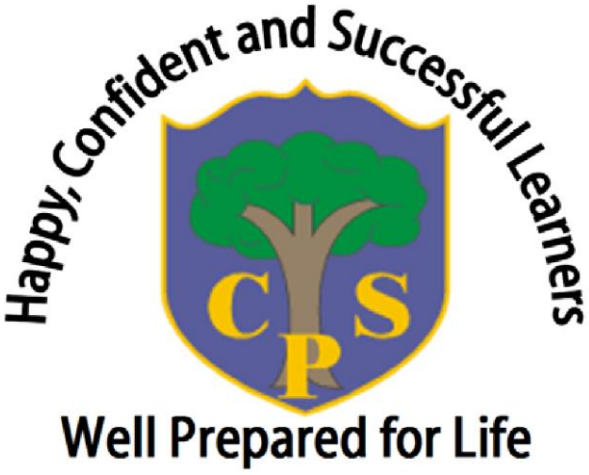


The Coppice Primary School and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Written by	Jo Tomkinson
Approved by Trustees	November 2026
Date for Review	November 2027

1 School Vision:

'Happy, confident and successful learners that are well prepared for the next

Stage of their education'.

2 Purpose:

This policy reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to our Early Years provision at The Coppice Primary School and Nursery. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and sets out the school's expectations of planning, teaching, delivery and assessment within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

3 This document is intended for:

1. All teaching and school management staff
2. All Teaching Assistants and pupil support staff
3. School Trustees
4. Parents and Carers
5. Inspection teams

4 Introduction

At The Coppice Primary School and Nursery, we recognise and place great value on the development of children as individuals and on providing them with the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary for lifelong learning. We aim to give all children the best opportunities that they can have so that they become happy, confident and successful learners who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

5 Aims of our Early Years provision: Intent

The Characteristics of Effective Learning: Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically form the building blocks for our children to require lifelong learning. We therefore plan many and varied learning opportunities in order that our children can develop and demonstrate these essential skills.

High-level involvement occurs when children are directing their own sustained play in an enabling environment and when supported by experienced and knowledgeable adults through high-level interactions.

It is during these valuable opportunities that our children can develop and demonstrate their play and explorative skills, their ability to learn actively and to create and think critically.

We want to ensure that our children feel happy, secure and valued and that they acquire curiosity, knowledge, resilience, ambition and empathy. We know that children develop deep-level learning when they are demonstrating high levels of well-being and involvement and that this is what children require in order to be well prepared for the next phase of their education.

To enable the above to happen:

- We place the child's individual needs at the heart of our provision. Regardless of age, race, gender, religious or cultural belief, additional needs or economic situation, all of our children will receive a high-quality education.
- We will ensure that all children have an equal right to enjoy and participate in all aspects of school life and to benefit from the many and varied opportunities open to them.
- We view each child's well-being as the key to all other aspects of provision. Through building positive, nurturing relationships, through high-quality interactions and by creating a safe and stimulating environment, we aim to ensure that our children are happy and that they feel valued and respected. We want our children to feel strongly that they 'belong' to The Coppice.
- We seek to ensure that our children build up resilience, independence and confidence, and that they develop good communication and language skills, and problem-solving skills, during their time with us in early years.
- We plan provision in response to each child's needs and interests and, through positive interactions, and on-going assessment, we will guide their development.
- We ensure that our curriculum provides the foundations for the next phases in a child's journey at The Coppice and, therefore, everything that we do in Early Years has this in mind. This is why we have made sure that we have carefully and thoughtfully aligned the learning that happens within the Early Years with the areas of the National Curriculum that the children will begin to encounter in Year 1 and beyond.
- We ensure that children meet their next steps in learning, that they make good progress and are well prepared for reaching the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- We aim to develop and maintain effective partnerships with Parents and Carers, and outside agencies, to ensure that children receive the best possible provision and support so that they reach their full potential from their various starting points.
- For those children who enter our school Nursery or join in Reception year and are not at the typical level, or enter lacking the characteristics of effective learning, we ensure that we support these children with their personal, social and emotional skills, and their speech, language and communication skills, in order that they can catch up as quickly as possible.

6 Organisation and planning of our Early Years: Implementation

From the time they start with us, each unique child becomes the heart of our provision and practice. Before a child even starts with us, valuable time is spent building up relationships with the children and their families to support children's well-being, and to learn more about their previous knowledge and experiences.

We always strive to create effective partnerships with Parents and Carers and outside agencies through effective communication, to ensure that we are meeting individual needs. Our Early Years environment and the learning areas within them, both indoors and outdoors, are filled with a rich array of open-ended and easily accessible resources to fully create an enabling environment that promotes independence and critical thinking.

We have a balance between adult-led and child-led activities and provide sustained play opportunities throughout the day. During these continuous provision times, adults facilitate and move learning on by adopting the cycle of observing, assessing and planning in the moment. Through working in this way, individual needs are met immediately, and at a time when a child is displaying the characteristics of effective learning. Our EYFS provision is informed by the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) ShREC approach to developing high-quality interactions. ShREC focuses on **S**hare attention, **R**espond, **E**xpand and develop **C**onversation, supporting practitioners to build warm, responsive and language-rich interactions throughout the day.

6.1 Throughout the EYFS at The Coppice Primary School and Nursery, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework 2026 for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The framework specifies the learning and development in the Early Years and provides prime and specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum. Our Early Years philosophy centres around four themes that are underpinned within the framework. **These four themes are as follows:**

6.2 Providing for children's well-being: Induction and transitions

We understand that for learning to take place, children need to feel safe and secure in their environment; they need to feel respected and valued by those around them, and they need to be highly engaged and involved in activities.

Before starting at our setting, the children are given the opportunity to attend 'stay and play' sessions whereby they can come and play in their new classrooms with their Parents or Carers. It is during these first meetings that relationships and partnerships begin. Parents and Carers are given information to learn more about the school and can find out what their child will be learning during The Foundation Stage via our school induction information site. This is a carefully planned website to aid transition for our youngest children. Parents and Carers can view welcome messages and information videos from key members of staff in school, and the children can listen to stories being read by their new teachers. Video tours are included to show children their new learning environment and the key places that they will visit around school. These videos can be viewed throughout the summer months to support the children in becoming more familiar with their new setting.

In addition to the induction website, Parents and Carers are invited to attend an induction meeting at school whereby staff are available to answer any questions. They also have the opportunity to tour the Nursery and Reception classrooms. To further aid children when transitioning to our school, and to support staff in building a partnership with home, Parents and Carers are encouraged to book a home visit appointment

In Reception, staff discuss **'Reception Readiness'** with Parents and Carers before the child starts school, and we also give Parents and Carers a helpful booklet: **'Starting School'**, which outlines how they can support their child with independence and self-help skills that their child will benefit from. Parents and Carers are also made aware of what to do and who to contact if they feel their child has not met these milestones.

Where at all possible, staff meet or communicate with previous settings to find out as much information about each child as possible. This gives our staff another guide to a child's starting points and their current interests.

When moving from Nursery to Reception, or Reception to Year One, all staff meet to discuss children's needs and development. Opportunities are carefully planned to aid transition, with new teaching staff visiting children in their current classrooms. A carefully planned transition is put in place for all children, which is enhanced with more opportunities and transition books for those children who need it.

By the start of the new school year, children have spent time in their new classrooms and have started to build up relationships with their new teaching staff.

6.3 Providing for children's well-being: Key workers in Early Years

Although Class Teachers have overall responsibility for all of the children within their class, children are also assigned a Key Worker as they start our Early Years **(either their Class Teacher or Level 3 Teaching Assistant)**. Parents and Carers are given information about who their child's Key Worker is, and the role that they play in their child's day-to-day provision before the child starts with us. This system has proven to be very effective in supporting both children and their Parents and Carers, particularly as a child starts their time with us. Key workers build strong relationships with their children by spending time interacting with them, teaching them in small groups, and they therefore have a very good knowledge of a child's strengths, interests and next steps. All Key Workers have a responsibility to contribute to planning and assessment, and to ensure that the children in their key group are having their needs met. All teaching staff in our Early Years carry out high-quality interactions with the children, which build positive relationships and further the child's learning and overall development. Key Workers know their children really well, so they know the right time to intervene with learning, and also know the most sensitive way to deal with any situations that may arise.

6.4 Enabling environments

At the Coppice Primary School and Nursery, we believe that the environment has a significant role in supporting children's learning and development across all areas of the EYFS. It is recognised that children learn and develop best in supportive environments where their individual needs are being met.

All of our Early Years environments have things in common: they are all child-centred; they are welcoming and safe, and they aim to facilitate a sense of belonging. Both the indoor and outdoor environments provide a variety of activities and resources that support the individual needs of the children. There are open-ended activities to inspire and promote independence, communication and language skills, problem-solving and decision-making. Within Nursery and Reception, there are learning areas that promote the prime and specific areas of learning, which are regularly reviewed to ensure that resources meet the needs of the children.

Resources are engaging, challenging, easily accessible and are all presented at a child's height. Silhouettes or photos and labels are provided in each area to support children's independence during 'tidying up' time. During child-initiated times within continuous provision, children can select their own resources, combine resources and find new ways to use them. Enhancements and provocations are provided in response to children's interests or formative assessment so that next steps are reached. Adults play alongside the children to model how to handle and use the resources appropriately and to establish the rules and routines for caring for the resources. They also teach them to put the resources back where they belong when they are no longer required, through teaching the children to **'choose it, use it and put it back'**.

6.5 Teaching and learning in our Early Years

All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure that there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. Our Early Years curriculum has been carefully planned and sequenced to ensure that our children secure the knowledge and skills that they require for the next stage in their learning. National Curriculum links have been made within the different learning areas to best prepare our children for future learning. The children first acquire new knowledge and then use this to develop new skills, demonstrating understanding through the seven areas of the curriculum. These are the seven areas of learning that we use to plan children's learning and activities:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Underpinning and running throughout the seven areas of learning are the Characteristics of Effective Learning mentioned at the start of this policy. These link implicitly to our whole school 'Coppice Learners' key aspects i.e. to be **knowledgeable, ambitious, curious, resilient and empathetic.**

6.6 Early Language, Reading and Writing

Throughout our Early Years, we create language-rich environments where children can acquire new vocabulary and are encouraged to engage in back-and-forth conversations with their peers and Key Workers. Adults model good communication skills through their interactions and within the child's play.

Our children are explicitly taught how to communicate effectively through spoken language, articulating ideas and developing understanding of both sentence organisation and vocabulary. We are part of the Voice 21 Oracy Programme and use Voice 21 strategies and tools to enhance Oracy within the Early Years and the wider school.

Every child has a daily story time where they are read aloud to. High-quality stories are re-read, and we talk with children about them to build familiarity and understanding. Planned opportunities for Oracy are also experienced through these texts.

New concepts are taught to the children through the use of **'Concept Cat'** from The Living Language programme. Staff carefully plan the vocabulary that is to be covered through the curriculum, with clear links to the vocabulary that they will be taught in the next stage of their learning. Numerous opportunities are planned for this vocabulary to be revisited to aid children's understanding. Key vocabulary is shared with Parents and Carers through weekly newsletters, and it is also displayed across the provision so that all adults are clear on the planned new vocabulary to be taught and used. Through this approach, children, in time, begin to be able to read it for themselves. Children's speech and language skills are also assessed using the **Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)** programme. This is to narrow the communication gap by providing high-quality, targeted intervention to children with low baseline

oral language skills. All Reception children are screened in the Autumn term using the digital LanguageScreen app. The results data from the screener identify the three to six children per class with the highest risk of language delay, so that they can receive planned, targeted interventions so as to ensure that they make good progress in this vital area of learning. We have a dedicated NELI practitioner who screens all of the children and ensures the correct programme is delivered to close the vocabulary gap.

It is our aim that our EYFS children develop the necessary fundamental literacy skills in order to become fluent and confident readers, and that they have an enjoyment of reading that enables them to be lifelong readers. Children in Nursery and Reception are read to and engage in book talk daily. They choose and take books home from school to share with their family at home. Reception children are also provided with books that carefully match their reading ability, so that they can both read these stories at home and to their Teachers at school. Parents and Carers are encouraged to record in their child's reading diary to inform the school about the books that the children have enjoyed, and to share achievements. In this way, both home and school can reward and celebrate the child's progress.

To support our children in building up knowledge of authors, we carefully select the books that will be covered and focused on in each topic. The Author and book list can be accessed here. In both Nursery and Reception, we focus on 'Author of the Month ', where numerous stories are shared by the same author so that the children can become familiar with the author's work.

Parents and Carers are also invited into school throughout the year to take part in phonics workshops. We use the **'Sounds Write' programme** for our planning and teaching of phonics. 'Sounds Write' supports our children with their blending, segmenting and phoneme manipulation skills, in preparation for reading words and simple sentences by the end of Reception. This journey starts as soon as children join our Nursery, during which they have daily 'Phonics time sessions' where children take part in phonological awareness games and activities before being taught the phoneme/grapheme correspondence.

Mark making and writing opportunities are provided both indoors and outdoors and resources, enhancements, and provocations are well linked to children's interests and assessment. We follow the **'Kinetic Letters' handwriting programme** to teach the formation of different marks, lower-case and upper-case letters and to ensure that the children are well prepared physically for writing and mark-making tasks. We teach the correct pencil hold (3 friends hold) and offer consistency with the whiteboard pens and pencils that we provide. Our EYFS children are supported to write for real purposes, with our youngest children in Nursery learning to read and then write their name during self-registration. Reception children follow the whole school approach of **Herts for Learning's Essential Writing** where writing has both a clear, intended purpose and audience.

6.7 Early Mathematics

We plan mathematical teaching and learning opportunities using **The Early Years Framework and Development Matters**, **NCETM** resources and the **White Rose** programmes to ensure progression and coverage throughout the year. The children experience a range of activities and solve real-life problems that support the early development of their mathematical skills. The children count and sing number rhymes as part of daily routines to build up a good knowledge of numbers. They learn mathematical concepts through their continuous provision as well as through adult-directed teaching. Children in our Early Years use a range of practical manipulatives and resources to aid their mathematical thinking and problem-solving. Resources include: Numicon, counters, and five frames. Real objects are utilised in Nursery, and these are additionally provided in Reception, as well as tens frames, number lines and 'rekenreks'. (Please refer to our Maths policy on the school website for further information regarding the teaching of early maths).

Maths packs are sourced by the school and sent home so that each child has resources to practise their counting and number sense skills. We also hold termly maths workshops to support Parents and Carers'' knowledge of foundational skills in areas of maths such as: number, pattern, shapes, and developing mathematical language.

6.8 Adult-led teaching and learning

We ensure a balance between adult-led and child-led teaching and learning. Our adult-directed teaching times are called 'Family Times', and this is where the children work with their Key Worker to learn a particular skill or concept. The children are then able to apply this new skill within their own child-initiated learning. 'Family Time' sessions are always planned at the start or towards the end of sessions to enable continuous provision times to be longer and to avoid interruptions in a child's learning.

In Nursery, there are two 'Family Time' sessions at the start of the year, and this increases to three sessions when the children are ready. Direct teaching and activities focus on the prime areas, and then move on to focus on specific areas, also when the children are ready. In Reception, there are three 'Family Time' sessions. Activities are planned to support early reading, early writing and maths. Children work on a carpet area with their Key Worker. Because the family groups are smaller, adults can work more easily with any children who require extra support or need to consolidate their understanding. They can also target them at the start of continuous provision times if needed. Adults make assessment notes about each Family Time session, and this is used to inform future planning.

To support our children transitioning into Year One, the children are introduced to working at a table and sitting on a chair when they are physically ready. Teachers model the correct seating position, encouraging children to keep their feet flat to the ground and their bodies close to the table, and the children are given lots of opportunities to practise working at a table.

6.9 Child-initiated teaching and learning

In both Nursery and Reception, our child-initiated learning sessions are called 'Explore and Learn'. These sessions are long periods of uninterrupted play, either inside or outside, which gives the children the sustained time they need to develop their ideas, to test out, to review and to change their plans. During this time, children have free flow within all classrooms and can access the outside learning area. We understand that children are unique and that they like to learn in different ways and different environments. Therefore, we ensure that children have the

opportunities for outdoor learning during each session unless the weather is considered to be too dangerous. The outdoor environment offers different resources for the children and provides opportunities to experience activities on a larger scale. We choose to work in this way because we believe that children learn best when they are highly motivated and engaged and when they are directing their own learning.

All Early Years staff facilitate learning during these **'Explore and Learn**' times. As each child is initiating and leading their own learning, staff adopt a cycle of observation, planning, assessment and observation so children meet the next step in their development. Adults spend time working alongside the child, listening and observing and then stepping in just at the right moment to move learning on, to consolidate learning or to re-teach misconceptions. Adults use this time effectively to model, to introduce or reinforce new vocabulary and concepts and to pose questions. Through these high-quality interactions, adults can address a child's next steps in the moment. Interactions are recorded after the event and are collated as evidence and are sometimes accompanied by a photograph. Adults briefly record what they observed and what they did by using a 'T' to signify their part in the interaction. Finally, they record the outcome. Records of interactions will show that 'T modelled … explained… provided ', etc., as examples.

7 Health and Safety

7.1 Staffing ratios

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff-to-child ratios are maintained in our school to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.

For children aged 3 and over the statutory requirements state:

'Where a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, or early years teacher status is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children. At least 1 other member of staff must hold an approved Level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at Level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.

'Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children. At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved Level 3 qualification.

For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children (usual practice is 1 teacher and 1 TA per class of 30).

7.2 Paediatric first aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present and especially when eating. They also are included on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

7.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The school has a named Early Years DSL: Jo Tomkinson

We have an Early Years DSL who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children in the Early Years. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising, where required, with our full-time Designated Safeguarding Lead, Attendance Lead and Family Liaison Officer: Karen Woodyatt regarding any safeguarding concerns.
- Liaising, where required, with the wider DSL team, including Billy Hutt (Headteacher) and Lindsey Ashwell (Deputy Headteacher).
- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework.
- Refer to section 14 in The Coppice Primary School Safeguarding Children Policy (including Child Protection)

Attendance

Although attendance for children below compulsory school age is not statutory by choosing The Coppice Primary School and Nursery, regular attendance in both Nursery and Reception is expected. It creates good habits for the future and means that the children's foundations for future learning and development are stronger.

Attendance monitoring forms an important part of our safeguarding arrangements. The school will monitor attendance, follow up unexplained or prolonged absences promptly and respond appropriately to patterns of absence or concerns about a child's welfare. This is because absence from an early years setting may be an indicator that a child is at risk of harm or may require additional support.

Please refer to our school attendance policy

7.4 Oral health and tooth brushing

In the Early Years, we promote good oral health, as well as good health in general by teaching the children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We have a registered partnership with 'Colgate ', who provide each child with a toothbrush and toothpaste to take home; this enhances our oral hygiene provision.

7.5 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences

- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time, it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each child.

We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods. Our school's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy can be found on the school website: Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

We will consult with Parents and Carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate. We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff
- Work with them to move on to the next stage of their child's allergy management at a pace that's right for their child

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

7.6 Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as clean bedding, towels and spare clothes
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs. Please refer to the Intimate Care Policy for further information.

7.7 Screen Time Use in Early Years

This part of the policy is informed by Gov.uk screen time use guidance:

Evidence shows that screens can have a big impact on children and their development in the early years. Restricting time children spend on screens at home and in early years settings supports healthy child development, which requires sufficient sleep, play, real-world interaction and responsive adult engagement.

Screen use should be limited to up to an hour a day for children aged 2 to 5. As a school, we therefore strongly agree with taking a precautionary approach to using screens in Early Years by limiting its use and ensuring that when they are used, this is done carefully and intentionally, for specific learning and development aims

Difference between screen use and screen time:

Screen time refers to the amount of time a child spends looking at a screen. Screen use refers to how, why and in what context screens are used. It takes into account the quality and pace of content, purpose and level of engagement.

Screen time advice for children aged 0-5:

When thinking about using screens with children at The Coppice, we have a moral responsibility to strongly consider that they may already reach these screen time limits at home.

Evidence suggests that too much screentime is associated with poorer cognitive and behavioural abilities in children, such as reduced verbal activity and reduced vocabulary, and can be associated with developmental delays, reduced attention and lower executive function.

It is important to note though that the set time limits do not apply to screen-based assistive technologies for children with SEND. For some children these technologies have essential benefits for communication, well-being and quality of life.

Suitable content for Early Years children and safety considerations:

At The Coppice, we consider the nature of any content we plan to use on a screen to ensure it is safe, age-appropriate, and follows the guidelines below. We do not allow children to access or use screens alone or with other children without adult co-engagement. It is important to view screens with children to protect them from harmful content and to support their development.

All digital content should be:

- checked to ensure it is suitable for early years children, prior to showing it to the children
- slow-paced, repetitive and predictable - we always look to avoid fast-paced, over-stimulating content - this includes content which has a lot of cuts, movement and flashing on screen, complex audio with lots of fast-talking characters or overlapping music and dialogue, or complex plots
- advert-free, as young children cannot discern between advertisements and other content
- free of scrolling and autoplay features, to ensure children are not inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content or able to access content for longer than planned use - this includes algorithm-driven content, such as video platforms

Apps, software and tools may claim to be educational or designed for children, but this does not mean they are automatically safe or of high quality. We use our professional judgement to carefully assess them against the concepts set out in this guidance before deciding to use them our setting.

Avoid children using AI until better evidence is available about the impact of use with early years children. This includes toys with in-built AI features. See this page for more information on safety and safeguarding online: Help for early years providers: Internet safety.

Using screens in our setting

Screen use at The Coppice should be limited, carefully planned and clearly linked to intended learning aims. We teach our children about our technologically diverse world by

talking to them in an age-appropriate way about different types of technology and how to use them safely.

We will always consider how screen use fits into the children's day and routine, ensuring it does not displace important activities such as sleep, physical activity, time outdoors, story time, and engagement with other children and adults. Screens should not replace high-quality educator-child interactions, as direct human interaction provides a much richer experience for children. A story, nursery rhyme or song on a screen cannot match one told and performed by an engaged adult who makes eye contact with the children, uses different voices and facial expressions, and changes pace, volume and emphasis in response to children's reactions.

Interactive, screen-free activities are preferable. Good practice if you are using a screen involves adults co-engaging with children, prompting children to think, predict, respond or discuss, and avoiding activities which provide an automatic response without any effort on the part of the child.
You can do this through using techniques such as commenting, narrating, describing and open-ended questioning to stimulate conversation with children when using screens.

Practical tips we adhere to at The Coppice:

- Not allowing children to view screens in a passive or sedentary way, without any interaction or communication from educators
- Only using screens with children for short periods at a time, to protect children's ability to focus and concentrate
- Trying to ensure spaces that are permanently screen-free to protect social interaction and learning
- Avoiding using screens with children during mealtimes or snacktimes.
- Not having screens on in the background, as they can distract from activities such as social interaction and active play
- Avoiding using screens for routine classroom management or to calm children, as this impacts on children's ability to learn to self-regulate.
- Not allowing screens to be used to occupy children (including during periods of transition throughout the day) or manage their behaviour.

Children with communication needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

Some children with SEND or English as an additional language may need a more tailored approach when it comes to screen use. This includes children with communication challenges which may or may not be diagnosed. Screen-based assistive technology can be an important tool to help these children and families communicate, take part in everyday activities, and create an inclusive learning environment. Use your professional judgement to determine whether assistive technologies will support children's learning on a case-by-case basis.

Staff using screens and digital devices in their day-to-day role:

Digital devices support the successful running and management of early years settings in today's digital world, including engaging with Parents, Carers and professional services.

For example, digital devices might be used in conducting assessments of children. Pre-reception children are not asked to do assessment activities on a screen in order to determine their level of development and are, instead, based on observation and professional judgement.

When using digital devices for assessment and communicating with Parents and Carers, we ensure that this is proportionate, conducted in short stints and does not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive administrative burden, to maintain focus on time to engage with and teach children.

For safeguarding purposes, we make sure that we keep the number of images or videos taken of children to a minimum, including for assessment purposes, and only share images or videos of children with their Parents and Carers through technically secure methods.

Screens for school use must comply with the EYFS statutory framework, data protection and security requirements.

Personal devices:

In accordance with the EYFS framework, personal devices should be used in compliance with the early years setting's safeguarding policy. This policy must include how mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting.

Devices this guidance applies to:

This guidance applies to all digital devices with screens such as, but not limited to: tablets, laptop, desktop computers, mobile phones, televisions, gaming devices and toys with screens, video platforms, interactive whiteboards, large touch tables, e-readers, smart watches.

Reflection:

As a school, we will constantly reflect on:

- Is the screen use necessary? Are there other methods or resources we could use?
- What is the clear educational rationale for using a screen?
- How does it extend and enhance learning, rather than replace the practitioner's role?
- How can we ensure children are interacting in screen use and not passively using or watching it? How will we discuss the content with children?
- Is the content designed for educational purposes and appropriate for Early Years?
- How can we ensure that we introduce movement and physical activity?
- Are there any safeguarding risks around the device or content you're thinking of using? Has it been effectively checked?

8 Effective partnerships with Parents, Carers and professional agencies

We endeavour to form strong partnerships with Parents and Carers right from the start, as we value the knowledge they have about their child's development. Early Years teachers are all very approachable and make sure that they are available at the start and end of the school/Nursery day for informal or more formal discussions about the children.

All information is passed on at home time, and we very much see communication as a two-way process. We encourage Parents and Carers to let us know important information. Things such as: their child did not sleep well, or there has been a significant change in their child's life, could be important information that will have an effect on their child during the day. Knowing this information helps us to support the children as much as we possibly can.

Once the children start their learning journey with us in Nursery and Reception, teachers set up online learning journals using **Arc Pathway Early Learning Software.** These online journals provide the opportunity for staff to communicate progress and 'wow' moments to Parents and Carers, and they are a record of photographs and observations that have been made for each child. These journals are updated for Parents and Carers, and children, to view whenever they want to. Parents and Carers are also invited to contribute to learning journals by uploading their own evidence from home or by making comments.

All Parents and Carers are asked to consent to their child's photograph being taken and used to create online learning journals through a data protection form that is signed when their child first starts school. Teachers meet more formally with Parents and Carers during termly Parent and Carer consultations. This provides quality, ring-fenced time where a child's progress and development can be discussed and next steps in their learning are shared. However, more informal communication on a regular basis e.g. at the beginning or end of the day is always on-going, and we see these opportunities as incredibly valuable in knowing our children and families well.

All Early Years adults work closely with Parents and Carers and outside agencies. They have a responsibility to make Parents and Carers aware of any delays in their child's learning. Where there are concerns, teachers will have an initial discussion with the Parents and Carers to establish their thoughts and opinions. Parents and Carers need to be involved and advised during every step, and are asked to sign a consent form to allow Early Years staff to discuss their child with both the school's Special Educational Needs Team (Mr. McGarry: SENDCO and Mrs. Heptinstall: SEN Teacher with specialism in autism) and other professionals. When outside agencies have been involved and reports given to school, all Early Years staff must follow the guidance and put actions recommended into place to ensure the best provision for that child.

9 Assessment within our Early Years: Impact

Integral to teaching is how all practitioners in our school assess what children know, understand and can do. We take account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.

Reading attainment is assessed regularly and accurately, and gaps are identified through the Sounds Write progress tracker analysis. These are then tackled through both carefully structured interventions and the targeting of children by practitioners when they are in their provision. Our aim is for all children to be 'keeping up' rather than 'catching up'. However, where children do need to 'catch up', this will be carefully planned for with the aim being to achieve this as soon as possible.

Our curriculum needs to meet the needs of our children, including our disadvantaged pupils, Looked after and Post-Looked after (LAC & PLAC) children, those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and those with SEND. Therefore, as well as our structured and progressive

EYFS curriculum map, we also spend time looking at and evaluating how children are learning. This is achieved through talking to children, looking at their work, observing their learning experiences and analysing data and progress.

All Early Years staff use on-going observations and key 'checkpoint' assessments to identify children's starting points, and plan experiences which ensure progress. Staff effectively use information regarding a child's development, achievements and interests, and that which is provided by home via Arc Pathway online learning journals. All of the information that is gained is used to plan learning experiences and next steps so that fundamental knowledge and foundational skills are built cumulatively, and to ensure that a whole picture is created of the individual child.

During the Early Years, staff carry out speech and language assessments using the Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme (NELI). This allows staff to support children's understanding and use of language and to identify specific speech, language and communication delays as early as possible. At the beginning of a child's Reception year, teachers also carry out the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment with all children. This assessment focuses on 'Language, Communication and Literacy ' and 'Mathematics', and will show the progress a child makes from Reception until the end of Key Stage Two.

Towards the end of the Reception year, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for all children. Teachers assess whether the child has met each of the seventeen Early Learning Goals, and discussions are held with Year One teachers to establish a child's readiness for learning at the next stage of their education: Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2). Year 1 teachers are informed of which fundamental skills children are still working on trying to achieve, to ensure that gaps continue to be focused on and closed. To ensure the accuracy of the judgments that are made for our children in the Early Years, we carry out internal moderation within our year group teams. Reception teachers additionally attend moderation meetings with other schools, and attend annual moderation training provided by Worcestershire County Council. Further information regarding assessments in The Early Years can be found in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

The impact of our Early Years curriculum and provision is reflected in having 'happy, confident and successful children' transitioning into Year One. The majority of our children make expected or accelerated progress from their starting points, with a high proportion achieving the Early Learning Goals and a 'Good Level of Development' at the end of Reception. Our children are therefore well prepared for the next stage of their learning.Those who aren't fully ready will continue to receive intensive support to enable them to continue closing any gaps they have.

10 Roles and responsibilities

10.1 The Early Years Leader's role

The Early Years Leader will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for giving children the best start to their education.
- Work with the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Early Years Trustee to determine the strategic development of the Early Years Policy and provision.

- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy.
- Have an accurate understanding of the provision's context, strengths and areas for development, which informs the actions they take to improve children's education and care, in line with the statutory requirements of the EYFS.
- Take all reasonable steps to make sure that all children have access to an ambitious curriculum, including those who attend part-time, those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.
- Ensure that the curriculum identifies and sequences the key knowledge that children will learn across the EYFS educational programmes.
- Ensure that the curriculum is well taught across the setting.
- Ensure that staff use assessment well to make any necessary changes to teaching and/or the curriculum to enable children to make even greater progress, including sharing information with Year 1 teachers when children move to Key Stage 1.
- Work in partnership with Parents and Carers to promote children's learning and development, and to raise their awareness about supporting children's readiness for starting school **(see section 8).**
- Establish appropriate policies, procedures and practices that promote the welfare, mental health and wellbeing of all children.
- Provide staff training, professional guidance and modelling to Early Years staff.
- Monitor attainment and progress of classes, groups and year groups through data analysis, and providing follow-up actions to be implemented
- Monitor teaching and learning within the Early Years and report findings to SLT
- Line manage Early Years staff.
- Work with other agencies to ensure that children receive appropriate support, as well as being the point of contact for ensuring that effective partnerships are maintained.

10.2 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:

- Monitor the way the school implements the Early Years Curriculum.

10.3 The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Work with the Early Years Lead and Early Years Trustee to determine the strategic development of this policy and the Early Years provision in the school.
- Have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners within Early Years.

10.4 Early Years Class Teachers

Each Early Years Class Teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the safeguarding of all children in their class is the highest priority.
- Ensuring that concerns about a child are recorded and raised promptly with the DSL team, and with any other appropriate members of staff.
- Ensuring the progress and development of every child in their class.
- Working closely with any Teaching Assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions, and how they can be linked to classroom teaching.
- Working with their Teaching Assistant to review each child's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision.
- Being a Key Worker for a group of children, including being a role model for the children, and supporting each child in line with this policy.
- Carrying out high quality interactions and recording the progress made by the children.
- Reading thoroughly the externally provided reports and seeking guidance where necessary. Teachers have to ensure that all recommendations are carried out and evidence provided as to their effectiveness.
- Setting and reviewing children's next steps, and ensuring that these are shared and agreed with Parents and Carers.
- Providing a learning environment in line with this policy.
- Ensuring they follow this Early Years policy.

10.5 Teaching Assistants

Each class Teaching Assistant is responsible for:

- Following direction and support from the Class Teacher or Early Years Lead with regards to Early Years practice and provision.
- Seeking advice from the Class teacher or Early Years Lead when necessary.
- Being a Key Worker for a group of children, as well as being a role model for the children and supporting each child in line with this policy.
- Carrying out high quality interactions and recording the progress made by the children.
- Contributing to planning and assessment, and supporting the Class Teacher in providing the best provision for the children.

10.6 Parents and Carers

Each Parent and Carer is responsible for:

- Sharing information about their child's development with school staff as part of the assessment process.
- Supporting their child at home with activities that have been sent by Early Years staff.
- Accessing support and guidance where necessary.

11 Access and review of policy

This policy will be reviewed by Jo Tomkinson (Early Years Leader) every year. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year or to the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework effective from 1st September 2026. This policy will be

accessible to all staff and the community through the school's website. It will be approved by the school Trustees.

12 Data Protection Statement:

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our GDPR Data Protection Policy. All data will be handled in accordance with the school's GDPR Data Protection Policy.

Name of policy	Content	Reason for policy	Who does it relate to?	Where is it stored?
Early Years Policy	Procedures, administration and responsibilities linked to the Early Years	To ensure a consistent and effective approach to teaching and learning in our Early Years	Pupils and staff	Secure Network drive

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements
✓		