



POLICY FOR COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

This policy is a statement of the aims, principals and strategies for learning and teaching within the area of Communication and Language.

What is Communication and Language in the Foundation Stage?

The EYFS 2012 states that

“Communication and Language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.”

In the Revised EYFS 2012 Communication and Language has become a “Prime Area”.

“Prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive”

EYFS 2012

This Prime Area of learning and development is broken down into three aspects;

1. **Listening and attention:** children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.*
2. **Understanding:** children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.*
3. **Speaking:** children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.*

The importance of these three aspects has been established from the Every Child a Talker (ECAT) programme. By focusing on listening and attention, and separating receptive language (understanding) from expressive language (speaking), practitioners can gain a better understanding of how language develops, how to support the process, and how to identify children who could be at risk from language delay.

*The above statements are taken from "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012", see Appendix 1

The Importance of Developing Listening and Attention Skills

Listening and Attention covers the aspect of the original EYFS framework called 'Language for Communication'. The change in emphasis in the new framework builds on findings from the ECAT programme about the best way for practitioners to support language development.

The ability to focus attention is a developmental stage vital to the whole process of acquiring language. Practitioners can support young children's language development by providing a wide variety of opportunities for them to focus their attention and to listen carefully. These are skills which will support all aspects of their learning and development, including the phonetic and phonemic awareness which underpin reading and writing.

Progress in Listening and attention

24-36 months

Children listen with interest when adults read stories to them. They recognise and respond to many familiar sounds e.g. turning to a knock on the door, looking at or going to the door. They can shift attention to a different task if their attention is fully obtained.

36-48 months

Children listen to others one-to-one or in small groups when the conversation interests them. They join in repeated refrains and anticipate key events and phrases in rhymes and stories. They can focus attention by shifting between an activity and listening.

Early Learning Goal

Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

[Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012]

The Importance of Developing Understanding

Understanding covers part of the aspect of the original EYFS framework called 'Language for Thinking' with the change in emphasis in the new framework building on research findings from the ECAT programme.

Understanding, or developing comprehension, is a fundamental part of interpreting spoken language. It is important that practitioners can distinguish between situations where a child may be following an established routine, or responding to gestures rather than understanding the spoken word.

As children develop their understanding and build up a large receptive vocabulary they become more able to make sense of complex sentences and questions. These skills are essential for reading comprehension and for making sense of information in all other areas of learning.

Progress in Understanding

24-36 months

Children can identify action words by pointing to the right picture, e.g., *'Who's jumping?'*. They understand *'who'*, *'what'*, *'where'* in simple questions and are developing understanding of basic concepts, e.g., *big/little*.

36-48 months

Children respond to instructions containing positional language, e.g. *'over'* and *'under'*. They can identify objects by their use. They attempt to answer *'why'* and *'how'* questions using words like *'because.'*

Early Learning Goal

Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

[Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012]

The Importance of Speaking

Speaking covers one part of the aspect of the original EYFS framework called 'Language for Thinking', with the change in emphasis coming from the findings of the ECAT programme.

By learning to talk, children can engage more fully with others and begin to express their needs, ideas, feelings and emotions. Putting ideas and feelings into words is a part of the process of thinking. Being able to use spoken language to talk about ideas and share them with others helps children to develop higher level reasoning and thinking skills.

Children need lots of opportunities to use spoken language to develop their ideas and understanding of the world before they are ready to use written language to communicate.

Progress in Speaking

24-36 months

Children learn new words very rapidly and are able to use them in communicating. They use action, sometimes with limited talk, that is largely concerned with the 'here and now'. They talk in basic sentences and use a variety of questions, e.g. *what, where, who?*

36-48 months

Children use talk, actions and objects to connect ideas and recall past experiences. They can retell a simple past event in the correct order and can talk about things that will happen in the future. They question why things happen and can give explanations.

Early Learning Goal

Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

[Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012]

The Relationship between Communication and Language and the Other Prime Areas of Learning

'Communication and Language supports Personal, Social and Emotional Development because a child who can communicate feelings, needs and ideas develops a strong sense of self and is increasingly able to relate to others in rewarding and appropriate ways. It supports Physical Development through description of actions which increase conscious control and through talk about health and the factors which influence this.'

[Review of the EYFS, 2011]

The Revised EYFS states

"Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments".

To this end, At Coat of many Colours Nursery, we recognise;

Each Child is Unique

"Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured". EYFS 2012

- We value each child as an individual, accepting their individual needs, interests, and rates of development, identifying and responding to any particular needs in a child's language development at an early stage.
- We show particular awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of children learning English as an additional language, using their home language when appropriate and

ensuring close teamwork between practitioners and parents so that the child's developing use of English and other languages support each other.

- We recognise each child as a competent learner
- We accept and recognise each child's ability, disability, gender, race, and cultural background, so enabling them to enjoy equality of opportunity and support to reach their full potential.
- For children who may need to use alternative communication systems, we provide opportunities for them to discover ways of communicating and recording ideas in an alternative way, for example through signing and ICT.
- We aim to support children in recognising that their views count and that their opinion is valued, eg in following children's interests and ideas in this area.

The Importance of Positive Relationships

"Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships." EYFS 2012

- We respect parents/carers as the child's first and continuing educator, and work with parents/carers to support and encourage their child's development.
- We allocate a key worker to each child who will make a special bond with the child and their family and thus support and guide them through their nursery experience. The key worker observes the child at play to gain an insight into their developing needs, so that each child achieves the very best they can.
- We help children to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings, and build-up relationships with adults and each other.
- We aim to support children to work together and begin to take account of ideas and preferences which differ from their own.

The Provision of an Enabling Environment

"Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers."

EYFS 2012

- We aim to provide time and relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups and between the children themselves. We allow children time to initiate conversations, respect their thinking time and silences, and help them develop the interaction.
- We aim to create an environment where it is "safe" to make mistakes, to share thoughts and ideas, explore different options, and work collaboratively.

- We plan an environment that is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words, rhymes, books, pictures, music and songs that take into account children's different interests, understandings, home backgrounds and cultures.
- We allow time for children to browse and share these resources with adults and other children.
- We aim to support children with additional needs by providing supplementary experiences.

The above aims for this area of learning are consistent with the aims of our Nursery philosophy and take account of the Early Learning Goals both within the outdoor and indoor environment.

Learning and Teaching within Communication and Language

“Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.”

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, QCA.

Effective Learning at CMC Nursery involves:

- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language
- Children initiating activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from each other
- Children learning through movement and all their senses
- Children having time to explore ideas and interests in depth
- Children feeling secure, which helps them to become confident learners
- Children learning in different ways and at different rates
- Children making links in their learning

“Teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learnt. Teaching has many aspects, including planning and creating a learning environment, organising time and material resources, interacting, questioning, responding to questions, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children's progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents.”

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, QCA.

Effective Teaching at CMC Nursery involves:

- Working in partnership with parents, because parents continue to have a prime teaching role with their children

- Promoting children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable
- Observing and listening to children to better understand their interests and provide opportunities/resources for child-initiated learning (Project Based Learning).
- Practitioners who model a range of positive behaviour
- Using language that is rich and using correct grammar. Recognising that what is said and how the practitioner speaks is the main way of teaching new vocabulary and helping children to develop linguistic structures for thinking
- Using conversation and carefully framed questions because this is crucial in developing children's knowledge
- Children teaching each other
- Interacting with and supporting children in a way that positively affects the attitudes to learning that children develop
- Planning the indoor and outdoor environment carefully to provide a positive context for learning and teaching
- Skilful and well-planned observations of children
- Assessing children's development and progress to serve several purposes. Assessment opportunities may be identified in planning or arise spontaneously
- Working with parents, who are vital partners in the assessment and planning process
- Identifying the next step in children's learning to plan how to help children make progress
- Using assessment to evaluate the quality of provision and practitioners training needs

Planning for Communication and Language

Planning at Hadfield Nursery School is devised in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework and Guidance ("Development Matters" 2012) and from observation and assessment of children's needs. Our planning consists of 3 layers:

1. **Continuous provision:** which is our planned learning environment both inside and outside. We have thoughtfully planned workshop areas which are organised to spark learning opportunities and children's interests, provoking children to make choices as they play alone or with others. Children can select and replace resources as they need them. They know that these resources and materials will always be available. Our workshop areas are:
 - **The Studio:** where children explore paint, malleable materials and learn to join and construct with different materials
 - **The Laboratory:** where children explore properties of sand, water, the natural world, light, magnets and a host of other scientific resources. This area also includes the snack area and maths resources
 - **Let's Imagine:** where children develop imaginative skills in the home bay, with small world and constructional resources. They explore music and instruments. This area also includes a cosy reading area and writing den.

- **Outdoors:** a large, well-resourced area where children can move, build and investigate on a larger scale. It includes a large sandpit, a stream, a mud kitchen and natural wooded area.
2. **Enhanced Provision:** staff develop our workshop areas by adding enhancements. We observe children's interests and development needs and add resources to reflect and develop a skill, concept or interest.
 3. **Project Planning:** this is developed across the Nursery through noticing emerging "themes of interest" as children work in our rich Nursery environment. Staff working within a workshop area work on *mini-projects* which they plan and develop with the children. The planning and direction of our projects are shown on planning boards around Nursery.

It also takes into account:

- The Nursery's two year rolling programme of twelve termly topics.
- Medium Term Planning for Communication and Language; linked to each term's topic to ensure coverage of steps toward Early Learning Goals (ELG's) See Appendix
- Short-Term "Focussed" planning - weekly. To ensure that basic skills are taught. Staff work to a "Target-List" for Communication and Language Development in which higher /average/ lower achieving children are clearly identified. Staff can easily differentiate the activity to offer challenge or smaller steps as necessary. Staff record any significant progress or difficulty on this sheet so information can be shared between the whole staff team.
- Assessment/levels and stages of development
- Records (including the nursery profile)
- I.E.P.'s where necessary
- Observations
- Wellcome spoken language screening
- The Early Talk Boost Programme
- Targeting specific children, including gifted and talented children
- Individual learning styles
- Continuous monitoring

Effective planning includes:

- Planning a carefully structured curriculum that provides rich and stimulating experiences.

Practitioners:

- Plan experiences that are relevant, imaginative, motivating, enjoyable and challenging;
- Make effective use of unexpected and unforeseen opportunities for children's learning that arise from everyday events and routines

- Make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors
- Planning and organising the learning environment to provide experiences that build on what children already know and to involve themselves in children's learning.

Practitioners:

- Enable children to become involved by planning experiences which are mostly based on real life situations, and children's interests;
 - Allow time for sustained concentration;
 - Understand that every aspect of learning for young children - personal, social, emotional, physical and intellectual - is interrelated and interdependent and reflect this in their planning.
- Planning a learning environment, indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning through rich and stimulating experiences and by ensuring each child feels included.

Practitioners:

- Use materials, equipment and displays that reflect the community the children come from and the wider world;
- Plan an environment free from stereotypical images and discriminatory practice;
- Include the local community and environment as a source of learning;
- Encourage children to make choices and develop independence by having equipment and materials readily available and well organised;
- Provide resources that inspire children and encourage them to initiate their own learning
- Give children the space they need for their activities.

Observation, Assessment, Monitoring and Record-Keeping

Children's skills and stages of development are observed and monitored by key-workers and the whole teaching team. Observations may be long or short and supported by evidence such as annotated photographs or pieces of work when possible. These observations may also include Levels of Well-being and Involvement (Laevers). Parents and Carers are encouraged to post their own observations of significant development or learning experiences to their child's Learning Journey via Tapestry. Staff monitor and accept/decline parental contributions as necessary.

Records of individual children's progress and achievement are kept electronically as part of each child's "Markbook" on Classroom Monitor. These observations and records inform planning, identify specific targets for each child, may identify a learning difficulty or talent, and provide the school with the means to monitor cohort progress and collect data on the effectiveness of the provision.

Data collected each half-term will identify children requiring additional support or challenging in this specific area of learning (see Medium Term Planning).

Children's progress in Communication and Language is shared with parents/carers during consultations, during their first term and during their third term in Nursery. This enables two-way sharing of information and the planning of "next steps".

"Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates."

EYFS 2012

Supporting All our Children's Needs

- Provision will be made to meet the individual requirements of children with any additional needs, to enable them to make progress in their Communication and Language and achieve their full potential, eg through specific targets as part of an Individual Support Plan.
- Staff will liaise and work closely with other professionals involved with the child and respond to the advice they offer.
- Where necessary, resources and equipment to support children with additional needs will be procured from other agencies.

Equal Opportunities

At CMC Nursery we aim to offer children and their families a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, in which children's contributions are valued and where racial and religious beliefs are respected. We will be particularly sensitive to those children for whom English is not their first language, by working closely with parents/carers and any other bilingual staff, to support the child's development of both languages. We aim to challenge discrimination on the grounds of gender or disability.

All children will be treated as individuals and they will have full access to all elements of the Communication and Language provision and opportunities, regardless of gender, ability/disability, race or cultural background.

Health & Safety - Managing Risk

The Health and Safety of the children is paramount. Staff check resources and areas on a daily basis and remove or report anything which may present a danger or health-risk. Children are encouraged to consider their own and others safety both indoors and outdoors eg using "walking feet" indoors.

The Role of the Subject- Co-ordinator

The Subject Co-ordinator is responsible for

- the writing and reviewing of the Policy for Communication and Language
- the development and auditing of this area of learning
- ensuring that all children receive their entitlement to all the elements of this area of learning
- Identifying and meeting the needs of those children who show a particular gift/talent in this area.
- Identifying and meeting the needs of children with special educational needs or disability. Special provision will be made for those children with special educational needs or disability to allow them to make the best possible progress in this area of learning. Where necessary, resources or equipment to support children with SEN will be procured from other agencies.
- monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in this area and the children's progress towards ELG's
- monitoring, maintaining and ordering resources
- supporting colleagues in their understanding and delivery of this area of learning
- identifying and attending relevant courses to promote continued professional development (CPD) and to feed-back to the Head-teacher and staff.
- ensure equality of opportunity and access to all aspects of Communication and Language
- liaise with the Governor with curriculum responsibility for Communication and Language in order to support their monitoring.

Linked Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Policy for Equalities, Differences and Cohesion
- Behaviour, Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Policy for Teaching and Learning
- Assessment and Recording Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Policy (incorporating Modern British Values)
- Planning Learning through Project Work