Little Crickets at Park School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Introduction

At Little Crickets at Park School, we are committed to providing a nurturing, stimulating, and inclusive environment for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Our aim is to ensure that each child's early learning experiences are ambitious, engaging, balanced, and promote holistic development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Park School applies to children from 3 months to the end of the Reception year. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday. However, for children who turn 4 years old after the 1st July, parents can choose to defer starting school until September of the following year (which is the term after their 5th birthday). Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling. The learning and development requirements are detailed in The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2025) and this sets out the learning and development requirements as well as safeguarding and welfare requirements.

The majority of children join our Reception year having already begun their learning journey in an Early years Setting, including, our own Nursery.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following documents and principles:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026)
- Childcare Act 2006
- Birth to 5 Matters
- Characteristics of Effective Learning

We strive to achieve this by:

- Getting to know each child
- Developing positive relationships
- Providing an enabling environment
- High quality interactions with passionate and knowledgeable practitioners
- Early identification of additional needs and appropriate intervention and support
- Opportunities for deep learning by providing a rich and stimulating environment both inside and outside
- Allowing children time and space to develop at their own rate and in their own way
- We aim to start form the children's interests and build upon them
- Offering a structure for learning and content that matches the needs of young children

EYFS Framework Overview

The EYFS curriculum is based on the statutory framework outlined by the Department for Education, which is designed to help children achieve specific learning and developmental milestones. The EYFS framework is divided into seven key areas of learning, with three prime areas and four specific areas of development:

Prime Areas of Learning:

- **Communication and Language**: Communication and language development underpins all areas of learning within the EYFS. We provide a language-rich environment and high-quality interactions to support vocabulary acquisition, conversation skills and early literacy development.
- **Physical Development**: Encouraging fine and gross motor skills, balance, and coordination.

- **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development**: Supporting emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and relationships with others.

Specific Areas of Learning:

- **Literacy**: Developing reading and writing skills.
- **Mathematics**: Fostering an understanding of numbers, shapes, and basic mathematical concepts.
- **Understanding the World**: Encouraging curiosity and knowledge of the environment, people, and technology.
- **Expressive Arts and Design**: Promoting creativity, imagination, and self-expression through art, music, and movement.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS lays out the Characteristics of Effective Learning as follows:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creative and Critical Thinking

By the end of the Reception year, children should have achieved the Early Learning Goals in each of these areas. Our curriculum ensures a balance between structured learning and the free play that children need to explore and understand the world around them.

Core Principles of the EYFS at Little Crickets at Park School

We believe in creating a supportive, stimulating, and caring learning environment where every child is encouraged to grow and develop to their fullest potential. Our approach is guided by the following four principles:

1. **Unique Child**: Every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, and confident. We celebrate each child's individuality, and we strive to create an inclusive environment that recognizes their unique learning style.
2. **Positive Relationships**: Secure, trusting relationships are at the heart of learning. We ensure that children feel safe, supported, and respected by their peers, teachers, and families. Our focus is on building a sense of belonging, which enables children to grow in confidence and independence.
3. **Enabling Environments**: We believe that the environment plays a key role in children's learning. Our classrooms and outdoor spaces are designed to stimulate curiosity, exploration, and creativity. We provide a range of opportunities for children to explore new ideas, challenges, and experiences in an environment that meets their developmental needs.
4. **Learning and Development**: Children learn in different ways and at varying paces. Our approach is flexible, ensuring that all areas of learning are interconnected and equally valued. We ensure a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, always responding to children's interests and developmental stages.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In addition to the explicit skills taught in line with the seven areas of learning, our approach is underpinned by the following Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- **Playing and Exploring**: Children are encouraged to explore, investigate, and try new things. We provide opportunities for them to experiment and engage in hands-on activities.
- **Active Learning**: Children are motivated to concentrate and persist with tasks, overcoming challenges and celebrating achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**: We foster problem-solving, creativity, and independent thinking. Children are encouraged to make links between ideas and apply new strategies to solve problems.

Curriculum Structure and Delivery

The Little Crickets at Park School EYFS curriculum is carefully structured to provide an ambitious yet achievable learning pathway. The curriculum is designed to build foundational knowledge and skills while ensuring that children engage in learning that is relevant and meaningful to them. Our curriculum delivery includes both **play-based learning** and **adult-directed instruction**, ensuring that the needs of all children are met.

At Little Crickets at Park School, our curriculum is designed to develop confident, independent, resilient learners who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for future success. We provide a language-rich environment, promote curiosity and creativity, and ensure all children have access to ambitious learning experiences regardless of their starting points.

Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning is integral to the EYFS at Little Crickets at Park School. We believe that children learn best when they are actively engaged in play that promotes their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Continuous provision is carefully planned to create opportunities for children to practise and apply their learning. Areas of the environment are regularly adapted in response to children's interests and assessments to maximise opportunities for independent and adult-supported learning. Through play, both indoors and outdoors, our children explore, develop and take ownership of their learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise, build up ideas, learn self-regulation and understand the need for boundaries. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express likes and dislikes and are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities. The Nursery and Reception classes facilitate child initiated learning and follow a child-initiated planning approach that emphasises flexibility and extending children's interests. The more general features of excellent practice in our Nursery and Reception that relate to the EYFS are:

- the strong and positive partnership between teachers, teaching assistants, nursery practitioners and parents and carers. This is so that our children feel secure at school and nursery and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers, teaching assistants and nursery practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching, interaction with the children and flexibility in delivering the curriculum;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their cognitive, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and

equipment;

- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children from observations. These are regularly shared with parents. In Reception, this consists of 3 parent evenings and half termly reports alongside the Learning Journeys and the use of Ovivio. In Nursery this is focussed on Ovivio, supported by ongoing communication, and termly Parent/Teacher Evenings.
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the importance of up to date safeguarding training for all staff.
- the importance of outdoor provision and providing a supportive and engaging environment for the children to learn in.
- the identification of SEN and support put in place
- referral to the Transition Policy to foster a positive transition for children, parents and staff.

Digital Learning

We recognise the importance of digital literacy in today's world. Children at Little Crickets at Park School are given opportunities to develop their digital skills using a variety of tools, devices, and resources, including educational software and remote control toys. These resources are used to engage children and support their learning in various curriculum areas.

Enrichment and Personal Development

In addition to the core curriculum, we provide a variety of enrichment activities to broaden children's experiences and foster personal development. We emphasise the development of communication skills, confidence, and the ability to work collaboratively with others.

Pupil Voice

At Little Crickets at Park School, we believe in the importance of giving children a voice in their learning environment. Children are encouraged to express their opinions and contribute to decisions that affect their school life. Through regular meetings and discussions, we ensure that children's views are valued and considered in shaping their educational experience.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is integral to our approach. In the EYFS, we use a range of observational techniques to track each child's progress and identify areas for development. This includes:

- Regular observation and analysis of child-initiated activities.
- Tracking progress against Early Learning Goals.
- Parental involvement in the assessment process to build a holistic view of each child's development.
- The use of summative assessments, and pupil progress meetings, to identify and address gaps in learning.

Progress Check

On arrival in Nursery, children are tracked within the Early years Framework. We carry out the progress check on two year olds (27 month check) which is shared with parents. We also ask parents to share their child's HV 27 month check if already done. This check provides an opportunity to identify any early signs of developmental delay, allowing for timely intervention and support. It also helps to ensure that children's individual needs are met, and that parents and caregivers are informed about their child's progress. By conducting this check, we aim to celebrate achievements, highlight areas for further growth, and foster a collaborative approach between practitioners and families to support the child's ongoing development.

Teacher Judgment in the EYFS

At Little Crickets at Park School, we believe that teachers play a crucial role in shaping children's learning and development, particularly within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Teacher judgment is at the heart of our assessment process, ensuring that each child's individual progress is accurately observed, understood, and supported. Through a blend of professional expertise, ongoing observations, and careful analysis of children's work and interactions, teachers can make informed judgments about where a child is in their learning and what support they may need to continue to progress.

The Role of Teacher Judgment in EYFS Assessment

Teacher judgment in the EYFS is not based on a single snapshot but is instead informed by ongoing, dynamic observation across a wide range of activities and interactions. Teachers use their knowledge of each child's development, personality, and learning style to assess progress and identify individual needs. This process is continuous, and teachers make their judgments by:

1. **Observation**: Teachers observe children as they engage in both adult-directed and child-initiated activities. These observations allow teachers to see firsthand how children approach tasks, interact with their peers, and apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts. Observations are documented regularly to build a clear picture of a child's development over time.

2. **Interaction**: Effective teaching in the EYFS involves constant interaction with children. Through questioning, prompting, and encouraging children, teachers can gauge the depth of a child's understanding and their ability to articulate thoughts and ideas. This active interaction also helps teachers to model new skills and provide the scaffolding children need to progress.

3. **Tracking Progress**: Teacher judgment is supported by the systematic tracking of children's progress. At Little Crickets at Park School, we utilize digital tools, such as Ovivio, to record and analyse the data collected from ongoing observations. These records help teachers track each child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals and other developmental milestones, making it easier to identify patterns and areas where a child may need additional support.

4. **Contextual Understanding**: Teachers consider the context of each child's learning journey. This includes understanding their starting points, their personal experiences, and any external factors that might influence their development. The goal is to assess each child holistically, ensuring that teachers are aware of all aspects of a child's development, including emotional, social, and physical needs.

5. **Use of Professional Knowledge**: Teachers use their professional knowledge of child development to interpret what they observe and assess. They consider the interconnections between the prime areas (communication and language, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional development) and the specific areas (literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design). This broad understanding helps teachers assess children's development in a balanced way, recognizing that all areas of learning are interconnected.

6. **Collaboration with Colleagues**: Teacher judgment is not made in isolation. At Little Crickets at Park School, we encourage collaborative working among staff to ensure that judgments are informed and accurate. Teachers share insights about individual children during planning sessions, pupil progress meetings, and discussions with other practitioners. This collaborative approach ensures that each child's progress is monitored from multiple perspectives, and any necessary interventions or adaptations to teaching strategies are identified.

6.1 **Parental Involvement**: Parents and caregivers are essential partners in the assessment process. Teachers actively involve families by seeking their insights into their child's development and learning at home. This partnership ensures that assessments are based on a comprehensive understanding of the child's overall development and supports continuity between school and home. Teachers also encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing observations and experiences outside the classroom. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their child. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school/nursery
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting Reception at Familiarisation visits in June and July before they start, and through familiarisation sessions in the Nursery;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering children who start in Reception once the school year has begun the opportunity to have a familiarisation visit at the school to meet their teachers and peers;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher or key worker if they have any concerns. In the Nursery there are informal parent's evenings. In Reception there is a formal meeting for parents in the School each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term, this allows time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- having flexible admission arrangements and flexible school hours that enable children and parents to become secure;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the Reception Reading Record and the Interactive Learning Diary in both Reception and Nursery. We invite parents to a curriculum evening to discuss the curriculum and ways in which they can support their child through the Reception year.

Inclusion and Equality

We celebrate the diversity of our children and are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment where every child's needs are met. We recognize the importance of respecting differences and promoting equal opportunities for all children, regardless of background, language, gender, ethnicity, or additional learning needs.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage although some children

progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children identified as requiring additional support are monitored through the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle in partnership with parents and relevant professionals where appropriate.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- 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 wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary;
- planning and providing opportunities for their next steps in development;
- differentiated phonic phase groups in Reception;
- the learning environment, both inside and outside, is set out to maximise accessibility for the children;
- referring to outside agencies (e.g. Speech Therapy) when appropriate for our children;
- Early support – Come Talk With Me or ready steadi chat;
- Use of whole school facilities.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff receive regular safeguarding training and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, KCSIE guidance and local safeguarding procedures. Please also refer to the safeguarding policy.

Professional Development

At Little Crickets at Park School, we believe in the continuous professional development of our staff. Our team participates in regular training sessions, both in-house and externally, to stay informed about the latest educational practices and developments. This ensures that we maintain high standards of teaching and learning throughout the EYFS.

Wellbeing and Life Skills

At Park School and Little Crickets we recognise the importance of promoting good oral hygiene. It is important we help the children to develop good habits from an early age. We do this through discussing healthy food choices, teeth brushing and the importance of regularly visiting the dentist. We prioritize the social, emotional, and mental wellbeing of all children. Through our Personal, Social, and Emotional Development curriculum, we support children to develop resilience, self-regulation, and empathy. We encourage children to practice life skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and communication, preparing them for success both in school and in life.

NURSERY/CLASSROOM ORGANISATION RESOURCES

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We provide materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe

that this encourages independent learning.

REPORTING TO ISI AND OFSTED

We are obliged to report:

- Any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises, whether the allegations relate to an incident committed on the premises or elsewhere, and of the action taken, at least within 14 days.
- Any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises, at least within 14 days.
- Any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, any child in their care and of the action taken, at least within 14 days.
- The school will notify Ofsted, ISI and other relevant agencies of reportable incidents in line with statutory requirements.

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Special educational needs and disability policy
- EYFS attendance and registration policy
- EYFS educational visits
- EYFS food safety & allergies
- EYFS first aid and medicines
- EYFS key person
- EYFS transition policy

Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Nursery Manager, EYFS Lead and Senior Leadership Team. Regular reviews of teaching, assessment, learning environments and children's outcomes will inform ongoing improvements to EYFS provision

Conclusion

At Little Crickets at Park School, we are committed to providing a high-quality Early Years education that fosters curiosity, independence, and a love of learning. We aim to nurture each child's development and provide a strong foundation for future success. Through a balanced approach that blends play, exploration, and structured learning, we ensure that all children are given the tools they need to flourish.

Policy Owner: LM/RM
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