

Caldecote Primary School

Early Years Policy

1. Introduction

Definition from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

"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.'

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers** sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years. The EYFS seeks to provide:

• quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;

• a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;

• partnership working between practitioners and parents and/or carers;

• equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported;

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework outlines four overarching principles that shape practice:

• 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 with teaching and support from adults;

• children develop and learn at different rates.

At Caldecote Primary School, "we strive to provide a happy, safe and nurturing environment where every child is recognised as a unique individual. Through positive relationships, enabling environments, high-quality interactions and an ambitious curriculum, we support children to become confident, resilient and independent learners, enabling them to achieve their full potential".

We are committed to providing a rich, ambitious and inclusive curriculum that enables every child to flourish and develop a lifelong love of learning. Our curriculum is informed by the EYFS Statutory

Framework and Development Matters guidance and is designed around the unique needs, interests and experiences of our pupils.

The importance of the early years is valued by all. We are fully committed to the needs of our youngest children.

2. Purpose and Aims of the Policy

This policy outlines how Caldecote Primary School implements the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to provide high-quality education and care for all children. It reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment where every child can thrive and achieve their full potential.

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote high-quality practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- provide an ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum for all children;
- ensure that every child is valued as a unique individual and supported to make good progress;
- establish strong foundations for future learning and development;
- support children's personal, social, emotional, physical and academic development;
- promote equality of opportunity and inclusion for all children;
- foster positive relationships with parents, carers and the wider community;
- provide guidance for staff, governors, parents and carers on EYFS practice and provision.

3. Aims

At Caldecote Primary School, we aim to provide high-quality learning experiences for all pupils.

We do this by:

- recognising and responding to children's individual needs, interests and starting points;
- building on children's prior knowledge, experiences and achievements;
- providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where children feel happy, secure and valued;
- promoting high expectations and equality of opportunity for all children;
- supporting children to become independent, confident and resilient learners;
- building skills and developing foundational knowledge;
- delivering a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum through a range of engaging learning experiences;
- fostering curiosity, creativity and a lifelong love of learning;
- developing children's communication, listening and thinking skills;
- encouraging positive relationships, cooperation and mutual respect;
- celebrating effort, achievement and success;
- working in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community to support children's development and well-being.

4. Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is our highest priority. At Caldecote Primary School, we are committed to providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment in which every child can learn and develop. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure children are protected from harm and their needs are met.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and understand their responsibility to identify, respond to and report any concerns about a child's welfare. The school has designated safeguarding leads (one of which is the EYFS Lead) and follows the procedures outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The welfare, health, safety and well-being of all children underpin all aspects of our practice.

The EYFS team also complies with statutory requirements relating to staff suitability, supervision, first aid, medicines, risk assessment, behaviour management, attendance, online safety and child protection.

All of the EYFS team hold a certificate in Paediatric First Aid.

Safer Eating

At Caldecote Primary School, we are committed to promoting safe eating practices throughout the EYFS to support children's health, wellbeing and safety. We recognise that young children may be at risk of choking and therefore take appropriate steps to minimise risks during snack times, mealtimes and cooking activities. See school risk assessment and procedures for further information.

Children are always supervised by a member of staff while eating and are encouraged to sit down calmly and eat at an appropriate pace. Food is prepared in line with current safety guidance. Staff are aware of individual dietary requirements, allergies and medical needs, and these are communicated clearly to all relevant adults.

Children are taught good eating habits, including chewing food thoroughly, taking small bites and not talking with food in their mouths. Drinking water is readily available throughout the day. Where food is provided or used for cooking activities, appropriate hygiene procedures are followed.

Staff follow the school's emergency procedures should a choking incident occur. Through these practices, we aim to create a safe, positive and enjoyable eating environment for all children.

Rest and Sleep

We recognise that some children may occasionally require rest during the school day, for example if they are unwell, tired or fall asleep unexpectedly. Any child requiring rest will be appropriately supervised and cared for in a safe and comfortable part of the classroom. If a child falls asleep, a clean mat and blanket will be provided to ensure they can rest comfortably. Parents and carers will be informed where appropriate. The school will work in partnership with parents and carers to meet individual needs and ensure children's well-being at all times.

5. The Importance of Early Years Stage of Education

The EYFS provides the foundation for children's future learning, development and well-being. During this period, children rapidly develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that support their success in school and later life. High-quality early education promotes children's independence, resilience, curiosity and confidence, whilst fostering positive relationships and a love of learning.

At Caldecote Primary School, we recognise that every child is a unique individual who learns and develops at their own rate. Through an ambitious curriculum, high-quality interactions, play-based learning and carefully planned experiences, we provide children with the secure foundations they need to thrive. We aim to create an environment where children feel safe, valued and supported, enabling them to develop academically, socially, emotionally and physically and reach their full potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

We follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers**, which sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years. Children learn through a range of rich, meaningful experiences that support their development across all areas of learning.

Our curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and carefully planned to meet the needs, interests and developmental stages of all children. We recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers to support children's learning and development.

The EYFS identifies three **Characteristics of Effective Learning** which underpin all learning and development:

1. **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active Learning** – children concentrate, persevere and enjoy their achievements.
3. **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children develop their own ideas, make connections and solve problems.

These characteristics support children to become confident, independent and motivated learners.

The EYFS curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning and development.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The prime areas provide the foundations for learning and are particularly important in supporting children's development. The specific areas build upon these foundations and provide children with the knowledge and skills needed for future learning. Through high-quality teaching, play-based experiences and purposeful adult interactions, children are supported to make good progress across all areas of the curriculum.

British Values

Through the EYFS curriculum and daily interactions, children are supported to develop the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. These values are promoted through opportunities for children to make choices, take turns, share ideas, build positive relationships, understand expectations and celebrate similarities and differences within our school community and the wider world.

6. How Young Children Learn: Basic Principles of Good Early Years Practice

We recognise that children learn best through a combination of play, exploration, active learning and meaningful experiences. Our practice is guided by the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage and is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

We believe that children learn most effectively when:

- they feel safe, secure, valued and supported within positive and nurturing relationships;
- learning is planned around their interests, needs, stage of development and prior experiences;
- they have opportunities to play, explore, investigate and develop their own ideas;
- they are engaged, motivated and challenged through high-quality interactions and experiences;
- they are encouraged to become independent, resilient and confident learners;
- adults build on what children already know and can do, supporting them to make progress in their learning;
- they have frequent opportunities to develop communication and language through conversations, storytelling, questioning and discussion;
- they experience a rich language environment that develops vocabulary and understanding;
- they have daily opportunities to develop early reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills;
- learning is practical, hands-on and rooted in first-hand experiences;
- they are encouraged to explore, observe and develop an understanding of the natural world and their wider environment;

- they can be creative, imaginative and expressive through a range of experiences and resources;
- they have time to think, practise, revisit and consolidate new learning;
- learning is enjoyable, meaningful and promotes a lifelong love of learning.

Through these experiences, children develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to succeed both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and beyond.

The Importance of Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Play is at the heart of the EYFS and is fundamental to children's learning and development. Through play, children explore, investigate, create, communicate and make sense of the world around them. Play provides opportunities for children to develop confidence, resilience, independence and problem-solving skills while building knowledge across all areas of learning.

At Caldecote Primary School, we ensure that play is purposeful, well-planned and supported by skilled adults who observe children's interests and extend their learning through high-quality interactions. Children are provided with opportunities for child-initiated and adult-guided play, both indoors and outdoors, enabling them to learn independently, collaboratively and creatively.

Through play, children develop communication and language skills, social relationships, critical thinking, imagination and a lifelong love of learning.

7. The Learning Environment

We provide a safe, inclusive and stimulating learning environment where all children feel valued, supported and able to thrive. We recognise that children learn best through positive relationships, enabling environments and engaging experiences that reflect their interests, needs and stages of development.

We:

- provide a welcoming and nurturing environment where every child is respected as a unique individual;
- offer rich indoor and outdoor learning opportunities across all areas of the EYFS curriculum;
- ensure learning spaces are safe, accessible and well organised;
- promote independence by enabling children to access resources and make choices in their learning;
- provide high-quality resources that support exploration, creativity and curiosity;
- create an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all children, including those with SEND;
- promote communication and language development through meaningful interactions and a language-rich environment;
- support children to learn through play, first-hand experiences and sustained shared thinking;

- deliver an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that builds knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time;
- encourage children to develop confidence, resilience and a positive attitude towards learning.

Our learning environment is carefully designed to inspire curiosity, promote engagement and support all children to achieve their full potential.

8. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most important educators. We value the strong partnerships we build with families and believe that working together is essential in supporting children's learning, development and well-being.

We are committed to maintaining open, positive and effective communication with parents and carers and ensuring they are actively involved in their child's education. By sharing information and working collaboratively, we develop a thorough understanding of each child and can provide learning experiences that meet their individual needs and interests.

We support strong home-school partnerships through:

- meetings with parents and carers before children start school;
- opportunities to visit the setting and meet staff;
- curriculum information and guidance to support learning at home;
- regular parents' consultation meetings and an annual report on children's progress;
- ongoing communication between home and school;
- opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their child's development with staff;
- information evenings and workshops that support understanding of the curriculum and early learning;
- encouragement to participate in school events, the PTA where possible;
- home learning opportunities that support and enhance children's learning.

We value parental contributions and encourage parents and carers to share information about their child's achievements, interests and experiences outside of school. This helps us to build a complete picture of each child and strengthens the partnership between home and school.

9.The Role of Governors

The Governing Body plays an important role in supporting and challenging the school to ensure that the EYFS provision remains of a high quality and complies with statutory requirements. Governors monitor the effectiveness of the EYFS curriculum, safeguarding arrangements, outcomes for children and the implementation of relevant school policies to ensure all children receive the best possible start to their education.

10. Organisation and Transitions

Children join Reception in the school year in which they turn five. We recognise that starting school is a significant milestone for children and their families, and we are committed to ensuring a positive and supportive transition into school life.

We work closely with parents, carers and pre-school settings to help children settle confidently into Reception. A carefully planned induction process supports children in becoming familiar with their new environment, routines and relationships. Where appropriate, transition arrangements may be adapted to meet individual children's needs.

The Reception class is led by a qualified teacher and supported by trained support staff. Staff work together to provide a safe, nurturing and engaging learning environment where children are well supported throughout the school day. Appropriate supervision is maintained at all times, including during indoor and outdoor learning, lunchtime and wider school activities.

We recognise that moving into Year 1 is an important step in every child's school journey. We work closely with children, families and Year 1 staff to ensure a smooth and positive transition. Through visits, shared activities and the careful transfer of information, children are supported to feel confident, secure and excited about the next stage of their learning.

Key Person Approach

In Reception, children are supported by their class teacher and teaching assistant, who develop secure and positive relationships with each child and their family. These relationships help children to feel safe, valued and confident, supporting their emotional well-being, learning and development. Staff work closely with parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are understood and met throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

11. Equal Opportunities

All pupils will have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of their race, culture, background, gender or disability. All areas for equal opportunity will be taken into consideration in the planning and delivery of lessons and activities. Provision should be made to enable the use of switches, IT communication aids, etc. and the development of and support given by staff.

12. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At Caldecote Primary School, we are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children are valued, respected and supported to achieve their full potential. We recognise that children develop and learn at different rates and that some children may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which require additional support.

We follow the principles set out in the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)** and the **Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework**. All children are entitled to access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum, regardless of their individual needs or starting points.

Staff work closely with parents, carers and external professionals to identify children's needs as early as possible. Ongoing observation and assessment enable practitioners to monitor children's progress and plan appropriate support. Where concerns are identified, teachers work alongside the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and families to implement a graduated approach of **assess, plan, do and review**.

We strive to ensure that:

- all children are fully included in the life of the school;
- teaching is adapted to meet individual needs and enable all children to access the curriculum;
- reasonable adjustments are made where necessary;
- barriers to learning are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity;
- children's strengths, interests and achievements are recognised and celebrated;
- effective partnerships are established with parents, carers and external agencies to support children's development and well-being.

Where appropriate, support may be provided through targeted interventions, adapted resources, additional adult support, specialist advice or individual support plans. The views of the child and their family are central to decision-making and provision planning.

Through high expectations, inclusive practice and positive relationships, we aim to ensure that every child is supported to make good progress and develop the confidence, independence and skills needed for future learning.

Further information can be found in the school's SEND Policy and SEND Information Report

13. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It enables practitioners to understand children's progress, identify their strengths and next steps, and plan learning experiences that meet their individual needs. We recognise that every child is unique and brings their own experiences, interests, knowledge and skills to school.

Assessment is primarily based on **ongoing formative assessment**, which takes place through observation, interactions, play and adult-led activities. Staff use professional judgement to understand children's learning and development and to inform future teaching, provision and support. Assessment information is used to:

- inform teaching and learning;
- adapt provision to meet children's needs;

- identify strengths, barriers to learning and any additional support required;
- celebrate progress and achievement.

Our assessments are informed by the **EYFS Statutory Framework**, **Development Matters**, and the school's own curriculum and assessment frameworks for Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

Alongside ongoing assessment, children participate in a range of curriculum-based assessments to support teachers in monitoring progress and identifying next steps. These include phonics, early reading, mathematics and fine motor development assessments.

In accordance with statutory requirements:

- children complete the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** within the first six weeks of starting Reception;
- practitioners complete the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)** at the end of the Reception year, assessing children's attainment against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's learning and development through ongoing communication, parent consultation meetings and an annual written report. We value parents' contributions to assessment and work in partnership with families to support every child's progress. Opportunities such as workshops, curriculum presentations, open events and Seesaw updates enable parents to share in and celebrate their child's learning journey.

Assessment in the EYFS is used to support children's development and ensure that every child is given the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential.

14. Monitoring and Review

The EYFS Leader and Senior Leadership Team monitor the quality of provision, teaching, learning and assessment within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Governors support and monitor the effectiveness of EYFS provision and ensure statutory requirements are met.

The Policy statement will be reviewed in line with the rolling programme of Policy reviews.

Headteacher: …..…… Date:……

Chair of Governors: ……..…..… Date: ……..