

CANTRELL PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL



FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

March 2022

Introduction

Cantrell Primary School has an established designated Early Years Foundation Stage Department including provision for a twelve part-time place unit for 2-year olds. There is a 39 place Nursery and two 30 place Reception classes. The building is adjacent to the main school. The two-year old 'Rising Stars' are situated in the annexe part of the building and have their own entrance. The Nursery (FS1) takes up the ground floor and whilst the Reception Classes (FS2) work alongside each other upstairs. The Reception classes share a Creative area which is timetabled for use by each class every day and the outside garden area also shared with the Nursery.

All our early years provision supports child-initiated learning through continuous provision, focused activities and adult initiated tasks. The provision is well resourced throughout and the environment is bright, purposeful and engaging.

Our Vision

Within Cantrell Early Years we believe that well-being and involvement are essential to develop confident and engaged learners. We aim to embed enriched language and provide communication opportunities for all children to reach their full potential. Our aim is for children to be happy and thrive in our settling.

Our Learning Environment

At Cantrell our aim is to promote independent learning, success and enjoyment through stimulating, safe and positive experiences. We have a balance of focussed activities, teacher initiated and child-initiated learning. The learning environment is challenging and purposeful for the differing needs of the children. We strive to develop confident and engaged learners for all children. We support individual children with signs and symbols showing the daily routine using Communicate INPrint. Throughout the department, each child's achievements are celebrated through a 'Super Me' display.

Staffing

There are two Early Years Lead Teachers who work as a job share (0.6) in the Nursery and oversee the Rising Stars, Nursery and Reception teaching and learning. The Reception classes both also have experienced job share teachers and a Teaching Assistant assigned to each class. The Rising Stars are led by an experienced Early Years Level 3 Teaching Assistant. Within the Nursery there are also two other teaching assistants one of which is also a Level 3. Currently within the Rising Stars there is one other teaching assistant and there are 8 places available.

The EYFS team work closely together and meet each week for a briefing meeting to discuss any matters arising. They also meet and work as a team during most INSET and designated phase meeting times.

Our Curriculum

Within the Early Years we follow our own pertinent curriculum. This curriculum is regularly updated and guided by the Government.

From September 2021 we follow the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). *Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. This framework is mandatory for all early years providers. At the end of the academic year of a child becoming five all children will strive to meet the 17 expected outcomes known as the 'Early Learning Goals'. These incorporate **seven** areas of learning and data collected will be sent to the schools Local Authority.

In developing our curriculum, we are guided by 'Development Matters' a non-statutory guidance for providers. Within this guidance there are seven key features of effective practice.

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

Underpinning the curriculum are 'The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'.

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.
- *Creating and thinking critically*- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The seven areas of learning are split into two categories:

Prime areas of learning and ***Specific areas of learning***.

The ***Prime areas*** are:

1. Communication and language

We encourage speaking and listening through the telling and listening to stories; extending children's vocabulary and encouraging them to respond to what they hear with comments, questions or actions. We offer opportunities for children to act out story scenarios.

Within the Foundation Stage there are opportunities for role play whereby children take on roles and express themselves through play. At whole group circle time, children are encouraged to speak and listen and share ideas with each other. We support the development of communication and language with signs and symbols. Cantrell school is also Makaton friendly.

2. Personal, social and Emotional Development

PSED takes place all the time through real life situations with support and direction from caring adults. We support children to understand their own feelings and emotions through talk and play. In both the Nursery and Reception classes there is a dedicated 'circle time' whereby guidance and modelling of issues around PSED are structured. We follow guidance from the LA and early years curriculum. Positive reinforcement through praise and encouragement to all are integral.

3. Physical Development

Children are supported in developing good control and co-ordination through large and small movements, (fine and gross motor). There are many opportunities to develop these skills through various areas within the curriculum including using challenging apparatus, balancing and Forest School sessions. The outside environment is integral and experienced daily. This environment incorporates; climbing with a slide, balancing and building with crates and planks and areas for running and jumping. We also use the larger Infant playground which is timetabled with a challenging Trim Trail for agility and strength. Fine motor skills are accessed through such things as water, sensory and holding tools such as scissors, chalk and pencils.

The ***Specific areas*** are:

4. Literacy

At Cantrell Primary school we deliver a progressive and systematic phonics programme in partnership with the Flying High English Hub. This begins within the Nursery with the delivery of Phase One, these are pre-phonetic fun activities to encourage children to tune into different sounds. We support children in the development of listening, remembering and talking about environmental, voice and instrumental sounds. Spotting similarities and differences in pictures, objects and identifying everyday words in the environment, including their name.

Phase Two begins at the start of the Reception Year with the explicit teaching and learning of phonemes and graphemes (Letters and Sounds) including long vowel digraphs and trigraphs. Phonic lessons take place daily and include reading and writing. Children are encouraged to apply their knowledge during independent work time and whole class writing at the beginning of the day. This usually begins after the Autumn half term. Parents are encouraged to support with reading at home and communicate through a reading diary. Story themes are integral with our planning and are introduced through story reading, singing, rhymes and story talk. The learning environment also supports the development of reading and writing.

5. Mathematics

In both Reception and Nursey mathematics is taught daily through interactive first-hand experiences. This includes counting, matching, subitising (recognising an amount without counting) patterning and problem solving. We follow a 'Mastery' approach to teaching and learning within a smaller group. Children are encouraged to verbalise their understanding and acquire mathematical language and vocabulary. We aim to develop positive attitudes and interest in mathematics to apply in the real world. The learning environment and resources allow all children to apply their skills through play and investigation.

6. Understanding of the World

First-hand experiences enable the children to develop understanding of the world around them. Wherever possible children are given real life experiences such as visiting our woodland area, farm, looking after chicks, and observing changes in life cycles such as frogs and butterflies. Children are encouraged to talk about their families and where they live and how it might be different to other people. We also celebrate different traditions and customs throughout the year with food tasting, stories, art work and the teaching and learning of new vocabulary.

7. Expressive Arts and Design

Children are encouraged to develop their imagination and artistic awareness by selecting from a wide range of creative resources both independently and through teacher directed tasks. Children are encouraged to respond to what they see, hear and say and to develop self-expression through the use of different media. This may include: dance, singing, arts and crafts and imaginative role play.

Planning

We use a two-year cycle of themed topics, one each half term (Long Term Planning), detailed Medium Term Planning highlights specific learning activities, continuous provision and enhancements to the environment and resources. Weekly planning demonstrates particular focused tasks and continuous provision allows children to make their own choices and lead their own play and learning by selecting equipment that they enjoy and are interested in. We follow children's interests and ideas. Objectives for learning are identified through specific skills and next step criteria.

Observations and Assessments

Children starting the Nursery and those attending our Rising Stars have their own Learning Journey. This incorporates incidental observations, photographs and a selection of special pieces of work. Observations and assessment procedures are recorded using the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker (EExAT). This informs our judgments for age related development and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). These are recorded at six weeks, on entry into Nursery and then termly thereafter. This data is used for intervention groups and monitoring individual progress including children eligible for Pupil Premium. At Cantrell we use the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker to monitor progress. A final judgement is given at the end of the academic year before a child leaves the Foundation Stage, usually around June. Individual Profile scores are then sent to Local Authority for analysis against other similar city schools and nationally. In FS2 we monitor progress in Phonics half termly and in Mathematics termly.

We regularly liaise with parents to discuss progress and talk about issues arising for individual children. This takes place each term through parent's evenings and open days. If further discussion is required, teaching staff are usually available at the end of the day. Alternatively, appointments are offered at a mutually convenient time. Parents have the opportunity to celebrate their child's achievements by communicating via The Early Excellence Assessment Tracker (EExAT) where they can upload activities their child is doing at home and share messages. Parents can view their child's Learning Journal on EExAT and contribute to it.

Admission

Children are admitted to the Nursery after their third birthday. All admissions are taken from a waiting list which is held in date of birth order on 'in catchment' or 'out of catchment' criteria. A start date is given and the children attend from this date. A settling in period allows for individual needs of the children.

Children enter the Reception class at the beginning of the academic year. At the end of the Reception year children then transfer into a Year One class. The Nursery has termly 'Open Days' where existing and new parents and children engage in learning together. The term before entering Nursery, the Rising Stars are invited to our 'Getting ready for Nursery' sessions.

At Cantrell we offer 30 hour nursery provision for eligible families. These children attend nursery for a full day.

Toileting Statement:

We acknowledge that every child is unique and will reach milestones at different stages of their development. We work with parents to ensure that children are happy and comfortable within the setting.

If a child is not toilet trained we encourage parents to place their child in pull-ups. This encourages independence and ensures that staff are able to support children with toileting. We have purpose built low-level toilets which we encourage the children to use.

On arriving at the setting we ask parents to ensure that their child's nappy/pull-up is clean and dry. We have changing facilities for this in the health room and private toilet areas.

We ask that each child has their own bag containing nappies/pull-ups wipes and spare clothes.

Dummy and Drinks Statement:

The NHS outlines the importance of language development and recommends that dummies are discouraged from the age of one. Evidence suggests that children who have dummies have fewer opportunities to babble and practise sounds, as a result they may talk less and speech sounds may be unclear.

In the Foundation Unit we focus greatly on a child's language development and discourage dummies in our Rising Stars setting. If a child initially needs a dummy as a form of comfort we promptly encourage the child to discard their dummy through distraction and engagement.

We provide milk and water for the children and convey to parents that juice and baby bottles are not allowed within our setting.

Children are encouraged to bring their own named water bottle to use throughout the session or day.

