



# Coten End Primary School

## **Early Years Policy**

## **Vision**

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace our 'Learning for everyone, learning from everyone' ethos and ensure all children are ready for their next steps.

Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children within the Reception Class. 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, March 2021

The Reception year must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The Reception year is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based on four overarching principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- 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/or carers; and
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

This Early Years Policy includes the following:

- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Classroom organisation and resources
- Induction
- Involving parents
- Assessment and record keeping
- Monitoring and evaluation

## **Aims and Principles**

- Reception practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued
- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development

- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children’s learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children’s imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings
- Practitioners must respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction
- Involve parents and carers

## Planning and Organising the Curriculum

The curriculum for the EYFS forms the first stage of our whole school curriculum. It covers children in the Reception Class.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are interconnected.

The three **prime areas** are:

- **Communication and Language** – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development** – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will develop both their gross and fine motor skills.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- **Literacy** – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest. Children will have access to mark making and writing materials throughout the day.
- **Mathematics** – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- **Understanding the World** – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The curriculum is planned through a series of learning themes that reflect and respond to the children’s needs and interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry

equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child- initiated activities.

Our long-term plan draws from the Statutory Framework, ensuring that all areas are covered. This is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available while children are in the early years.

Weekly plans highlight daily inputs, group and continuous provision activities linked to the learning theme and children's needs and interests. Adult's observations and interactions with children feed into the activities available, ensuring all children's needs are met. Weekly plans show links to each of the areas of the curriculum. Activities are extended and differentiated accordingly through practitioner's knowledge of the children and their learning.

## **Learning Environment**

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

The Reception class provides the following areas:

- Small world area
- Role play area
- Large and small construction
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing tools throughout the environment
- Art area with access to a choice of materials
- Interactive whiteboard
- Malleable materials
- Maths area with resources available to children and clearly labelled

The outside area provides the following areas:

- Large sand pit
- Water tray
- Mud kitchen
- Role play areas
- Mark making opportunities
- Tuff trays with planned activities on
- Small world toys
- Climbing equipment
- Bikes & trikes
- P.E. equipment

## **Induction**

We have close links with local nurseries and communicate, where circumstances allow, throughout the year. This enables the pre-school children and the Reception teacher to become familiar with each other before the transition period begins.

The EYFS lead will visit local nurseries to meet the children and play alongside them in the Summer term. Transition forms will be emailed to all feeder nurseries, these will be discussed in person with staff at local nurseries. Phone conversations will be had with other nurseries if necessary.

The pre-school children are invited for two visits in the Summer term. One of these is with their parents and the other without. The second of these will coincide with Warwickshire's common induction day where all the children move to their new year group.

In June, a meeting is held by the Headteacher, EYFS lead and Reception staff to introduce parents/carers to the school, reception procedures and curriculum. Parents/carers are encouraged to read the 'Reception Handbook' which outlines the curriculum and school routines.

All Reception staff complete home visits in the first week of September. This allows teachers to see the new children in an environment in which they feel safe and secure. During the home visit, teachers talk about routines of school, uniform and answer any questions parents may have.

Children then do a staggered intake where they come to school for three sessions. This takes place in groups of 15. This enables children to become familiar with their new classroom and all of the adults in Reception. During these sessions we do a tour of the school and grounds, meet members of SLT and talk about the routines of class.

Reception children are introduced to the life of the wider school gently as they are ready. Initially, children go for their lunch at 11.45am, allowing more time to get used to the hall and routines before Year 1 and 2 children join them. After they have eaten, children play on the main playground with the rest of the school. Children attend two assemblies a week after the first half term, one Phase assembly and one Celebration assembly.

## **Involving Parents**

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to parents/carers during the new parents meeting in June, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information
- Information about the curriculum is uploaded to keep parents informed of the learning themes their children are doing and the activities planned to support this
- Weekly blogs are written on the school website informing parents of what has been going on that week in their child's year group
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Termly invites to parents/carers to 'Come and Play' sessions where parents can see their child's classroom and play alongside them in the environment
- In the Autumn term, there will be a Reading meeting for parents to explain our process for teaching Phonics and how they can support at home

- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO) for the school

## **Assessment and Recording**

'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, March 2021

High quality interactions with children enable Reception staff to constantly assess children's knowledge, address misconceptions and move their learning forwards. Regular conversations between Reception staff enable children's strengths and areas of need to be discussed and next steps planned and actioned.

At the end of the Reception year, staff assess children against the Early Learning Goals.

In the Reception year there will be 4 summative assessment checkpoints.

- Baseline/ on entry
- End of Autumn term
- End of Spring term
- End of Summer term

At each checkpoint teachers will make a judgement against the 7 areas of learning and the Characteristics of Effective learning. They will make this judgement primarily using their knowledge of the children, supported by any evidence that has been collected. Conversations with other staff and parents will also help to form these judgements.

For some areas of learning, teachers will complete a 'Checkpoint Activity' to support their judgements. These will be kept in the children's folders to build up a picture of that child's progress over time. The same/similar activity will be completed at each checkpoint.

## **Teaching Assistants**

A full-time teaching assistant is assigned to work with each Reception class. It is the teaching assistant's role to engage and interact in children's play to support their learning. They will work with groups of children under the direction of the class teacher. The teaching assistant will be proactive in encouraging development in all areas of learning. Input and feedback to the

Reception teacher is seen as a vital element in the education of the children. Additional support staff as required for speech and language and intervention support.

Reviewed September 2025	Naomi Farmer
Next Review September 2026	Naomi Farmer