

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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## 1. Aims

Children joining our school are taking their next steps on their learning journey. Many have been learning in a pre-school educational setting already and, most importantly, at home.

This policy aims to ensure:

- Children access a wide-ranging and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- A rich, stimulating, and enjoyable learning environment both indoors and outdoors.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child falls behind.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and parents / carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

We will:

- Develop confidence by building on what a child already knows, understand, and can do.
- Celebrate each child's success in all its forms and valuing their efforts.
- Ensure that each child is well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

## 2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/426273/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-statutory-framework.pdf)

*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 EYFS DfE 2021)

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Structure of EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Caroline Chisholm School, children are admitted to the Foundation Stage in the September following their fourth birthday.

We recognise that the learning environment plays a crucial role in supporting and extending the children's development – an environment where the children feel safe, secure and challenged.

The Foundation Stage setting comprises an intake of 60 pupils organised into two class groups who have the opportunity for free flow movement between the two classroom areas. All children have access to the large well-equipped outdoor covered play area and the Forest School area. EYFS children also have access to the primary playground and climbing equipment when required.

EYFS children benefit from access to a wide range of additional high-quality facilities within our all-through school setting, as appropriate, which include the school's Learning Resource Centre (LRC) and extensive sports and performing arts facilities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

## 4. A unique child

At Caroline Chisholm School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within our school. All children are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion, or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. We aim to enable each child to become a high performing learner through well-matched and challenging learning opportunities which will support their progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and beyond. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all groups and abilities whilst taking account of children's different life experiences.

The school ensures an inclusive approach to the education, opportunities, and experiences of all children within the Foundation Stage. In consultation with parents, arrangements are put in place to support the academic progress and well-being of any child with an identified special educational need or disability.

## 5. Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident, and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, and professional relationships with children and their families which brings about a sense of belonging to our school community. Staff are sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests and are supportive of the child's own efforts and independence. Positive relationships flourish when expectations are high and clear boundaries are set.

## 6. Enabling environments

At Caroline Chisholm School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel safe, secure, and challenged. The children have daily access to a high quality indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

The Foundation Stage classroom provision enables children to locate equipment and resources independently. We also provide a Forest School curriculum where children regularly access an outdoor learning programme through our onsite Forest School. This has a positive effect on the children's development, offering opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives the children the opportunity to explore, to use their senses and to be physically active and exuberant.

## 7. Learning and development

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2017 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning.

Foundation Stage pupils also participate in daily, synthetic phonics sessions, drawing on the guidance from the best of recommended programmes including 'Letters & Sounds', 'Jolly Phonics' 'Phonics Bug'. All areas of learning and development have equal weighting and value. They require a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities which enable most children to reach the Early Learning Goals that are required at the end of the Foundation Stage.

## 8. Characteristics of effective learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective learning. These are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout the EYFS.

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

1. Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and to 'have a go'.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Our unique Forest Schools environment also supports and improves children's experiences outdoors.

2. Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and to keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and to enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning and take pride in everything that they do.

3. Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas, and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

## 9. Teaching

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage setting at Caroline Chisholm School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2017). This document is a principled approach to early years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes explained above: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development'.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

We believe that **'Play is the work of the young child'**. Play, both indoors and outdoors, provides the key context in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In our Foundation Stage we do not differentiate between work and play.

Play activities in the Foundation Stage classes are often initiated by the children, as we believe this encourages independent learning. We also provide carefully planned and sometimes adult-led play opportunities whilst continuing to follow the children's interests, passions, and abilities. When the adult intervenes in play the child's learning is moved forward and extended. Adults also play a crucial role in extending and supporting the children's spontaneous play, curiosity, and exploration in their environment.

As children grow older and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

## 10. Assessment and Reporting

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents and carers.

During the first term of the Foundation Stage in school, the teacher assesses the competencies of each child through observation and assessments to form a baseline assessment. These assessments enable us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as 'Emerging', 'Expected' or 'Exceeding'. Children's attainment is tracked throughout the year and intervention groups are put in place to support and extend children's knowledge and understanding. Assessment in the Foundation Stage comprises of formal and informal observations complete with

photographic evidence and also takes place through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

As well as our internal baseline, we also complete a Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment which is submitted by the end of the first 6 weeks of the child starting school. The assessments carried out are within Mathematics and Communication and Language.

Tracking grids are updated each time a child is observed or assessed. We record each child's level of development as 'emerging within', 'developing within' or 'securely working within' the Development Matters age-bands. The Foundation Stage Leaders monitor the progress and attainment of the Foundation Stage cohort and at the end of each term, whole class and individual tracking sheets are printed and shared both within the Foundation Stage team and to the Leadership team.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- 'Meeting' expected levels of development.
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('Emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers. At the end of the final term in the Foundation Stage a summary of these assessments is reported to the Local Authority for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We also share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year Annual Report to parents.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers a teacher's comment on each child's progress and characteristics of effective learning. It highlights the child's attainment and development needs.

## 11. Transition

Starting school is an exciting and challenging time for young children as they settle into full time school; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children's transition and ensure that their experience is as smooth and effective as it can be to achieve the best possible start.

Our Foundation Stage pupils come from many different pre-school settings. We make every effort to visit each child in his / her pre-school setting during the summer term prior to admission to school. In order to ensure continuity and progression of learning and well-being, the child's pre-school setting will forward a copy of his / her report or transition document to us. We can then use this document to plan for the first term and support our baseline assessments.

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an induction meeting in the summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Parents / carers are invited to a 'Stay and Play' session with their child in the summer term before starting school. Following this, the children are given an opportunity on transition day to come into school on their own to meet their teacher for a second time and to meet other children in



their class. They will spend a morning or afternoon in their new class. This means that before they join school the Foundation Stage environment is already a familiar place to them.

Throughout the Foundation Stage year, each child's involvement in whole school life will be further developed so that they become familiar with many of the teaching and support staff outside the immediate Foundation Stage team. They will take part in key stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 and 2 children.

It is our aim to establish positive and caring relationships between the youngest and oldest pupils in the primary phase of the school and to this end, we pair children with a Year 6 mentor (buddy) during their Foundation Stage year. This is an important partnership which helps children to develop confidence in school and establish friendships with older pupils in the school. Likewise, the Year 6 pupils develop their sense of responsibility as a role model, mentor and friend.

We believe that early year's education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1 and during the summer term Foundation Stage children participate in planned, transition to Year 1 experiences which build confidence and allow continuity of learning.

## 1.2. Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. The class teacher helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. Class teachers support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home and help families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

A child's best potential is achieved when home and schoolwork together and so our Home-School Agreement aims to encourage this vital, supportive partnership. We recognise that parents / carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Providing a handbook of information about starting school at Caroline Chisholm School.
- Inviting parents / carers and children to a 'Stay and Play' session in their new classroom before starting school.
- Holding timely parent/teacher consultations during the academic year and sharing termly assessments and targets for a child through our learning logs and 'Master Cards'.
- Providing a written report on each child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Foundation Stage.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents and carers with any queries or concerns.

- Making regular written contact through the Home-School Learning Log and school newsletters and encouraging parents to contribute to their child's 'Learning Journal' through our parent share online system.
- Sending up-to-date observations of a child directly to parents / carers outlining achievements and next steps in learning.
- Leading parent workshops about areas of the curriculum; phonics and reading, mathematics, physical literacy, writing and personal, social and emotional development.
- Inviting parents to a range of special events and activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, stay and play sessions, special celebration productions, workshops, fun days, sports day, etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g., hearing readers.

### 13. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance (2017) and which are outlined in our school child protection and safeguarding policy. The school is compliant with procedures relating to government disclosure and barring service (DBS) and Safer Recruitment Legislation.

*'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'*

*(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)*

We will:

- Provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health including the provision of healthy meals and snacks.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that all adults working or volunteering within the setting are suitable to work with children and compliant with safer recruitment legislation.
- Ensure that the setting and provision is safe and suitable for the purpose intended including first aid, fire safety/evacuation and emergency procedures.
- Maintain effective records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting.
- Comply with GDPR regulations in relation to the management of personal data and information.

## 14. Monitoring Arrangements

It is the responsibility of those working in Foundation Stage to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Foundation Stage Leaders and Leadership team will carry out quality assurance of the EYFS as part of the whole school schedule.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.