



## Clifford Primary School

### Early Years' Policy

#### Principles and Ethos

At Clifford our aim is to provide a happy, stimulating and caring environment for children where every child is treated as unique and therefore, feels valued, secure and confident to develop a love of learning. We support each unique child by recognising and respecting the children's individual characteristics and temperament by getting to know the child through sensitive observations. We aim to recognise and celebrate the success in everyone.

#### Aims

- To make the transition from home to the setting a pleasant experience through partnerships with parents and key person.
- To provide a secure environment where the child's well being is protected by adults and their emotional, mental and social needs are supported.
- To provide an enabling environment that is rich and varied to support every child's learning through planned activities and experience.
- To encourage independence.
- To develop self esteem.
- To encourage respect for others through acknowledgement of the feelings of children and their families through a caring professional relationship.
- To involve parents in their child's education by encouraging parents to join in with classroom and outdoor activities, school excursions and comments based on the child's learning journey.
- To deliver effectively the seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS framework through flexible planning linked to the children's ideas and interests with a balance of child initiated and adult-led teaching.
- To promote and value the Characteristics of Effective Learning; *Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creative and Critical Thinking*.
- To give children the opportunity to develop critical thinking and creativity to help them find new ways to do things and encourage them to ask questions.
- To value the importance of child initiated activities and learning through play to promote children's choice, exploration and independent learning.

#### Partnership with parents

- Prior to seeking admission, parents are encouraged to visit the school and talk to the head and Foundation Stage teacher.
- Parents are issued with a school prospectus and a booklet for prospective parents and a school 'Welcome Pack.'
- Parents are invited to school events e.g. school productions, Harvest Festival, Carol Service, Sports Day, etc.
- The Friday newsletter and the school website keeps parents up to date with school activities and news.
- Curriculum evenings are organised to inform parents of current school practice and to explain how they can be involved in their child's learning.
- Parents evenings take place in school during the Spring term where parents are invited to come and speak to their class teacher.

We operate an 'open door' policy where parents are welcome to come and see us if and when they have any questions.

## Liaison with other agencies

- Busy Bees Nursery Clifford's main feeder nursery) is run near the school grounds. This allows easy communication between its members and school.
- Whitney Crocodiles (feeder nursery) is located approximately 3 miles from the school. Children from Whitney Crocodiles attend Clifford during Welcome Days and Foundation teacher visits children in their setting.
- Through the Pre-schools, parents are invited to school events, e.g. school productions, joint school and nursery trips, Carol Service, Sports Day.
- Pre-school children and the teaching assistants join our Reception class for an afternoon each week during the Summer Term. This benefits the pre-school children as they can build up a good relationship with the children in school and also benefits the school children by encouraging them to welcome and support the pre-school children.
- There is contact with the school nurse and other health personnel, e.g. speech therapists and when appropriate in assessing and meeting the special educational needs of individual children.

## Admission arrangements/Induction process

Children are eligible to start school in the school year in which they reach the age of five. Some parents prefer their children to wait until the term in which they are five however, a single entry in September is preferable. From experience we find that even if the child is not completely ready educationally, it is beneficial socially and emotionally for them to start at the beginning of the year. We discuss our arrangements with Pre-school and also take into consideration the needs of individual children and the wishes of the parents.

In the case of children starting full time in September, we operate an induction process in the second half of the Summer Term. Each week the prospective pupils visit us for an increasing period of time until they spend a whole day. Children starting later in the school year, do so on a part-time basis, spending 2-4 days a week in school from September.

## Planning and the Foundation Stage curriculum

At Clifford we believe that children learn better when they feel safe and secure. As we have a small reception class we are able to carefully plan opportunities for each individual to learn and achieve their full potential. By giving the children opportunities for 'free play' through **levelled continuous provision**, they are able to take control of their own learning and development. We also provide opportunities to have adult led and child initiated activities that are tailored to the child's individual learning styles.

While we plan closely in accordance to the early learning goals there are also opportunities for more able children to be suitably stretched within the various areas of learning.

**The EYFS is made up of four themes: The Unique Child, Positive Relationships, The Enabling Environment and Learning and development.** These themes are important as they all combine to ensure young children make good, strong progress in their earliest years. This Stage in life is the most important as children's minds and bodies grow and develop most from birth to age 4.

In Learning and Development there are 7 Areas of learning in which the curriculum is organised to make sure children make all round development in this important stage.

### **Prime Areas: (the basis of all early learning)**

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

**Specific Areas: (More developed knowledge, skills and understanding from age 3 upwards, these areas develop once the basic prime areas are established. They prepare children in their Foundation Year in school to access the National Curriculum in Year 1)**

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

#### Personal, social and emotional development

Children must be provided with experiences and support that will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. Providers must ensure support for children's emotional well-being to help them to know themselves and what they can do.

We promote this by:

- Establishing a warm and caring environment.
- Giving the children opportunities to share experiences during 'Treasure Bag' time and morning news.
- Encouraging self-discipline and independent learning.
- Planning work for children to work independently as well as collaboratively where they need to share and co-operate.
- Encouraging empathy and active listening to each other that is reinforced by adults within our setting.
- Giving the children opportunities to tackle problems so that they begin to actively develop their own learning styles.

#### Communication and Language

Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening must be supported. They must be provided with opportunity and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes, and be supported in developing the confidence and disposition to do so.

Children are given the opportunity to speak and listen during:

- Treasure Bag time;
- Sharing assemblies;
- Role play;
- Morning news;
- Planned activities for pairs or groups of children when challenges are set that require them to share ideas and work out a solution together.

#### Physical development

The physical development of babies and young children must be encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. They must be supported in using all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. They must be supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and make healthy choices in relation to food.

We do this by;

- Practicing active start
- Focusing P.E. lessons on improving skills, co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement
- Encouraging a variety of movement through dance

- Forest school activities
- Promoting healthy eating
- Children spend break times outside and are able to play with various equipment and games that aim to improve their confidence while being healthy and active
- Providing opportunities to go outside and take part in various activities eg. Listening journeys, gardening, follow the leader
- Planning activities where the children can develop their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination eg. scissors and colouring, clay and dough for molding, computers for mouse skills
- Offering opportunities for children to take part in throwing, catching, pedaling, climbing in planned P.E lessons and free play
- Offering daily 'Dough Gym' and 'Funky Fingers' sessions to develop gross and fine motor skills.

### Literacy

Children are encouraged to take an interest in reading

- by ensuring there is reading material out in many of the different areas set up, both indoors and outdoors, both fiction and non-fiction
- by having their trays and book bags labeled
- by having rotas / routines up in the classroom
- by labeling displayed work
- by learning rhymes
- by reading in guided reading groups (Lighthouse books, Oxford Owl e-books)
- by scribing their own stories so they can read them later
- by regularly choosing a book from the class and mobile library to take home and share
- by having stories told/read
- by sharing books including 'Big Books' with an adult, by themselves or in a group
- by having a home-school reading record to encourage home involvement
- by playing interactive computer games where they identify instructional words e.g. enter, play, next, finish
- through planned morning phonics lessons in mixed ability groups that include rhymes, songs and blending sounds.

Children are encouraged to think of themselves as writers

- by providing writing materials in many of the different areas set up, both indoors and outdoors
- by 'dressing' areas of continuous provision to suit the interests and abilities of the individual children
- by encouraging emergent writing
- by providing sessions such as 'Dough Gym' and 'Jedi Writing' to develop motor skills and letter formation
- by scribing for the children when asked
- by involving them in shared reading
- by encouraging them to record events through drawing and writing
- by displaying their work
- by helping them to write their own name, with attention to the correct formation of letters
- by teaching them the correct formation of the letters of the alphabet
- by using cloze activities to write key words that they are able to read
- by encouraging the children to do free writing using their knowledge of phonics and simple key words.

### Mathematics

Children must be supported in developing their understanding of *Number and Shape, Space and Measures* in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practice and talk about their developing understanding. They must be provided with opportunities to practice these skills and gain confidence and competence in their use.

The children learn

- through practical activities using a variety of equipment and everyday objects for counting, sorting and matching;
- By observation of their environment e.g. seeing patterns and shapes in a brick wall or on a leaf;
- By talking about number in everyday life;
- Through a meaningful context of real life problems e.g. shopping, measuring;
- Through number rhymes and songs,
- Through stories with a mathematical theme, e.g. 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' (counting and time);
- Through painting, drawing and making models.
- By measuring ingredients in a recipe.
- By promoting the use of mathematical language. Eg. Positional language
- By developing a sense of time e.g. through establishing daily routines

### Understanding of the World

Children must be supported in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them make sense of the world. Their learning must be supported through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertake practical 'experiments'; and work with a range of materials.

They learn skills necessary to this area by;

- using a range of tools, e.g. computers, magnifiers, scissors;
- encountering creatures, people, plants and objects in real life situations, e.g. minibests in the nature reserve, bulbs planted in the garden and cress in the classroom;
- encourage children to explore the environment and consider ways to care for and preserve it e.g. by recycling, reducing car use, etc
- taking part in weekly outdoor mornings (Muddy Mondays), including regular Forest School sessions
- doing things, e.g. investigating how things move, making food from products picked in the garden.
- working with a range of materials e.g. wet and dry sand, coloured and clear liquids;
- examining artifacts e.g. historical objects in 'Museum on the Move'
- use role play and opportunities for dressing up to tell stories and recreate history. Eg. European day where they dress up and look at products from different countries.

### Expressive Arts and Design

Children's creativity must be extended by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play. They must be provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities, mathematics, and design and technology.

We promote creative development through the areas of learning by:

- Valuing children's creativity and ideas
- Planning lessons around children's ideas and interests.
- Providing a stimulating environment where children can make choices and select their own resources.
- Presenting the children with the experiences where they are encouraged to ask questions
- Giving opportunity for children to role-play using their imagination and other stimuli.
- Helping the children to gain confidence in their own ideas and abilities.
- Giving the children time and space to explore and experiment with different materials both indoor and outdoors.
- Giving Children opportunities to express with all their senses using dance, music and art.
- Providing areas of play such as sand and water.

## **Outdoor Education**

At Clifford we are fortunate enough to have a large playground, sports field, outdoor music garden, school garden, a low level adventure play area and a forest school site set a short journey from school in a local forest area. The reception children also have their own outdoor play area where they have provision for sand, water and bikes. The children get lots of opportunity for fresh air and exercise in a safe environment.

Opportunities for outdoor learning include:

- Exploring the environment using stories, scavenger hunts, maps and making plans.
- Gardening and growing plants, investigating mini beasts
- Nature walks and listening journeys
- Forest school activities
- Conservation area
- Encouraging a concern for the environment by using recycled products
- Role play
- Maths games
- Construction
- Art
- Wheeled toys, climbing and balancing on equipment

## **Assessment**

We assess according to the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, basing our judgments on criteria set out in the Development Matters handbook. The children are levelled as either *emerging, developing or secure* against age in months e.g. 40-60+ months, until they have reached their Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

Teachers and TAs are continually observing children's actions and speech and recording them.

Weekly Objective Led Planning is set to focus on specific areas of learning for different children and observations are made according to them. These observations inform a child's next steps and allow us to be continually assessing.

As of September 2015, Baseline Assessment shall be formally reported within the first 3 weeks of the new Reception Class children starting school.

We moderate the children while they take part in various activities throughout the year including adult led and child initiated play as well as continuous observation as evidence of the child's development.

Parent interviews are held at the end of the Easter term when progress is reviewed and discussed and parents can find out how they may support their child's learning in specific ways. This is also a good time to discuss a child's levels.

The TAs and classroom teacher are in regular conversation about the children's progress and the way forward. We also report to each other in staff meetings about any individual about whom we have special concern and discuss suitable activities/tactics.

We observe the children during team teaching and whole school moderation tasks based. Information collected is discussed at staff meetings.

Children are aware of our expectations of them through discussion, Circle time and the setting of short-term targets (Next Steps). We also encourage positive self-criticism and evaluation of their own and other children's work. Praise for good work and behaviour from adults and peers is a satisfying reward in itself, supported by more concrete rewards e.g. sharing their success with others, allowing them to choose a favourite activity and sticker charts.

## **Key Stage 1 Continuum**

Continuity between key stages is not a problem in this school, as the Foundation Stage children spend time in the same teaching area as Key Stage 1 and are often joined together for activities.  
We plan our topics based around the interests of the children and according to the time of year and share our experiences with other classes.

Written – April 2015

Signed \_\_\_\_\_