



**Cavendish**  
Primary School

## **Early Years Policy**

Date of Issue	Review Date	Date Ratified by Governing Body
June 2026	June 2029	June 2026

## Statement of intent

Our school recognises the vital importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing children with a secure, nurturing and ambitious foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in line with relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that every child has a happy, positive and successful start to school life, enabling them to build confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote high-quality teaching and learning so that children are ready for the next stage of their education and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to make strong progress through school and later life.

We are committed to providing:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes strong progress from their individual starting points.
- **A secure foundation**, through learning and development opportunities that are carefully planned around the needs, interests and experiences of each child, and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working**, with strong relationships between practitioners, parents and carers supporting children's learning and wellbeing.
- **Equality of opportunity** ensuring that every child is included, valued and supported to thrive.

## **Aims**

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy, positive and successful start to school life, enabling them to establish a secure foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence, confidence and resilience within a secure, caring and stimulating environment.
- Support children to build positive relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation, turn-taking, kindness and sharing.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to understand and meet each child's individual needs, supporting them to reach their full potential.

Four overarching principles shape our 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 who respond to their individual interests and needs, help them to build on prior learning over time, and work closely with parents and carers.
- Learning and development matter. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and provision is responsive to these differences.

To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

## **Learning and development**

In partnership with parents and carers, the school promotes children's learning and development so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

EYFS provision and practice are informed by careful observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning is planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances, ensuring that each child experiences purposeful, challenging and enjoyable opportunities.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development 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 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics:
  - Numbers
  - 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

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school ensures that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, with careful regard to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play, and are willing to try new things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep trying when they encounter difficulties, and take pride in their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for approaching tasks.

Further information regarding progression from the EYFS into the National Curriculum is set out in the school's progression documents.

## Assessment

Assessment plays an important role in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan meaningful activities, and identify where additional support may be required.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and carers.

Ongoing formative assessment is used to understand the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners interact with and observe children to identify their interests, strengths and next steps, using this information to inform practice and provision.

The EYFS setting undertakes summative assessment of each child's development at key points. These include:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment completed within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception.
- Initial baseline assessments in Nursery and Reception during the autumn term.
- Termly assessment points throughout the EYFS.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS, providing a rounded picture of each child's knowledge, understanding, abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and readiness for Year 1.

On a termly basis, pupils are RAG-rated to indicate whether they are on track, working towards, or working below age-related expectations. These assessments are informed by evidence gathered by teachers and key people through observations, independent work, and adult-focused activities in Literacy and Mathematics books. This evidence contributes to pupil progress and achievement discussions.

The school ensures that teachers actively involve children, parents, carers and other adults who have significant interaction with specific children in assessment processes, helping to build a rounded picture of each child's development and attainment.

The school will ensure that assessment processes allow adults to spend as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. Teachers will not be required to record or document excessive evidence to prove children's level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements in order to plan the next steps in learning.

The school reports EYFS Profile results to the LA when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead will discuss any concerns about a child's progress with the child's parents or carers and the SENDCo, particularly where concerns relate to the prime areas of learning. A

strategy of support will be agreed and consideration will be given to whether the child may have SEND and require additional support.

The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning, whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of the English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills and whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

### **Inclusion**

All children are valued as individuals, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability, gender or any protected characteristic. The Trust's Equality Information and Objectives Statement supports the school in ensuring that the needs of all children are recognised and met.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures that all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting is monitored and managed by the school's SENDCo.

The EYFS curriculum is planned to meet the needs of each individual child and to support them to make progress at an appropriate pace.

### **Role of the Key Person**

Each child is assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care and learning are tailored to meet their individual needs. This helps the child become familiar with the setting and supports a strong relationship between the child, their parents or carers, and the school.

Practitioners at Cavendish Primary School:

- Keep children safe and promote their wellbeing.
- Understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, and plan appropriate next steps.
- Identify where additional support may be needed and respond promptly.
- Support children to develop a positive sense of identity, belonging and culture.
- Value and respect all children and families equally.

### **The learning environment and outdoor spaces**

The learning environment is organised so that children can explore, investigate and learn independently within a safe, purposeful and interactive setting.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor environment, and daily access to outdoor learning is planned as an integral part of the EYFS provision.

## **Teachers' planning and organisation**

EYFS class teachers are responsible for the planning and delivery of the Early Years curriculum, in consultation with the Early Years Leader. Planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are informed by Development Matters. All areas are delivered through a carefully planned, play-based approach, with an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning is based on themes and interests that act as meaningful vehicles for delivering children's next steps in learning. Planning is adapted systematically to reflect practitioners' ongoing assessments of pupils. Discrete Literacy, Mathematics and Phonics sessions take place daily. Additional directed teaching, including Understanding the World, PSHE and Music, also takes place each week.

Long-term planning ensures coverage of all areas of learning across the EYFS. Medium- and short-term plans ensure that every child has opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in each area at an appropriate developmental level.

At Cavendish Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Through high-quality interactions with children, practitioners assess interests, development and learning needs before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences that extend learning.

## **Being healthy**

The school promotes the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health and healthy routines.

Regular opportunities for physical activity are an integral part of each day.

All food provided is healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh water is always available and children are offered a snack as part of a structured snack time. We record any dietary needs and display these in the appropriate areas. Children are supervised and encouraged to be independent in eating and drinking.

## **Staffing**

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

There will be at least two members of staff with a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate on the school premises at all times, and a member of staff with a current PFA certificate will accompany children on school outings. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification

will be PFA trained. The school will ensure that PFA training is renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in classrooms.

The school provides staffing ratios in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school adopts the following staffing ratios:

- For children aged three and over:
  - Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
  - Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- For children in Reception classes:
  - Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and children's safety are maintained, will changes be made to staffing ratios.

Each child is assigned a key person whose role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The EYFS lead will inform parents of who their child's key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school.

### **Parental involvement**

We firmly believe that successful EYFS provision depends on strong, positive partnerships with parents and carers.

Parents and carers are invited to regular meetings to discuss their child's progress. The school also operates an open-door approach, and parents and carers are welcome to speak to teachers at the start and end of the school day where appropriate.

Parents and carers are updated regularly about their child's learning through ClassDojo. All Early Years staff contribute to each child's individual learning journey by sharing significant moments and updating the class story with current learning and topics.

### **Transition**

Before children join our school:

- Families are contacted and invited for a visit with their child.
- Information meetings for new parents and carers are held with the Early Years lead to share key information and meet class teachers.
- Staff visit children in their current pre-school settings.

- Children attend a settling-in session in September with their parents or carers before attending independently.

As children transition to their next year group, we will:

- Inform parents and carers in advance of the new class and offer opportunities for discussion where needed.
- Organise sessions for children to visit their new class with familiar staff.
- Hold transition meetings between teachers before the end of the year, ensuring new teachers are fully prepared to meet the needs of their new class.

### **Monitoring and review**

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with the processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction and ongoing professional practice.