

**Cedars Primary School and Nursery**  
**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**



*'We want every child to be happy, caring and successful'*

## **Rationale**

“Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support. When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.” (Development Matters, 2023)

At Cedars Primary School and Nursery, the Early Years Foundation Stage is viewed as a distinctive phase of education which integrates the care and education of our youngest children. We believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning which must be acknowledged and built upon. It is vital that parents are valued as children’s first educators and that they are active partners in their child’s school education.

## **Our Core Purpose**

At Cedars Primary School and Nursery, we provide highly effective teaching and learning within a culture of challenge, nurture and support. We support all children to progress to be the best they can be. Our curriculum enables as many children as possible to achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and we build on this in subsequent years.

## **Principles**

At Cedars Primary all children, staff and governors take pride in our school. We have the highest expectations for our children and work together to enable each of them to achieve the very best they can. All success is celebrated. Our EYFS policy is directly related to our school vision, values and curriculum statement. It documents further aims and strategies we employ to address the four overarching principles of EYFS:

- 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 independently through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers.
- We recognise the importance of all areas of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Effective Practice in relation to each of the four overarching principles of EYFS, the seven key features of effective practice and the characteristics of effective teaching and learning is detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Development Matters (links below).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Our carefully planned curriculum, quality interactions and use of assessment ensures that we address the seven key features of effective practice:

- Providing the best for every child.
- Offering consistent, high-quality care for all of our children.
- Planning a curriculum with a focus on what we want children to learn.
- Using a range of different approaches to ensure our pedagogy is effective in helping children to learn.
- Implementing a range of assessment strategies to check what children have learnt in order to inform future planning.
- Supporting children to develop their self-regulation and executive function.
- Developing a strong partnership with parents through positive and regular communications.

### **The Areas of Teaching and Learning**

Our Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. The prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The 3 prime areas are:

- **Communication and language**
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- **Physical development**
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- **Personal, social and emotional development**
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships

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

- **Literacy**
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- **Mathematics**
  - Number
  - Numerical patterns
- **Understanding the world**

- Past and present
- People, culture and communities
- The natural world
- **Expressive arts and design**
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

We recognise that teaching can take place at all times of the day through directed teaching sessions, through times of play inside and outside the classroom. Weekly and daily planning formalise this and aim to ensure a balance of formal and informal learning. Staff are encouraged to think carefully about their questions and interventions in children's learning in order to optimise this. Learning should be personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills.

At appropriate opportunities the adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage all children
- Demonstrate, model and work alongside the children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support and encourage all children
- Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- Re-direct play if necessary
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promote children's well-being
- Observe and assess learning
- Plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We uphold the view that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The 3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.

It is our aim that children leave the EYFS with:

- a positive 'can do' attitude to learning
- a willingness to take risks and make mistakes
- high levels of engagement in a task where they can practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- perseverance
- a love of learning
- ideas of their own, that they can plan and follow through

### **Early Language, Reading and Mathematics**

At Cedars Primary School and Nursery, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other. For early phonics teaching, the school follows the Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the only strategy used for decoding. The children start by taking home sound blending books and by the end of Autumn 2 they take home RWI reading books. The school also places an importance on the development of early comprehension skills; in line with the Revised Framework to ensure that children are able, to comprehend what they read and listen to. This sits alongside the development of children's speaking, listening and language skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment. Adults also strive to promote a love of reading through daily story time and carefully chosen books within the learning environment. Teachers closely monitor children's progress in reading through individual reading and regular phonics assessments to ensure that interventions are implemented to address gaps in learning promptly. Advice is sought from the inclusion team where these do not prove successful.

We follow the Mastering Numbering programme for our maths sessions. This programme ensures that all children are given opportunities to develop good number sense and have a deep understanding of early number. Maths is taught through a range of experiences including counting as part of the daily routine; discreet daily teaching with follow up group activities and play based opportunities and experiences through the learning environment. We recognise that maths can take place in any environment and we promote the use of learning maths skills through play-based opportunities. As with phonics, children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and support measures are put into place. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in whole class teaching, extending the children's understanding, allowing key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year.

## **Play**

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be lively and interactive, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.

Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, the desired outcomes for the end of the EYFS.

## **Planning**

Long term curriculum maps ensure progression from Nursery to Reception and ensure children have all the knowledge and skills they need to effectively access Year 1 and their continuing education. These curriculum maps and the analysis of data and on-going assessments ensure that the areas of learning are planned through a series of topics, influenced by the pupils' interests, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. These plans then inform short-term weekly planning.

Adult focused and independent activities are planned on a weekly basis. Children have the opportunity to work in each of the learning areas within the classroom and outdoors. Whole class, group and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, our early years practitioners interact and question to challenge children. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

## **Assessment**

At Cedars Primary School and Nursery, ongoing 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. The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first six weeks of a child starting in Reception. We also use a range of assessments, both formative and summative, with individual pupils throughout the year.

At the end of Reception, teachers 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 among teachers working with the children. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) in the summer term when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. We formally report to parents three times a year; a parents consultation evening in November and March and a written report in July. The report in July is a detailed, written summary and contains information about how each child learns and an assessment against each of the seven areas of learning.

### **Relationships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

We know what an important role parents/carers play in their children's learning journey and we aim to involve them as much as possible in school life. We recognise the huge contribution that parents make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents. We seek to start building relationships with parents from the term before their child starts school, through clear communication and the initial visits and information sessions. We do this in a range of different ways, which range from communication with home to inviting parents into the school setting. These include:

- Introductory sessions
- Stay and play sessions
- Reading books shared between home and school
- Termly newsletters
- Parent Celebrations
- Parents consultations

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Transition**

At Cedars Primary School and Nursery we pride ourselves on the efficient transition process we offer to ensure a successful start for all children who join our school. For children joining our Nursery, we offer three stay and play sessions where children can develop relationships with staff and become familiar with the environment. Parents are invited to an information evening prior to starting and Early Years staff visit the child at their home. Children starting Nursery are offered a staggered and gradual start if needed based on their individual needs. For children starting in Reception, we work closely with the local pre-schools to ensure that we have detailed information about the children prior to them starting school. The Early Years Leader visits the pre-schools in the summer term to observe the children prior to them starting school. We invite the children to join us for three stay and play sessions in the summer term and parents/carers are invited to an information evening. Early Years staff carry out home visits during the autumn term and the children to further develop relationships with parents/carers and children. Children joining from

our Nursery are familiar with the Reception staff and environment. They have the opportunity to spend time in the Reception area during the summer term.

As the children prepare to enter KS1, the Early Years teachers meet with the Year 1 teachers to discuss the attainment and development of all children. These discussions help the Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. The children will also spend time with their new teacher in the Year 1 classroom.

## **Safety**

At Cedars Primary School and Nursery, we believe children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. Children's safety and welfare is paramount to us. We create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies in place to safeguard children and daily procedures are in place to encourage children to operate in safe ways and to keep them safe.

Staffing arrangements in our Nursery class and in all our Reception classes meet needs of all the children and ensure their safety. We are compliant with the statutory requirements for staff:child ratios.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. We promote good oral health and strive for all children to be able to manage their personal needs by the end of the EYFS including having knowledge of ways to stay healthy and safe.

## **Intimate Care**

On some occasions it may be necessary for staff to give intimate care to pupils. These are defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene.

- Routine personal hygiene is not carried out by teachers or assistants but they will offer verbal support for pupils who may require this.
- Nursery staff will inform another member of staff when they are giving intimate care.
- Reception staff will carry out intimate care with another member of staff present
- Pupils will be treated with respect; each stage of the procedure will be carefully explained and will only proceed with the pupils consent.
- If there are any safeguarding concerns relating to any illness or injury of an intimate nature staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Communication about the wetting or soiling incident will be handled sensitively and discreetly between members of staff and to the parents of the child.



## **Inclusion**

We value all of our children as unique individuals at Cedars Primary School and Nursery, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children meet the expected levels of development against the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. At times, it is necessary to work with children in a small group or on an individual basis outside of the learning environment to allow for specialist input e.g. Speech and Language support. However, whenever possible, support is provided within the classroom context.

Written by	Bethan James
Ratified by Governors	Autumn 2023
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Signed – Chair of Governors	K.Warren
Signed – Headteacher	J.Goldsmith