

# CONSETT INFANT SCHOOL

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, happy childhood is important in its own right”

**Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2021**

### Our Intent and Aims

Within Early years at Consett Infant School we aim to:-

- offer each child the best possible learning opportunities in a caring, challenging, attractive environment so that they can develop academically and personally to their full potential.
- ensure each child has a happy, positive and enjoyable start to their school life within a safe and secure environment
- establish solid foundations and foster a deep love of learning
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in order to thrive in a diverse and ever changing world
- offer a rich curriculum that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development
- encourage children to develop independence within a nurturing and supportive atmosphere
- support children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as kindness, good manners, cooperation and sharing
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements by experiencing success and developing their determination and self confidence and to show resilience when working towards personal goals



### **Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

### Implementation

#### **Structure of the EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of Reception year.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy at Consett Infant School applies to all children joining us in their reception year.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two reception classes, together in one reception unit. Our unit can take up to 60 children in total. In Reception staffing includes a teacher and teaching assistant in each class.

In Reception, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. The Prime areas of learning (Communication and Language, Personal, social and emotional development and Physical Development) are at the heart of our early years curriculum alongside the specific areas (literacy, mathematics, expressive arts and design, understanding of the world). We provide a varied and engaging programme of teaching and learning and our continuous and enhanced provision enables the children to demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. Our Reception curriculum is skills based and our approach focuses on key skills rather than concepts, which are revisited throughout the year in line with the children’s needs. Input may be through whole class teaching, group work, work with individuals, through adults supporting within the continuous provision or enhancements made to continuous provision through our ‘curiosity cube’.

## **Learning and Development The Curriculum**

In Reception we follow the curriculum outlined in the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) document. The framework defines what we teach and we use the Development Matters guidance and Birth to Five to support our curriculum. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

The Prime areas are:-

<b>Communication and Language</b>	Listening, Attention and Understanding Speaking
<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b>	Self-regulation Managing Self Building Relationships
<b>Physical Development</b>	Gross Motor Skills Fine Motor Skills

In addition to the above there are a further four *specific* areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

<b>Literacy</b>	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
<b>Mathematics</b>	Numbers Numerical Patterns
<b>Understanding the World</b>	Past and present People, culture and communities The Natural World

We enrich the Early Years framework with our ‘Consett Infant School’ curriculum to enhance the experience and opportunities available to the children. This includes special events and celebrations, memorable experiences, themes selected to drive the curriculum and the PSHE Jigsaw scheme which we cover in school from Reception to Year 2.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Throughout all of these areas of learning and at the heart of the EYFS Curriculum are the “Characteristics of Effective Learning”. These help practitioners to identify a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. These are: -

*Playing and Exploring* - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’

“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.”

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact the children learn best from activities and experiences that interest them and inspire them to learn. Our children access continuous provision throughout the day which provides them with stimulating, active play to encourage creative and critical thinking alongside other children, as well as on their own. Children are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives the children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. The adults in our setting take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling and questioning. They teach and extend play while developing skills and communication and language. At Consett Infant school outdoor play is of equal importance therefore continuous access to our reception outdoor area is available throughout much of the day.

*Active Learning* - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

“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.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their

confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

*Creativity and Critical Thinking*- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understanding and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Our children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults in our setting support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Our children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### **A Unique Child**

At Consett Infant School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in different ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Inclusion**

The EYFS seeks to provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate. All children at Consett Infant School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of every child, 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.

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 the children’s learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them 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 and experiences 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.

The EYFS specifies requirements for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

It is important to us that all children in school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide the children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Our children are allowed to take risks but are taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

#### Welfare

"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"

At Consett Infant School we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We take all necessary steps to keep our children safe and well. We aim to ensure that we: -

- Promote the welfare of our children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Safeguard all our children
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

#### **Positive Relationships**

At Consett Infant School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

#### Parents in Partnership

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through: -

- Talking to parents about their child prior to them starting their reception classes.
- Informing parents/carers how the EYFS is being delivered in the setting and explaining how they can access further information.
- Parents are encouraged to fill in a 'starting school booklet' and an Opal starting points sheet which gives a parent's view on their child prior to their start.
- Parents are invited to an induction meeting with class teachers prior to their child starting their reception class. A 'Starting Consett Infant School book' to share at home with children is provided.
- Children have regular visits to their reception class prior to their starting school.
- Regular parent's evenings, one each term is held for parents to discuss their child's progress.
- Policies and procedures are available to parents on request.
- Parents are encouraged to talk to early years staff if they have any concerns and are welcome into reception to share in their child's learning experiences.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each year.
- Parents are invited into school regularly during the year to share in 'Stay and Play' sessions, assemblies, special person events, nativities, coffee afternoons, sport's days, sponsored events etc,
- Our Dojo app keeps parents up to date with information, news, the children's learning and progress and other relevant items. We also use dojo to set homework.
- Notice boards in the school entrance contain a variety of useful information for parents/carers.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good, close relationships with all children and parents, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

## **Teaching**

We ensure there is a balance of child-initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult led activities, across the school day. Although much of the time is spent with the children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between adult and child is essential. The adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. At times throughout the day an adult will ask a child to complete a task with them; at other times they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible.

There are set routines that we follow each day. There are designated times when the children come together to be taught. We teach a daily maths and phonics session, as well as stories, Jigsaw time, music time and curiosity cube time which introduces various topics as well as extends communication and language. All these sessions provide the opportunity for the children to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, take turns, to further develop vocabulary, to answer questions and to concentrate.

## **Phonics and Reading**

At Consett Infant School we recognise reading as a key life skill, which underpins access to the rest of the curriculum. We teach phonics using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Scheme, which is a synthetic, systematic phonics programme where

children are taught the essential skills for reading through daily phonics lessons. These are delivered in whole classes (and in small groups where appropriate) once the children are settled into our unit. We follow the Little Wandle planning and our children are taught a cumulative progression of GPC's (see phonics policy) that they practise through oral blending, reading and spelling words and sentences using Little Wandle resources. It is our intention that children are able to read words and simple sentences by the end of reception.

The children have regular reading sessions with teachers/trained adults to ensure that they are regularly applying and practising their phonic knowledge. Reading books are allocated to the children after half termly assessments have been carried out, and the children read decodable 'Big Cats' books matched to the phase in which they are working. These are shared three times weekly in school before being allocated as an online book to share at home.

Story times are important parts of our day. We want the children to develop a life long love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction (traditional and modern) and non fiction texts as well as rhymes and poetry to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We end our day with a whole class story and create opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision. Our children also take home a weekly Reading for Pleasure book and are encouraged to enjoy and share this at home in order to instil a love of reading.

We also encourage close links with our local library and introduce incentives for visiting.

## **Writing**

Early writing is taught through early mark making. In Reception the children are encouraged to make marks and give meaning to their early transcriptions. The Little Wandle Systematic Synthetic phonics teaches the correct letter formation to match the phonemes they are learning. Children are then encouraged to use the sounds they have been taught to build phonetically regular CVC words and high frequency words. They are also encouraged to practise the skills they have learnt in phonics to build simple phrases and sentences. Children are also encouraged to write for a purpose linked to activities they are involved in during continuous provision.

## **Mathematics**

We teach daily maths lessons, loosely following the White Rose Maths scheme. Classes come together and are taught as a whole class so that specific learning objectives taken from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Development Matters) guidance can be delivered. Throughout the year the scheme builds on maths skills and prepares our children for those required in Key Stage 1. Evidence is collected in staff's individual traffic light assessment folders as well as in a maths floor book. Later in the academic year evidence of the learning in maths is recorded and collected in individual maths books for each child. An emphasis on developing and using mathematical vocabulary is important and the learning is encouraged and extended during continuous provision both indoors and outdoors.

## **Planning**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the basis for planning in our Reception Unit. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are supported by the Development Matters Statements from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Document. Our planning is loosely based upon themes with an emphasis on introducing the skills required in preparation for learning in the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1.

Practitioners select themes according to the children's interests, experiences and prior learning, as well as the specific needs of each cohort. Progress and curriculum coverage are monitored half termly. Staff reflect on the different ways in which the children learn and include these in their practice. The children's social and emotional needs are responded to as well as their academic achievement.

The planning within the EYFS follows our long-term plan which is loosely based around half termly themed topic work linked to traditional stories. Each half term, the early years team list possible activities which will encourage the children to work towards achieving the skills they need to reach the Early Learning Goals, however through close observation, the children's interests are considered, and the weekly planning reflects these. Planned activities and experiences within the continuous provision are based on the children's interests, skills and abilities and the learning may move away completely from the original topic. Our short-term weekly planning is flexible, based on our observations, challenges the children's thinking and extends the children's learning experiences.

## **Assessment**

At Consett Infant School ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations are recorded in a variety of ways and added to the children's individual portfolios on dojo so that parents are informed.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Planned, regular observations as well as spontaneous observations are made by staff to ensure that each child's needs are being met and provided for. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways through the use of Opal observation sheets, notebooks, post it notes and photographic evidence.

Emphasis is also placed on recording the children's voice. Evidence for mathematics is recorded in floor books as well as individual mathematics books towards the end of the academic year and literacy in individual English books. Evidence for all other areas of learning is kept in each child's individual learning journal. We also collect evidence in our large indoor and outdoor floor books.

On entry baseline assessments (RBA) are carried out in the first six weeks of the child entering reception in the Autumn term.

At Consett Infant School we have adopted an assessment system known as OPAL (Observation of Play and Learning). During the children's journey with us in Reception they will develop, grow, learn and flourish in a number of different ways. In order for us to ensure they develop to their full potential it's important to have an effective, meaningful and principled assessment of young children's learning. This allows us to ensure we support the children in achieving significant milestones in their development. Observations made inform our everyday practice and curriculum. By gaining an insight into children's thinking, feeling and needs we can plan our environment and actions to provide future possibilities for learning.



Children are assessed against our Reception Developmental Milestones on entry then termly for each area of learning.

At the end of the EYFS it is a statutory requirement for practitioners to complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the early learning goals, which is the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS, indicating whether they are;

- Expected - meeting expected levels of development
- Emerging – not yet reaching the expected levels of development

Children's development levels are assessed as the year progresses.

Pupil progress meetings with the head teacher take place every half term. If a child's progress gives a cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

Lorraine Hall (Reception teacher and EYFS co-ordinator)  
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