

**Early Years Policy**

The research is clear: a child’s early education lasts a lifetime. An excellent early education is the foundation for later success. At Coupals Primary Academy we provide a high quality education to give every child the best possible start and we are aspirational for **ALL** pupils.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Coupals Primary Academy.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS settings, including both teaching and non-teaching staff. It is the responsibility of the SLT to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

**Aims**

Our aim is to provide:

**Quality and consistency** so that every child makes good progress from their starting points 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 with parents and carers;

**Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

**Confident, motivated and happy learners**, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own learning, equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable a smooth transition into Year1.

**Principles**

Within Early Years education we offer our children learning that is based on the following principles:

* Build on what each child already knows and can do;
* Inclusivity to all groups of learners and individuals, taking into account children’s backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, EAL and SEND;
* Provide a rich and stimulating environment, including challenging, exciting and imaginative indoor and outdoor learning environments;
* Provide a wide range of opportunities for independent learning, adult-led learning, adult-initiated learning and child-initiated learning;
* Encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children’s learning;
* Provide a positive, supportive environment where children feel safe and secure to learn;
* Develop positive attitudes towards learning from an early age;
* Provide knowledge based on the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of learning;
* Provide an extensive range of opportunities for assessment in well thought out and detailed planning;

**Admissions**

**Reception** - Parents of children who require a Reception place will apply online to their Local Authority. Please see the school admissions department of your home local authority, the academy website and/or academy Admission Policy for details. All prospective parents are invited to visit our school and are taken on an informal tour. We also offer open sessions, for you to see the school, this may be during the day or an evening session, depending on demand.

**Legislation**

**Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Teaching in the EYFS at Coupals Primary Academy is delivered in accordance with the government’s statutory document, ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.’ (Updated 4th January 2024).

**Curriculum**

**Areas of Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in the EYFS at Coupals Primary Academy. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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.

**These three Prime Areas, are:**

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

Settings 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

In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

**Three 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;

**Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

**The Leuven scales** are used to measure children’s emotional well-being and involvement to assess learning, development and progress of children.

**Teaching & Learning**

Each areas of learning and development will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led play. Child-led play enables children to follow their own interests, where staff will develop learning by engaging in skilful, positive and warm interactions.

**English / Literacy**



In EYFS we follow the CUSP Early Foundations, which is guided by evidence-led curriculum structures, such as retrieval and spaced retrieval practice. It is underpinned by explicit vocabulary instruction and research-focused pedagogy.

**EYFS CUSP consists of three elements:**

**1. Foundational knowledge:** what pupils should know and be able to do throughout the EYFS and how this will support their development and prepare them for Key Stage 1.

**2. Opportunities and experiences:** how this foundational knowledge can be learnt through play and through guided activities that will allow pupils to explore, experiment with and think hard about new and important concepts.

**3. Structured Story Time:** core texts that will introduce key language, ideas and themes that pupils will need to access the foundational knowledge, built into a framework that uses all that we know about effective literacy instruction.

**Phonics**



We follow the Sounds-Write programme, an approved DfE provider to ensure consistency across the school. Sounds-Write is a highly structured, cumulative, sequential, explicit and code-oriented instructional programme for teaching all children to read and spell. For further information, please refer to our Phonics Policy.

Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school. They are given **books that match their phonic knowledge** in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers.

**Mathematics**



In Reception we follow the Mathematics Mastery Programme of work. High quality learning environments and meaningful interactions with adults, support children in developing mathematical thinking and discussion. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations which are then rehearsed applied and recorded within their own child-led exploration. Children in Reception have daily, ‘Maths Meeting’ to develop fluency, revisit key concepts and address misconceptions.

**Wider Curriculum**

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; ‘Understanding of the World’ and ‘Expressive Arts and Design.’ EYFS staff have a good understanding of how ELG’s feed into the National Curriculum through our robust planning and CPD opportunities. In reverse, colleagues throughout the school are also aware of the key ELG’s that link to each foundation subject and the progression of the subject.

Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are planned to build on children’s natural curiosity. For example, building a boat for their favourite toy enables them to think like a ‘Scientist’ and ‘Engineer’ as they explore a range of materials and test out their own ideas.

We use the follow programmes of study to support PSHE and R.E which following through from EYFS to Y6.



**Assessment**

**Baseline:**

Prior to children starting, staff spend time speaking to the child’s parents, previous settings and read previous learning journey’s to gain an understanding of the whole child and where they are at. During the first half term in Nursery or Reception, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual’s starting points in all areas so we can plan experiences to ensure progress. The following baseline assessments are also carried out.

**The RBA (Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment)**

This assessment focuses on ‘Language, Communication and Literacy,’ and ‘Mathematics.’ The purpose of this is to show the progress children make from Reception until the end of KS2.

**NELI (Nutfield Early Language Intervention)**

NELI is **an evidence-based oral language intervention for children** who show weakness in their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading.The assessment informs us if the child is at expected for their age or requires intervention from trained NELI practitioners.

**Ongoing Observation:**

All ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children’s next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a Phonics and Writing books. Some observations are uploaded using Class Dojo and shared with parents and carers.

**Phonic assessments are carried out using phonics Tracker every half term to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to ‘keep up’ rather than ‘catch up’ where possible.**

**Assessments are completed three times per year and shared with parents, whereby the Class Teacher updates the progress children have made and plans next steps accordingly.**

In **the Summer term of Reception, the EYFS Profile will be completed** for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well- rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents/carers and any other adults whom the teacher, parent/carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child’s level of development will be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners will indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development (‘Expected’) or are working towards the expected levels (‘Emerging’). This is the EYFS Profile. Reception staff will moderate children to ensure consistency with the judgements.

Teachers will identify more able children that are working above the expected level of development, (‘Greater Depth), and provide information to parents and the Year 1 teacher.

In the Summer Term, EYFS and Year 1 will have a handover meeting and provide a copy of the EYFS Profile. These will inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Academies will share the results of the profile with parents and carers and explain when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it.

The Profile will be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities will be made as appropriate. Children will have differing levels of skills and abilities across the Profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development, to inform plans for future activities and to identify any additional support needs.

**Induction/Transition to Reception**

Coupals Primary Academy will make contact in the April with all families, once we have had confirmation of places from the Local Authority. This letter will welcome you to our school and share key dates for transition.

A family transition evening is held in the June. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to the school, to disseminate important information about routines and the curriculum, to encourage discussion and to emphasize the vital importance of home-school co-operation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all of our children.

During the July, the school holds a setting in session, to enable each child to explore their new learning environment and meet their teacher and LSA’s. Links will be made with the pre-school settings, and where practicable the class teacher will make a visit in July and home visits will also be offered.

**Transition to Year 1**

Towards the end of the Reception year, the teachers will begin to prepare the children for Year 1.

We do this at Coupals Primary by:

* Gradually moving the timetable in the Summer term to one more similar to that of Year 1 for seamless transition.
* Providing a continuous provision environment alongside adult-led learning for at least the first half of the Autumn Term in Year 1.
* Scheduling a ‘Meet the Teacher’ day, when all classes will spend part of the day with their new teacher in their new classroom.
* Presenting to parents the expectations for a child in Year 1, the differences in timetable, homework and learning.
* Allowing time for the teachers of the existing classes to ‘handover’ to the Year 1 teachers, giving information on family background, learning styles, friendship groups, academic ability, progress achieved through the year etc.
* Ensuring we have an open-door policy for any concerns the parents and/or children may have.

**Inclusion**

At Coupals Primary Academy we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child’s special educational need(s), disability, gender or ethnicity. Consequently, we aim to be fully inclusive schools - as described in our Equality Policy. We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in order to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's communication needs, any disability and their range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. This is outlined in school Accessibility Plans, which is an annually revised document outlining how each school intends to meet the needs for all children to access learning.

**Parents**

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their children. We therefore recognise their role by:

* Teacher visits to children’s nurseries prior to them starting school where possible;
* Home visits prior to starting school;
* Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through an open-door policy and through Parent/Teacher meetings;
* Sending home curriculum letters periodically to keep parents informed of their child’s current curriculum and learning needs;
* Encouraging them to support their child in home learning activities;
* Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
* Providing various activities that involve parents and carers such as inviting them to Phonic and Early Writing workshops and share sessions, as well as SEND meetings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking in class and how they can continue to work with their child at home;
* Holding regular parent evenings, discussing individual next steps and progress;
* Sharing progress at school through photographs and observations via Tapestry;
* Sending home an annual written report to parents/carers on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

**Safeguarding/Welfare of Pupils**

The class teacher is responsible for the pastoral care of each child as well as the academic side of school life.

All staff in the Early Years teaching team are qualified in Paediatric First Aid.

Medication will be kept out of reach of pupils and administered in accordance with the Medicines in School Policy.

A school behaviour policy is in place and followed on entry to Early Years.

All safeguarding and child protection concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and procedures followed in accordance with the Trust’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored and will be reviewed annually.

**Date of Policy: January 2024**

**Date to be reviewed: September 2024**