

Cromwell Junior and Infant School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life'.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, April 2017).

At Cromwell, we aim to: -

- Support all children to become independent and collaborative learners.
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Cromwell, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for learning and development and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Set the standards for individual learning, development and care to enable each child to fulfil their potential.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers' to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do using ongoing observational assessment (linked to the Early Years Outcomes)
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors. All of which are based on the Early Years Outcomes
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It lays a secure foundation for future learning through the provision of a key person and groups are kept as small as possible
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers, professionals and outside agencies

Nursery Admissions:

- Applications are received directly from parents mainly living around the Nechells area
- All applications are receipted and filed until the allocation period.
- All applications are considered during the allocation process by the Early Years Lead and Nursery Teacher.
- The Birmingham Nursery admissions criteria is used to allocate full time and part time places appropriately. Full time places are only allocated to those who fulfill the criteria
- When considering the allocation of places, we will ensure that the setting is also able to meet the child's individual needs.
- In the Summer term, meetings are held for parents who would like a nursery place for their child. These meetings are stay and play sessions in school. Sessions are attended by parent and child and are a positive way for school to find out about the child. Once we have met all the children we write to parents to offer nursery places.
- Once a place has been offered and accepted by the parent, the parent partnership worker will make contact and arrange a home visit to meet the parent(s)/carer(s) and the child in the home. The parent partnership worker is accompanied by the class teacher. We believe that it is important to meet the child and their family in a familiar context. Within this meeting, the child's interests, likes and dislikes are ascertained too.
- Following a home visit a start date will be offered.
- From the information that is gained about the children, vulnerable children and families are identified and signposted to appropriate agencies within and outside of school e.g. family learning, parenting sessions etc. Family learning sessions are held on a weekly basis within the last half term in the summer.
- The nursery team also use this information to divide the groups in to keyworker groups which are led by a teacher and two teaching assistants.
- We have a settling in period of two weeks. We expect a parent/carer or an adult, who is well known to the child to stay with them during this transition. This time allows both the child and the parent/carer to build a relationship with their key worker. The transition time will reduce as the child becomes more confident within the setting.

Reception Admissions:

- Each year Cromwell admits 30 pupils into Reception.
- Applications for reception places are completed through the Birmingham Admissions website.
- Birmingham Admissions contact the parents with details of their child's offer and parents need to accept the offer by the deadline given.
- Once a place has been offered and accepted by the parent, the parent partnership worker will contact any new parents and arrange a home visit to meet them and the child at home. The parent partnership worker is accompanied by the class teacher. We believe that it is important to meet the child and their family in a familiar context. Within this meeting, the child's interests, likes and dislikes, medical needs are ascertained too.

- The class teacher also attends the previous settings of any new children.
- From the information that is gained about the children, vulnerable children and families are identified and signposted to appropriate agencies within and outside of school e.g. family learning, parenting sessions etc. Family learning sessions are held on a weekly basis within the last half term in the summer.
- Following a home visit a start date will be offered and the parent and child will be invited to an induction morning. New children are welcome to attend afternoon stay and play sessions in the last half term.
- The Reception team also use this information to divide the groups in to keyworker groups which are led by a teacher and two teaching assistants.
- In September, the Reception children have a staggered intake. This is to ensure that the new children to the setting as well as those with additional needs and those who are vulnerable are given the best chance to settle.

The EYFS Principles:

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Cromwell, we recognise that children develop in individual 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 assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. (see Foundation Stage Behaviour Policy- Appendix I)

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Cromwell Junior an Infant School are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We give our 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. This begins even before the children start our nursery. During the summer term, home visits are conducted and induction afternoons. In this way, practitioners can develop a whole picture of the child and put early interventions into place through our family learning sessions, talking tip sessions at our local Children Centre, parenting sessions/ advice etc.

At Cromwell, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by using the early years' outcomes to create strong based starting points, developing next steps in learning and planning appropriately. The planning must 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, 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 children’s learning needs- making sure everything is hands on and practical, using sustained shared thinking and role playing effectively
- using smaller groups wherever possible to maximize learning;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children by using the numerous animals, insects and fish we have on site, cooking regularly, having a setting that is well resourced, providing rich experiences both in and outside of the setting
- providing a nurturing, 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 acting promptly to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

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.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, April 2017)

At Cromwell, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- 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 and development 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.

Keeping Safe

At Cromwell, we believe that children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure learning environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Good Health

We promote a healthy lifestyle by providing fresh fruit, milk and water for the children daily and encourage them to make independent healthy choices about what they eat.

Intimate Care - "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children can carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Nursery and Reception (See Appendix II)

Positive Relationships

At Cromwell, we recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We respect that parents are the child's first and future educators. Each child has a key person, i.e. the person with whom they form a special attachment. The key person is responsible for ensuring that the child feels safe and cared for, to develop a positive sense of well-being and achievement.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We are always willing to talk to parents and listen to any concerns or worries. We aim to keep all parents informed about their child's progress. 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 before their child starts in our school;
- the teacher and parent partnership worker visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- the children can spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Come and Join in' afternoons and Transfer morning;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets as well as electronic journals (Classroom Monitor);
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal expectation meeting for parents in the Autumn term and parent consultations within the year 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 the school year;

- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: workshops, play and stay sessions, sharing book sessions, etc;
- providing opportunities for parents to leave comments relating to the children's learning and achievements.

Children

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the children have a designated key person either the EYFS teacher or teaching assistant. We promote a kind and caring environment that is based on mutual respect and consideration. This is done by ensuring:

- Adults are respectful of children and each other.
- Adults actively encourage the children to show kindness and respect to their peers and the adults.
- Adults support children to know their views count and that we value the views of others.
- Adults encourage children to talk about their feelings and think about how we support the feelings of others.
- Adults promote an environment that helps children to understand their own behaviours and that of others.

Enabling Environments

At Cromwell, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class is made up of two classrooms giving the children ample space to access the resources they require. This encourages children to move around independently making their own choices and decisions about their play and learning experiences. We believe that children learn best from following their own interests, having first-hand, hands-on experiences and the time to revisit and repeat aspects of their play, with the support of responsive adults.

We have a range of resources available to the children - sand, water and malleable materials e.g. playdough, books, puppets, puzzles, musical instruments, small world equipment e.g. dolls house, and secure outside play areas. We think carefully about how we set up the resources and how we can promote all aspects of each child's learning. Our setting has its own enclosed outdoor area with various animals such as ducks, chickens, guinea pigs, rabbits and birds. This has a positive effect on the children's development because it enables them to explore in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At Cromwell, we value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. These areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The school aims to ensure that the curriculum for the EYFS underpins all learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

These areas will be strengthened and applied through:

- Literacy (reading and writing)
- Mathematics (number and shape, space and measure)
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, April 2017).

Observation and Assessment

Observations undertaken by all practitioners are used to plan children's next steps of learning in their individual learning plans and progress is recorded in the Learning Journeys. Classroom monitor enables practitioners to continually assess children against the early years outcomes, set targets and next steps and reassess. Progress is tracked every half term and parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's assessment. Through the ongoing assessment, children who are working above, at expected and below national expectation are identified and strategies are put into place to challenge as well as support those children in need. This may be through using the school speech therapist, family learning worker, school nurse, parent partnership worker, drawing and talking therapist, communication and learning consultant, school additional needs advocate and any other outside agencies.

Teaching and Learning

Our aim is to provide a safe and secure environment that is rich and stimulating. We ensure play underpins all learning and development because it is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. Children are given opportunities to think

creatively independently, with each other and with adults. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Children participate in whole class, small group and individual activities, with increasing times as the year progresses to accommodate children's needs. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. An ongoing judgement is made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Our aim is to help and guide the children to become independent, enquiring and evaluative learners. Half termly topics are used but these are adaptable as we follow children's interests. By doing this, the children are fully engaged and more likely to take charge of their own learning. All staff use the characteristics of effective learning, prime areas of learning and development and specific areas of learning and development and other assessment tools to plan appropriate learning and development experiences based on children's individual interests. Staff observe how children use the resources and the spaces to plan further learning and development opportunities for children in the setting.

Our teaching will provide opportunities and experiences for children to:

- have access to a wide range of opportunities and experiences which will allow them to explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their knowledge skills and understanding;
- initiate activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from one another;
- have time to explore ideas and interest in depth;
- feel secure enough to become confident and independent learners;
- make links to other areas of learning;
- undertake creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

The staff will:

- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- promote children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable;
- teach skills and knowledge;
- understand that children learn in different ways and at a different pace to each other;
- use rich and varied language to help children develop linguistic structures for thinking;
- plan both indoor and outdoor provision to maximise opportunities for children's learning

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

During the summer term, a home visit for new starters (in Nursery) is completed. A Parent Conference sheet is completed which gives us information about other siblings, family situation,

information about the child- e.g. medical needs and information about the progress check at two. An 'All About Me' sheet is also given to parents to complete with their child. This enables us to gather information about the child such as: - the behaviour strategies used by the parents; likes and dislikes of the child; eating habits, level of independence and the child's interests. Following this, settling in sessions at school are provided to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. We have an excellent working relationship with our feeder nursery and liaise with each other on a regular basis. Transition meetings are also held within the local preschool nurseries for children entering Cromwell Nursery.

The Reception team identify the new children and families to the setting. Home visits are planned with the class teacher and the parent partnership worker. A Parent Conference sheet is completed which gives us information about other siblings, family situation, information about the child- e.g. medical needs and/ or additional needs. An 'All About Me' sheet is also given to parents to complete with their child. This enables us to gather information about the child such as: - the behaviour strategies used by the parents; likes and dislikes of the child; eating habits, level of independence and the child's interests. Following this, settling in sessions at school are provided to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Transition meetings are held and transition booklets are created for children to make the process smoother and less daunting for the children.

Reception staff provide the Year 1 staff with individual profiles and targets from our assessment tool- Classroom monitor. Transition meetings are held and transition booklets are created for children to make the process smoother and less daunting for the children. Information about the characteristics of effective learning for each child is also shared with the Year 1 staff.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all those working in Nursery and Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and EYFS Lead will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.