



Early Years Policy

Calcot Infants and Junior Schools

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CALCOT INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Early Years Policy

At Calcot Schools we know that a child's early years are the foundation for his or her future development, providing a strong base for lifelong learning. A child's experiences during the first stage of their learning can have a significant impact on their future chances so we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying these secure foundations.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is for children from birth to the end of the reception year (when they will be five years old). Our Foundation Stage consists of our Nursery (Foundation Stage 1) for children from three years to four years old, where they can access fifteen or thirty hours of learning provision and our Reception (Foundation Stage 2) for children who are four years old to five years old. This provision is not phased and all children will be admitted to Foundation Stage 2 in September in the year that they will be five.

When children join our early years provision, we know that they arrive having learned a lot already and it is therefore essential that we build upon their prior learning and experiences. This is done by working collaboratively with parents/carers and previous settings that they may have attended, to share information ensuring that each child's learning is a continuous journey.

The EYFS prepares children with the skills, enthusiasm and independence to learn as they progress throughout the school. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of their time in Foundation Stage, and we aim to continually develop our provision to ensure that each and every child is given the opportunity to meet, and in some cases exceed these goals. Our provision is based on the four themes and principles from the EYFS which are:

- **A Unique Child** - we recognise that every child is a competent learner, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, to enable children to develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive Relationships** - we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling Environments** - 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 learning experiences to extend the children's thinking.
- **Learning and Development** - we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Our Aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs

- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning
- provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive and challenging

Planning of the EYFS Curriculum at Calcot Schools

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and it is through these areas that our planning is developed. None of these areas can be taught in isolation from each other. Our planning is therefore cross-curricular and all areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated learning. These seven areas are separated into prime and more specific areas.

Prime Areas of Learning:

Communication and Language (C&L)

“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively.”
(Development Matters)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

“Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.” (Development Matters)

Physical Development (PD)

“Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.” (Development Matters)

These prime areas are those most essential for the children’s healthy development and future learning.

The prime areas will then enable the children develop skills in the following specific areas:

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Art and Design

Planning our EYFS Curriculum

The curriculum in EYFS underpins all of the curriculum areas across our school, at Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, and is where the learning in each discrete area starts. Our curriculum has been developed to be ambitious and inclusive across our Nursery and Reception classes, enabling all of our learners to flourish. Our curriculum

has been designed to lay strong foundations for future learning. It is coherently planned so that it builds upon what children know and can do and carefully considers what will be coming next in their onward learning journey. We understand the need for our curriculum to meet 'OUR' children's needs so it has a strong emphasis on the prime areas and the needs of 'Calcot's Early Years Foundation Stage'. Therefore, it:

1. has overarching topics planned across FS1 and FS2 to ensure greater links between the two settings and ensure progression of skills.
2. ensures that learning spaces are language rich environments where adults interact effectively with children. Every opportunity to develop children's oracy skills are harnessed, to ensure that children leave the early years as effective communicators.
3. supports the children's interactions with others and key social and emotional aspects have been identified within our curriculum with supporting texts to enrich learning.
4. focuses on early literacy skills, with carefully planned quality texts used as a vehicle to support learning across the curriculum.
5. regularly revisits the skills and knowledge in maths to ensure our children have the opportunity to remember and recall what they have learned.
6. has been planned to ensure that our understanding of the world curriculum develops children's understanding and respect of a range of cultures and beliefs, as we want to ensure that all children within our setting feel valued and represented.

The curriculum is driven to be exciting and engaging for our children, to instill a love of learning through experiences, which provoke curiosity and are rich in awe and wonder. We want to broaden our children's experiences, allow them to try new things and have access to opportunities, which will provide the cultural capital we know they need to succeed in life. All of our children are unique and we therefore foster an inclusive approach to education by promoting diversity. The cultures, languages and traditions that children and their families bring are valued and celebrated. We have the same ambitions for those children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and our curriculum will be adapted to meet their individual needs.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

• Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to give a broad and balanced coverage.

• Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for computing and using technology. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

• Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, adaptations, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

We work as part of the Early Years team and within the policies of the whole school, and the children benefit from being part of the whole school community. We are supported by our Inclusion manager and where necessary, support from outside agencies so that a child's specific individual needs can be met.

The Learning Environment

To engage and motivate encouraging them to learn and access all that we have planned, it is essential that we create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment. An environment like this encourages children to explore, be curious, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. As a therapeutic thinking school we work to develop intrinsic behaviours that are pro-social and we do this by using positive praise, supporting children to identify when things go wrong and acknowledging mistakes as a way of learning. In order to do this our school culture is built upon mutual respect which is underpinned by the school values – our '3 Rs': Ready, Respectful, Responsible.

Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are set up on a daily basis to reflect all 7 areas of learning within the early years framework.

Our learning environment will include:

- Small world and real world role play,
- reading corner,
- writing area,
- maths activities and challenges,
- climbing area,
- music and creative area,
- construction,
- computing/technology area,
- manipulative and or messy play area,
- sand and water,
- growing, garden, digging area,
- space for physical activities.

These areas are arranged to allow for a combination of quiet areas and more active areas within the environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

Prior to joining Calcot's Early Years Foundation Stage, we work with parents/carers and previous settings to begin gathering information on each child. This is done through home visits, discussions with parents/carers and visits to current education settings.

When the children start with us, they complete baseline assessments which form the starting point of their learning journey. By analysing and reviewing this data we can make informed decisions on how to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs.

Formative assessment is in place daily as it informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observations of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of observations, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. At Calcot Schools we use 'Tapestry', which is an easy to use, secure on-line learning journal which helps staff and families track and celebrate the children's learning and development.

Regular checks are carried out to monitor and track the progress each child is making in phonics. The information from these checks are used to adapt planning, identify early support that may be needed for children who are at risk of falling behind or those making accelerated progress and in need of further challenge.

In December and April an end of term summative assessment is undertaken. All seven areas of the EYFS curriculum are looked at in detail, with children being identified as being On Track (OT) or Not On Track (NOT) to working towards the expected standard for the end of the year. Parents receive termly information on their child's progress and are also given targets so that they can support their child's development at home.

Each term, the teachers moderate their judgements with each other and the senior leaders of the school. They also work with other local EYFS groups to verify their judgements.

In the summer term of Reception, and no later than the last week of June, the teachers complete an EYFS profile for each child. Each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). For each ELG, teachers judge whether a child is: meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

The EYFS profile is a statutory data collection. This data is reported to parents at the end of the FS2, alongside a written school report for their child.

Equal Opportunities and Special Needs

Every pupil will be given equal opportunity to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) irrespective of their ethnic or linguistic background, gender, disability or religious beliefs. Children with Special Educational Needs will have full access to the Foundation curriculum and the necessary adaptations will be made for them to do so. Those identified as Able, Gifted and Talented will be given opportunities to develop their skills. This may be through differentiated activities, opportunities for problem solving, research activities, higher order questioning or more open-ended tasks.

Building Relationships with families

We are really proud of our school and we enjoy showing people around so they can see all of the amazing learning opportunities our children have. We warmly welcome visits from prospective parents. In addition, we organise and run transition visits for all of our new pupils. We know from experience, that having a number of short transition visits is far more effective in helping our little ones settle into school life in comparison to having one longer visit. Therefore, in June and July we organise for all children to attend three to four visits so that they can familiarise themselves with their new learning environment, meet their peers and build strong relationships with the staff that will be working with them. In addition, we hold a number of meetings for the parents where they can learn about school life and how the children will be working in the EYFS, meet their child's teacher and meet other key adults including our Headteacher, Inclusion manager and family support workers. During the year we provide lots of opportunities for our parents to attend information meetings and training sessions on phonics, reading and maths. We also invite parents into school to share learning experiences with their children for example: Grandparent's tea, learn alongside your child sessions, sports week and creative arts week.

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When we work together the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way relationship of information sharing, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the curriculum to parents/carers to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- encouraging parents/carers to pass on information for the child's Learning Journey via Tapestry
- holding parent/carer evenings to discuss progress and next steps for learning
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- inviting parents/carers to help in our school and to accompany children on school visits and fun events
- encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- through providing activities to support the curriculum at home and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the EYFS curriculum and the EYFS profile.