

Caslon Primary Community School, Beech Tree SEMH Base,  
Beecher Bear Daycare, Nursery and Tree Acre



Early Years Policy

September 2024

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'*

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012**

The Early Years Foundation Stage ('EYFS') applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Caslon Primary School, children are admitted from Daycare (2 years old) to Reception (the September following their fourth birthday).

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Caslon Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

#### **Principles:**

The EYFS is based on four principles:

- **A unique child** - 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, encouragement, celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive relationships** - We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. [1]  
[SEP]
- **Enabling environments** - We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. [1]  
[SEP]
- **Learning and development** - The Early Years Phase is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. Areas are set up throughout the three different year groups where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. [1]  
[SEP]

Early childhood is the Early Years on which children build the rest of their lives. At Caslon Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure Early Years for future learning and development. However, we also believe early childhood is valid as part of life.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the Early Years stage to build upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Early Years Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge. [1]  
[SEP]

### **Learning and Development:**

*“Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Children are entitled to provision that supports and extends knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence, and helps them to overcome any disadvantage”*

### **Putting the principles into practise – Foundation Years**

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. 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.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- **Communication and language** - involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** - involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

These prime areas are those most essential for a child’s healthy development and future learning.

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

Specific Areas:

📖 **Literacy** - involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

🔢 **Mathematics** – involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

🌍 **Understanding the world** – involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

☒ **Expressive arts and design** – involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception pupils also participate in daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Read Write Inc" document and in line with school policy.

### **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, and 'have 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.'*

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.

*'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'*

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.

*"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."*

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.

### **Planning**

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The class teacher uses the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths, writing and reading directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic, which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards National Curriculum levels.

### **Observations**

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys on Tapestry and floor books.

### **Assessment**

In pre-school the children's level of development is recorded using the Birth to 5 age bands. Staff within Daycare will also undertake the 2-Year Progress Check with children who will enter Nursery in the September.

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

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.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Below or On Track. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps progress records, online learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These learning journeys contain a wide range of evidence that parents have the opportunity to look at as and when they wish to.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each half term. This provides a summary sheet for each child, which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be below or on track working within the Birth to 5 age-bands and Early Learning Goals.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. We share this information with parents at consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that discusses the child's characteristics of effective learning and offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details

of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. 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 in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

### **Teaching and Learning Styles**

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

### **Transition:**

Starting school can be an exciting but 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 and that they settle into 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 teacher and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to;

- To go through the school handbook

## Early Years Policy

- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction into Reception new class sessions- The children are given three opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will have an hour and a half to spend in their new class. Parents can leave their child during this session. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.
- 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, children will begin school gradually; during the first day they will spend the morning. During the second day they will stay until lunch. Following on from this, children will spend all day in their class.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the summer term.

### **Home and School Links**

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely in Early Years. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two way flow of information and knowledge. We will develop this working relationship between the school and carers as follows;

- We will outline the schools expectations from the start of the year.
- We will hold Parents Consultations early in the year to establish how the child is settling into the school environment. Parents will then also have another two throughout the year so they can be informed about their child's progress
- Teaching staff are available at the end of the day and on Dojo for parents to share any queries or concerns if needed. Conversely, if Early Years staff have any concerns about the progress of a child, they will also approach parents and carers to discuss this with them.
- Parents will have access to Tapestry and Class Dojo to record any achievements the children make at home as well as seeing achievements they have made in school.
- 'Inspire' sessions will be held for parents and carers to come into the school and participate in activities that will aid their children's learning.
- Parents and guardians are invited to assemblies where your child will demonstrate some of the things they have learnt over the term.

### **Safeguarding:**

*'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 2014**

At Caslon 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 2014.



## Early Years Policy

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good 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 wellbeing of all children. (See Caslon's Safeguarding Children Policy).

### **Good Health**

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They always have access to water.

Children also take part in tooth-brushing daily as part of the new EYFS Framework. They are provided with their own toothbrush and toothpaste. These are changed half termly to maintain a high level of hygiene. Toothbrushes and toothpaste are kept in bags on the children's pegs in the classroom in Reception. Within Daycare and Nursery, these are stored in individual pots for the children to access during toothbrushing time.

### **Intimate Care**

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children can 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 and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care. 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. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins reception at Caslon.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Support Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support corresponding with the schools SEND Policy. The schools SEND Coordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary. In line with the schools Equal Opportunity's Policy, we will provide all children,



## Early Years Policy

regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of schools life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

### **Tree Acre Early Inclusion Hub**

Tree Acre supports pupils who have been identified by IEYS as requiring more specialised support than that which is offered in Beecher Bear Nursery and Daycare. The pupils here may already have an EHCP or are likely to need one prior to moving into Reception. Places at Tree Acre will be allocated at the discretion of the IEYS, in conjunction with the headteacher. The inclusive provision will support the individual needs of pupils but will also allow for integration into Beecher Bear Nursery so pupils can be around peers and form relationships with other members of staff. Where possible, every attempt will be made to meet the short-term needs of pupils in Tree Acre – specialist support may be obtained to ensure pupils needs can be met.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception, Nursery, Daycare and Tree Acre to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on 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 as and when necessary.