

The Chiltern School	Early Years Foundation stage policy	
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Date Policy Adopted	Policy Review Date	Author
November 2023	November 2024	Sally Davidson

The Chiltern School Vision

Where we learn and achieve together, where we dare to be different. Our vision is to be a centre of excellence, to inspire, innovate and promote the best practice in inclusive pedagogy, that is recognised locally, regionally and nationally for SEND development and provision, where we put the pupils at the heart of all decision making. Our children will leave being happy, confident, inquisitive and independent.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

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

3. Structure of Early Transitions

Before the children start at the school, a personalised admission process takes place which includes-

- a virtual meeting with their parents/carers, their previous setting and/or the Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Advisory Team
- a home visit with the leader of Early Transitions and their new class teacher
- An initial telephone discussion with either our Speech and Language Therapist or Sensory Occupational Therapist

- A chance for new parents and children to meet prior to the settling-in sessions by coming for a Stay and Play in their new classroom with the classroom staff
- An informal presentation about the school and our systems such as ordering lunches and school uniform
- A personalised transition book
- A flexible settling-in programme to suit each child's individual needs

All children are given the opportunity to attend for either a half day or full day according to their age and individual needs. The ultimate aim is for all children to attend full time unless there are exceptional reasons why this may not be possible.

Most children will then stay in Early Transitions from N2 until the end of Year 2, where after careful assessment and observation of their learning needs and styles, they move on to the most suitable pathway or provision for them to continue their education and reach their full potential.

4. Curriculum

Early Transitions follows the school's bespoke Informal curriculum which is a developmental curriculum similar in style to the EYFS but broken down into smaller steps. Some children then progress to the Semi Formal curriculum. The Informal curriculum consists of the following strands with an emphasis on Communication, Wellbeing and Independence.

- Communication
- Essential Skills
- RSHE
- Physical Development
- Functional Skills
- Understanding of the world
- Creativity

The whole school uses the Communication at The Heart of the School (CATHS) approach which means education staff and Speech and Language Therapists share a complete approach to supporting children's communication in school. Education staff and Speech and Language Therapists work in partnership to ensure communication is supported within each class. Pupil's communication skills are assessed by the Class Teacher and Speech and Language Therapist and their communication band is established and dynamically reviewed. The CATHS banding framework is developmental and enables staff to understand how to best support the pupils communication and learning needs. In Early Transitions a 'Total Communication' approach is followed meaning all forms of communication are encouraged, modelled, accepted and rewarded. This approach gives the children the best chance in being able to both understand others as well as express themselves through whatever means they find most effective.

4.1 Planning

All planning in Early Transitions is play based and follows the children's interests and stage of development to ensure they are engaged and ready to learn. It is reviewed weekly after thorough discussions with all practitioners. Careful observation of the children ensures learning is personalised to each child and is pertinent to the outcomes on their Education, Health and Care

Plans. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

Developing communication skills and teaching emotional regulation strategies are key essentials in Early Transitions. All practitioners work closely with parents to ensure strategies are embedded both at school and at home.

In Early Transitions a variety of teaching approaches and styles are used to support the children's learning and their developmental needs. During group **Attention Autism** sessions the children are improving their focus, attention and turn taking skills. All sessions are highly engaging and exciting, offering the children an irresistible opportunity to learn. **The Curiosity Programme** is a 1:1 intervention encouraging the children to make good connections with adults, enhance interactions and build social communication opportunities throughout the day.

Intensive Interaction is another 1:1 intervention focusing on the fundamentals of communication such as enjoying being with another person, using eye contact and taking turns in conversations. Our **Continuous Provision** areas enable the children to access core resources that are interesting yet familiar to them in defined spaces such as the sensory tuff trays and Reading Corners.

Early reading concepts are taught in Early Transitions through **Stage 1- the 7 aspects of pre-reading**. This includes activities such as listening to environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, rhyme, alliteration and distinguishing between voice sounds. Other activities such as **Write Dance** (which is an exciting music and dance approach) begin to develop the skills for writing. When the children have mastered these pre-reading and writing skills, they are assessed and then move onto **Stage 2- the teaching of phonics**. At The Chiltern School we use the **Read, Write, Inc** phonics scheme across the whole school.

Physical Development is also a big part of the day in Early Transitions which includes weekly access to **Forest School** sessions. The outdoor space is used to take learning outside whenever possible and structured curriculum areas are set up outside on a daily basis.

5. Assessment

At The Chiltern School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These interests are recorded on a weekly document that is visible in every classroom as well as being discussed at length with other colleagues. This information is then used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers either verbally or by photos and comments that are shared on Class Dojo.

Within the first 6 weeks that the children start in Early Transitions a baseline assessment is undertaken and after 6 weeks personal learning goals (PLG's) are implemented. These goals are taken and broken down using the long term outcomes on each child's Education, Health and Care Plans. The Evidence for Learning platform is used to track progress towards these PLGs on a weekly basis. The Engagement Model criteria (Exploration, Realisation, Anticipation, Persistence and Initiation) is also used to assess the children's new skills, concepts and knowledge. Each term progress is assessed using the intent statements on the curriculum for each child which informs future planning as part of the 'Plan, Do, Assess, Review' cycle.

During each child's Education, Health and Care Plan review in Year 2, their needs, learning styles and progress are discussed with their parents/carers to make an informed decision as to which pathway they will continue their educational journey in. Sometimes it is appropriate to discuss if this is the right setting for the child to progress.

6. Working with parents

It is well recognised that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. In Early Transitions, all children are in small class groups with high levels of staff who are all attuned to their needs and interests.

In Early Transitions parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development either face to face, through telephone conversations or on class dojo (minimum of 3 times a week). This helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child in school, with regards to their wellbeing, what they have been learning and their progress.

Throughout the year parents are offered regular opportunities to come and join their children in Stay and Play sessions. The school also offers weekly coffee mornings for all parents and a range of informative workshops to help parents understand and support their child's communication and sensory needs.

There are termly individual parent consultations and a Celebration of Learning document is produced at the end of the academic year to highlight each child's progress towards their PLG's.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Good health and wellbeing in general, are promoted in Early Transitions by

- Using a trauma informed ARC approach to managing behaviour
- Encouraging healthy eating through our Healthy Eating Therapeutic Support Plan
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles by regular opportunities for outdoor learning and physical play

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our whole school Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Sally Davidson, Early Transitions Lead every 2 years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy