

## Early Years

### **Vision**

At Childer Thornton Primary School we want our children to be happy, confident, well-rounded and motivated individuals with a love for learning. We want children to feel a sense of belonging whereby, they develop a positive sense of who they are, and feel that they are a valued and respected part of a family and the school community. We aim to provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment which builds on each individual's wants, needs and interests and supports the children's growth of independence, resilience and collaboration.

We provide an education where each child is valued and enabled to achieve their highest possible outcomes. We develop a close partnership with families to facilitate links in children's learning and wellbeing between home and school.

### **Intent**

The curriculum in EYFS is designed to be progressive and is underpinned by the children's interests which is a key driver of our curriculum, along with our school values. Although we have themes that are mapped out across the year in our long term plans, these are not set in stone and can be altered according to interests displayed by the children. However, within each subject there is a clear progression of knowledge and skills.

Through careful sequencing, we have developed a progressive curriculum built with small steps to ensure that the children's learning is not only sequential but also has depth to give the children the best possible chance of mastering key concepts which will then be built on as they progress through school. The foundations that have been laid will ensure that the golden threads of learning are maximised upon as they move into Year 1.

At Childer Thornton, our EYFS is rooted in early childhood development, with a clear understanding of how young children learn best through explicitly planned learning opportunities. It is designed specifically with an understanding of how our children enter Childer Thornton and where we aim for them to get to throughout their time with us. We strive to provide a high quality play based curriculum and environment that is underpinned by the children's interests and allows the holistic child to grow and develop in ways that interest and motivate them. Ensuring children are encouraged to be independent, collaborative and develop resilience is at the heart of all we do.

Through a carefully planned and delivered play based curriculum, we aim for children to become sociable, independent, resilient and confident in all that they do. The curriculum is designed to ensure that children's learning is broad and rich and provides necessary challenge for more able pupils. Enjoyment and motivation to learn is a high priority of ours, through following children's interests and leads in learning, adults provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities to ensure all children make progress. It is essential to staff at Childer Thornton that we establish strong home school partnerships so that our children are supported in all aspects of their life. Through this effective relationship, our children will develop a strong sense of self and will be nurtured, loved and cared for, providing a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

An impact of Covid-19 has been the development of children's socialisation skills and personal development. This is an area of priority in both Nursery and Reception. Most significant, are the gaps and needs children have in PSED and communication and language and these are a core focus when

the children start. This in turn has had a direct impact on our children's starting points and how we plan to effectively meet their individual needs. Furthermore, at Childer Thornton our children's early childhood experiences fundamentally shape and inform what we want our children to learn and how we facilitate and provide this. The design of our curriculum is intended to support children as they move onto their next stage of learning and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that they have the fundamental building blocks in place and are ready for their next stage of learning. The curriculum is designed with a strong focus on developing children's cultural capital ensuring that they are introduced to the best that has been thought and said. This is also a key factor when pursuing children's interests.

Across the wider school subject leaders plan from nursery and ensure that knowledge and skills are progressive and key vocabulary is introduced at the appropriate level to ensure that this can be built on ensuring that children reach their end points.

### **Vocabulary development**

At Childer Thornton, we strive to provide a language rich learning environment that promotes the development of vocabulary, using high quality texts to offer stimulating and engaging hooks into learning opportunities for all children. Fundamental to our curriculum and delivery of this is providing high quality continuous provision and adult interactions that evolve and progress throughout the year. This is planned to ensure that all children make continuous progress and are given opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge that are age appropriate and relevant to their individual next steps in learning.

### **Continuous provision**

Staff at Childer Thornton understand the importance of the continuous provision and know that its role is to act as the third teacher. Therefore, the provision is designed to maximise on the children's learning inspiring curiosity, challenge and mastery of skill development within an engaging and purposeful environment. Opportunities for the children to engage in periods of uninterrupted play within the provision are of paramount importance ensuring that children experience a deeper level of play. In turn, the continuous provision is enhanced regularly in specific areas to ensure that children experience new and interesting resources which provoke discussion but also still includes resources that are open ended and are of interest to the children.

An integral part of the continuous provision are resources and activities that require the children to work as a team and co-operate effectively to develop their PSED skills.

### **Phonics**

At Childer Thornton, the children are taught to read using the Read Write Inc. phonics programme. The children start their phonic journey when they enter nursery and are exposed to rich opportunities that support not only their vocabulary development but also their phonic development as is specified by Read Write Inc. for example, playing games that help to develop children's oral blending.

Further to this, children who are due to enter Reception in September are taught the pictures associated with each single letter sound in Spring 2 and are then taught the single letter sounds in Summer 1. Every effort is made to ensure that the children commit the sounds to their long-term memory for example, through the use of 'pinny' time throughout the day.

In Reception, children are assessed on their phonological knowledge very early on to ensure that they are placed in the appropriate phonic group. Assessments are carried out on a ½ termly basis thereafter. Phonic teaching begins almost immediately after the children have been assessed and every effort is made to ensure that the children 'keep up not catch up.' Teachers ensure fidelity to the programme and use Read Write Inc. resources and phonic books pitched at the appropriate level (based on assessment) to ensure that sounds are taught in a progressive sequence. Monitoring of phonics in the Early Years is of a high priority to ensure that teaching is consistent and the best it can possibly be.

### **Love of Reading**

Fundamental to the work the staff do in Early Years is inspiring a love of reading. Every effort is made to ensure that children develop a love of books by exposing them to a wealth of high quality texts. Alongside this, initiatives such as, secret readers and mystery books have been introduced to support children's book talk and generate conversations about books.

### **Intervention**

#### Read Write Inc:

Children who are deemed as struggling are quickly identified and intervention for the lowest 20% of pupils is put into place immediately. Intervention happens daily on a 1:1 basis and is delivered by a highly skilled member of staff. The tutoring steps used are advocated by Read Write Inc. and are pitched at the appropriate level.

#### Neli:

The Reception TA has been trained on the NELI programme (which is designed for children in Reception) and delivers a daily intervention for an identified pupil/ pupils in order to improve their language and early literacy skills.

### **Maths**

As is stated in the maths statement of practice the EYFS curriculum is designed as a spiral. We focus on number fluency; this is to ensure children have a comprehensive understanding of number that will enable them to master the curriculum as they move through school. The curriculum planned is based around our work with the Maths Hub and the 'fiveness of five', which involves children spending longer periods investigating one number at a time using the 6 areas from the NCETM. Sessions are carefully planned to promote a balance between formal group teaching and exploratory activities.

### **PSED**

Striving for the best possible outcomes to be obtained in PSED staff aim to provide children with the necessary strategies to ensure that they can manage their emotions and develop a positive sense of self. In doing so, the staff use conflict resolution strategies to support the children with managing their emotions. They also incorporate role-play situations that require the children to consider other people's feelings and encourage them to discuss strategies that could be put in place to support the individual.

Furthermore, staff support the pupil's interactions with other children, so that they will learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably.

## **Links between home and school**

Providing regular links with home in a variety of ways, allows us to maintain our close working partnership with parents and carers. The use of Tapestry allows families to contribute to their child's overall learning journey and share 'wow' moments from home as well as seeing those that have happened in school too.

## **Transition**

We strive for all children to begin their journey at Childer Thornton with the best possible starting points. Through carefully planned transition, children and families are welcomed into school throughout the summer term prior to starting school, allowing staff to understand each individual child's background, needs and next steps.

## **Readiness for Y1**

The transition from Reception to Year 1 is carefully scaffolded. Throughout the summer term the children will get to know their new teacher and will have weekly story times with them. Their new teacher will also spend mornings or afternoons in Reception during the final half term. A transition meeting is held for the Reception teacher to discuss each individual child with the Year 1 class teacher. Further to this transition books are set up for those children who require more support with the transition process during the summer holidays. Opportunities to work in a more formal way will be introduced in the summer 2, for example, by encouraging children to record work in a more structured way using resources such as Power Maths.

The Reception teacher and Year 1 teacher work together to set up the continuous provision in Year 1 ready for September ensuring that it builds on what the children have learnt in Reception. This will vary depending on the needs of the specific cohort of children to ensure the provision in Y1 provides appropriate challenge.

## **Implementation**

At Childer Thornton we have created a carefully planned, ambitious curriculum that incorporates a balance of adult led and child initiated learning opportunities. It is a curriculum based on the principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021, that takes into consideration children's prior early learning and development experiences; their starting points at Childer Thornton; and their future learning when they progress into the National Curriculum.

How our provision and interactions change and adapt take into consideration and are reflective of each cohort's needs. Ongoing informal observations of how children play and learn inform next steps, including enhancements in provision; adult directed activities; interventions for support; adult interactions through play and direct teaching sessions. Staff work closely as a team to consistently reflect upon all aspects of teaching and learning and plan changes to ensure children are given opportunities to learn with depth and breadth.

## **Assessment**

Checkpoints have been devised for nursery and reception children based on Development Matters. Alongside these, the observational checkpoints in Development Matters are used to support and

facilitate conversations with parents regarding the typical development of children from birth to three.

Summative assessments at regular points throughout the year, allow all EYFS staff to contribute and discuss children's current learning stage and individual next steps. Through this, children that are not working at the expected standard are clearly identified. An effective working partnership with our school SENCO and other external agencies allows us to identify children that may present with additional needs and plan interventions of support that are required as part of the child's individual support plan. As part of our summative and formative ongoing assessments, other key interventions are planned to close gaps and ensure children catch up with learning where needed.

### **Interactions**

Adults spend the majority of their time in the provision – supporting children's interactions with their peers and focusing on vocabulary development. Phrases such as 'I wonder' are used by adults in the setting to provoke and stimulate children's thought processes. The adults also scaffold and model desired behaviours and turn taking – acting as good role models for the children to learn from. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are underpinned in all areas of learning and as part of their interactions the adults assess which characteristics underpin the children's play and further support the development of these through their questioning. Interactions enable staff to assess where the children are in their learning and plan the appropriate next steps.

### **Impact**

Children at Childer Thornton will leave our FS2 as confident, independent learners and will be able to articulate themselves well. They will demonstrate that they have a wide vocabulary that they can use appropriately to express themselves.

They will have a strong sense of self and their place within our school community. They will be equipped with the necessary skills to manage their feelings and behaviour and will be supported as they attempt to resolve conflicts.

Children will have a comprehensive understanding of numbers up to 10 and will be able to relate their learning to all aspects of maths. The children will have a secure knowledge of early phonics enabling them to be fluent readers at the appropriate stage of phonics. They will apply their knowledge of phonics to their written work and spelling. Furthermore, these golden threads of learning highlighted in phonics and maths will pave the way for the children's future learning and success throughout their time at Childer Thornton providing them with a secure foundation for when they continue their learning and move into the National Curriculum in Year 1.