school's Health and Safety policies and procedures, including identifying, reporting, and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment, the upkeep of risk assessments, and the running of school trips.
- a fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy is in place and children have regular experience of fire drills and of what to do in an emergency. They are also briefed on the school's red triangle protocol for alerting staff members to an emergency.
- there are safeguarding guidelines regarding the use of cameras and video equipment by staff and parent/carers within the setting.
- Early Years staff comply with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) when identifying, supporting, recording information on, and working with the families of children with additional needs.
- Early Years staff comply with the school's GDPR policy when recording and reporting any information on children.

Impact

7. Assessment and Reporting

Formative assessment is a constant feature of Early Years Practice at Clifton. Children are assessed in their interactions with adults, by their responses in sessions, as they observed at play, through the questions they ask and in the way they engage with others. Children have individual writing books and learning folders in which snapshots of learning are recorded, in addition to a whole-class floor book. This floor book is an active class record of learning to which pupils and adults can contribute. It aims to capture learning, celebrate achievement, and recognise pupils' learning behaviours, as well as becoming a tool to help children talk about their learning more effectively. It is part of daily routines, is an active document and is displayed in a prominent location in the classroom for staff and pupils to engage with throughout the day.

In the first half term of Reception, children complete the National Baseline, as well as being observed and communicated with generally in their play and learning to provide information on their starting points. Some additional, internal baselining activities also take place in Language, Literacy and Maths to enable correctly pitched planning and teaching. Throughout the year, the Little Wandle assessment tools will be used to assess phonics programme, in line with the scheme. Assessment in the other areas of learning will be based on continual observation and interaction with pupils, and on regular conversations between the teacher, support staff, and the headteacher.

Within the final term of the EYFS, the class teacher will complete children's Early Years Profile judgements and provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against all seventeen Early Learning Goals. Children will be assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected' for each goal and a short commentary will be provided for each area of learning and on children's learning characteristics. Children who are 'emerging' will continue to work towards the Early Learning Goals in Year One, as appropriate. Trends within our Early Years data has shown that we have been broadly in line with, or above, national average in the recent years that this has been published (national data was not gathered or published during the COVID pandemic).

8. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy. It will be reviewed every year or sooner in the light of any new legislation. The Head teacher and subject leaders will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of whole school monitoring and termly pupil progress meetings with provide opportunities for discussion about provision, progress and need of individual children. Discussion and observation will form the bedrock daily practice in the Early Years, with continual conversations between teaching and support staff regarding children's learning, their needs and the adequacy of provision. Discussion will also form the basis of

pupil progress meetings, profile judgements, the moderation of assessment and of the monitoring of Early Years teaching, learning and provision, in line with the Statutory Early Years Framework (2021) requirements.