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*Excellence, Respect, Friendship*

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# **CAWSTON GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

2025- 2026

## **1. Introduction**

‘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 [DfE 2024]

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Cawston Grange Primary School, children are admitted into reception in the September following their fourth birthday. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Cawston Grange Primary School, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

## **2. Curriculum Intent**

At Cawston Grange Primary School, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is crucial in securing solid foundations that children are going to continue to build upon. Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we celebrate and welcome differences within our diverse school community. It is our intent that the children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. We begin each academic year by looking at the individual needs of our children and taking into account their different starting points. Using this information, we then carefully tailor our curriculum to suit their needs and stage of development in a way that enables them to progress along their own unique learning journey. We constantly provide enrichment opportunities to capture children’s interests and inspire a love of learning. We believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in our lives, where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a thirst for new experiences and knowledge. At Cawston Grange Primary School we use our Whole School Values to promote positive attitudes to learning which reflect the values and skills needed to promote responsibility for learning and future success.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Cawston Grange Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and help each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage that applies from September 2024. This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

It builds on what our children already know and can do;

It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;

It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;

It provides a rich and stimulating environment;

It acknowledges the importance of a working partnership with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has four guiding principles that shape our practice. These are:

☑ A Unique Child

☑ Positive Relationships

☑ Enabling Environments

☑ Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

At Cawston Grange Primary 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.

**Inclusion** - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children and families at Cawston Grange Primary School are valued and treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities and of children from all social and cultural backgrounds.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary, with support and guidance from our SENDCo.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and enabling them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Cawston Grange Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

**Parents as Partners** - 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:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our induction meeting.
- Providing a starter pack of information about commencing Reception at Cawston Grange.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Inviting all new starters to spend time in Reception Class for a stay and play session during the summer term.
- Providing a curriculum meeting for parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding a parent consultation in the autumn term to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Reception staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through the Reading record and school newsletters.
- Regular updates on Class Dojo to inform them about what we have been learning about and sharing our Knowledge Organiser at the beginning of each half term, outlining some of our curriculum content.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Having regular access to the children's books on request and at parent's evening.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending written reports on their child's attainment and progress.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as the Christmas Nativity play, project afternoons and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to volunteer and support at school events or on school trips, or inviting them to share information about their cultural celebrations or job role.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Cawston Grange Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up to facilitate areas of learning with planned and enhanced continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and is centred around the individual's interests, passions and abilities. Enhancements and provocations are also added to provide them with new experiences and opportunities to show curiosity and develop new skills. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

The Learning Environment -The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be creative, be imaginative or find a calm quiet space.

Children have access to both inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales to when they are indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. It also enables them the opportunity to take and manage risks. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

## Learning and Developing

Our Reception curriculum is underpinned by the seven areas of learning identified in the EYFS framework and Development Matters. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The Specific areas are:

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

Our Reception pupils also participate in daily phonics sessions, following the Little Wandle scheme, and weekly reading practice sessions. The children have plenty of opportunities to practise tuning in to sounds as well as developing their letter formation and writing skills through regular practice and discrete Letter-join handwriting sessions. Reading practice focuses on decoding, prosody and comprehension of the stories read. The books are matched closely to reflect the phonemes and graphemes that have been taught, enabling consolidation and a secure recognition of each sound. Children are encouraged to experience a wide range of texts and are able to regularly swap their reading books as well as access our library and e-books in order to practise their reading skills at home and develop a love of reading.

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

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

Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things via having a go. 'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.' (DfES, 2007)

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They 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.

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

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.

#### **4. Implementation**

Planning - The EYFS Statutory Framework provides the basis for our planning throughout Reception and our medium-term planning aims to gradually prepare all children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of their time in Reception. The planning objectives within the EYFS are drawn from the Development Matters Statements and the Birth-to-Five document. We use the Cornerstones thematic curriculum to ensure a comprehensive skills and knowledge framework is delivered. This scheme is based upon broad themes which we adapt and tailor to suit the needs of our learners, with discrete phonics, maths, handwriting and reading directed teaching. We plan to cover all Areas of Learning using a topic based approach, but also embrace opportunities to follow and extend upon individual interests.

As well as being an active participant in their learning, we also take time to observe them in their play and assess where the children are currently working at in order to help inform our planning. All staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning.

#### **5. Assessing Impact and Reporting**

Assessment plays an important part in helping us understand children's needs and plan activities that support their progress. We ensure that pupils make at least good progress across all Areas of Learning by identifying their needs and promptly addressing them in order to close gaps in their understanding and aid their development. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. Through play-based interactions, conversations, sustained shared thinking and planned activities, adults in the setting will gather information that helps them to gain a picture of each child and their next steps. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

During the first half term in Reception, we assess each child using the Reception Baseline Assessment and a series of fun, play based activities. These assessments allow us to identify children's individual starting points and plan according to their developmental stages.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term to provide a summary of children's attainment at different stages throughout the year, which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. In the summer term of Reception, we will complete the Early Years Foundation Stage profile, a statutory assessment which measures each child's development against the Early Learning Goals. We use teacher based judgements, observations and evidence to record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as 'Emerging' (not yet reaching the expected levels) or 'Expected' and this information is shared with parents, their year one teacher and the local authority.

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers. Therefore, we feel it is important to keep families updated with their child's progress and attainment throughout the year and encourage families to share information with us too. The class teacher is the assigned key person for every child in the class. They ensure that the curriculum is tailored to meet their needs and that parents and/or carers are supported in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We share information regarding children's progress and development with parents at consultation meetings and in written reports. Parents will also receive regular updates about our learning via the Class Dojo page.

Parents receive an end-of-year written report that discusses the child's characteristics of effective learning and celebrates the child's progress and development throughout their time in Reception. It highlights whether the child has met the Early Learning Goals, identifies some developmental next steps, and gives details of the child's general behaviour and attitude to learning. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

## **6. Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child so that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception – 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 as well as other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Briefly outline the EYFS curriculum
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction process into reception
- Answer any questions parents/carers may have

Prior to children starting school, teachers arrange phone calls and pre-school visits to gather information from children's current settings and find out more about each individual child's interests, personalities and stage of development. Further meetings are also arranged with our schools special educational needs coordinator (SENDco) and parents of children with additional needs, in order for us to understand how best to support them and coordinate with any outside agencies involved.

The children are able to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and learning assistant for a stay and play session during the summer term. This will help children to familiarise themselves with the new environment and they will have opportunities to develop new friendships in smaller group sizes. Parents are welcome to stay for the first sessions to help their child settle in or they may feel their child is confident to explore the environment independently. Families are issued a photo book prior to the transition day to help them prepare for the change in environment and this includes pictures of key areas within the school such as their indoor and outdoor classroom, the cloakroom, the toilets and the hall where the children eat for lunch.

September Intake - When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

During the first week, the children are split into two smaller group sizes and will rotate between morning and afternoon sessions. Each group will attend two morning sessions (and stay for lunch) and two afternoon sessions – this information will be given to new parents prior to the transition day in July. Parents are asked to complete a booklet regarding key family information and any medical or dietary needs their child has. They will also be asked to complete an 'All About Me' sheet with their child, so that we can find out more about them.

## 7. Safeguarding & Welfare

‘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 2024)

At Cawston Grange Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024.

To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;  
Promote good health and good oral health;

Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs;

To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;

Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;

Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

**Keeping Safe** - It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see our Safeguarding Children Policy).

**Good Health** – We teach and encourage all children to make healthy choices in regards to their diet, exercise, sensible amounts of screen time and sleep routines. All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk (up until the age of 5 this will be free and thereafter, parents can choose to pay for this via our Cool Milk provider). They have access to water at all times and are encouraged to bring in a water bottle each day, to help them stay hydrated. As part of the Universal Free School Meals government scheme, children are entitled to receive a free school meal until the end of year two. They are given five healthy meal choices, consisting of at least four vegetarian options every day and children always have adult supervision when they are eating, in line with our safer eating practices.

**Intimate Care** - “Intimate” care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child’s age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

### Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and Senior Leaders will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if deemed necessary.

### References:

DfE (2024) Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS\\_statutory\\_framework\\_for\\_group\\_and\\_school\\_based\\_providers.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

DfES (2007) EYFS card: ‘Learning and Development 4.1, Play and exploration’, London: DfES.