



Coleridge Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September: 2023

Review date: September 2025

Legislation.

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the 2021 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

At Coleridge Primary School we use the *Birth to 5 Matters* non-statutory guidance to assist us in meeting the statutory EYFS requirements. <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/>

Structure of the EYFS at Coleridge

The statutory EYFS describes the curriculum for children aged 0-5. Within a primary school, the EYFS includes the Nursery (children aged 3-4) and the Reception classes (children aged 4-5). At Coleridge, our EYFS is organised into:

Nursery

We have a 39 place Nursery which includes a mixture of full time and part time places. Full time, 30 hour funded sessions are from 9am – 3pm. Our 15 hour funded places are from 9am – 12pm and 12pm – 3pm. We offer ‘top up’ sessions in addition to the 15 hour places as well as extended day provision from 3pm – 6pm for an additional fee. The Nursery is based in one large room with an outside area which is used solely by Nursery children. Extended Day provision can accommodate a maximum of 16 children and is situated within the same Nursery space. The Nursery is staffed by 1 teacher and 3 Early Years Practitioners. The Extended day provision is staffed by 2 Early Years Practitioners.

Reception

Coleridge has an intake of 120 children over 4 classes. Each class has 30 children and belongs to a colour coded strand that is used throughout the school - Purple, Red, Blue and Orange. Blue and Orange class are adjacent to each other and share a middle area, Red and Purple are also adjacent to each other and share a middle area. All children share the same outdoor space. Each class is staffed by a Teacher and a Teaching Assistant.

Curriculum

Our Early Years curriculum is challenging, exciting and experiential. It provides lots of opportunities for children to learn about, and make sense of, the world around them. Alongside child-led learning, our curriculum responds to events and phenomena that children experience throughout the year such as religious or culture celebrations, and the changing of the seasons.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In order for children to learn successfully, we must provide opportunities that promote curiosity, energy and enthusiasm and must be meaningful to the child. The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe the behaviours children use in order to learn, and these underpin our practice at Coleridge. These are:

- **Playing and Exploring** describes how children are engaged in their learning by finding out and exploring; playing with what they know; and being willing to 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** describes children's motivation to learn by being involved and concentrating; keeping on trying; and enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** describes how children learn by having their own ideas, making links, and choosing how to do things.

Our provision is designed to enable children's development of these characteristics to support the rest of their learning.

Prime and Specific areas of the EYFS

The EYFS curriculum is broken into seven areas – three prime areas, and four specific areas. The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal and Social Development
- Physical Development.

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

The Importance of Play

The role of play is crucial in a child's early brain development and is essential to develop language skills, emotion resilience, creativity and social and intellectual skills. At Coleridge, most of a child's day in the EYFS is spent in self-initiated play. Research and professional experience tells us that children learn best when they are engaged in activity, and that the highest levels of engagement are

seen in children during self-initiated play. Finding those moments of high involvement requires giving children time and space to explore their own ideas and interests through play. Therefore, in our EYFS, most of the day is spent in child-initiated play, where each child chooses what they want to do within a carefully thought out environment.

Teaching and Learning

At Coleridge, our day-to-day teaching is done through quality interactions between adults and children when they are engaged in their own play. We subscribe to the philosophy that teaching in the EYFS should not be a *top down* or formal way of working. Instead, we take time to build relationships and identify key interests and motivators to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Planning In the Moment

At Coleridge, most teaching happens through thoughtful adult interactions during play where a 'teachable moment' has been identified in a period of high involvement. Teachers therefore plan in the moment and scaffold the next steps for that child there and then. This could be providing equipment or modelling a skill, suggesting an idea, introducing new words or concepts. By working in this way, adults can really understand what motivates a child and how they can make progress within the 7 areas of learning.

Staff meet weekly to discuss observations and interactions of children that have taken place in relation to the 7 areas of learning. This is then used to inform each child's next steps and ensures that staff are able to further the learning of each child when engaged in 'in the moment' planning.

Direct Teaching

Across the Early Years, there are certain times of the day when all the children come together to talk about their learning or to share a story or song together. We also use this time to teach concepts from our curriculum and to explore the 3 Prime Areas of the EYFS curriculum. Both in Nursery and Reception all of our direct teaching is planned weekly and includes maths and literacy. In Reception, phonics is taught as a separate whole class session every day. The children also have a weekly PE session that takes place in the hall.

Enabling Environments

We consider the learning environment to be one of the most important aspects of a child's ability to learn. An enabling environment is one which enables children to learn most effectively, and includes the positive relationships children need to feel safe and secure.

At Coleridge, our physical environment is workshop-style inside and outside, with areas that provide different activities. Resources are varied and open-ended to support high quality learning. The children select what they want to do in each area, the resources are accessible to the children at all times and stored with visual labels to promote independence and autonomy.

Children always have opportunities to try new things, take risks and to challenge themselves. This approach can be seen in particular in our woodwork provision. Children are trained to use the tools and available materials safely in order to pursue projects of their own design. Our 'continuous provision' means that children are able to return to their chosen activities time and

time again to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding. They have access to the outside areas throughout the day, every day, whatever the weather. We encourage our children to be 'natural thinkers' who respect the environment around them and to connect with nature.

We also consider the wider community to be part of our learning environment, and make sure that Reception children get to visit their local amenities (for example, parks, gardens, city farms, theatres) in order to support their understanding of the world.

Assessment

Day to Day Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff play alongside and observe pupils to identify their level of attainment, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape weekly planning. Children have a 'focus week' each term where identified next steps are planned for and observations are discussed between staff. Assessment takes place all day, every day for all children.

Where we consider that additional support may be needed, we will always discuss this with parents. See our Inclusion and SEND Policy for more details.

Summative Assessment

At the end of every term, pupil progress meetings are carried out to identify those children who may need additional support to meet their milestones.

At the end of the EYFS (the end of Reception year), staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals within the 7 areas of the EYFS framework, indicating whether they are:

- **Expected** - meeting expected levels of development
- **Emerging** - not yet reaching expected levels of development

At the end of each school year, practitioners review children's progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development and a description of their characteristics of effective learning. This annual report highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support may be needed.

For children in Reception, the ELG assessment is included in their annual report.

Transition

Our transition process into the EYFS at Coleridge includes:

- A home visit by the class teacher for every family before starting at Coleridge
- A class picnic in the summer term for all new Reception children and parents/carers and a garden party in the Nursery for all new children and their families.

- A staggered start to the school year, with small groups of children joining (alongside their parents in Nursery) over two weeks.
- An *Introduction to the Early Years* talk for all new parents in the first half term.

Throughout the EYFS year

Once children are settled in school, our work with parents/carers includes:

- Termly parent meetings for all children.
- Stay and Play sessions throughout the year where parents/carers can learn alongside their children in class.
- Invitations to concerts, sports days and other events.
- Google Classroom used to communicate with parents. The classroom is used to share weekly overviews (learning that is taking place in the classroom), photos of children taking part in activities, updates and newsletters. It is also place for parents to upload and share photos of learning at home that is connected to the learning that is taking place in school.
- Informal conversations between teachers and parents/carers on a regular basis to talk about their child's interests, progress and any concerns.
- Presentations and workshops on different areas of the curriculum and visits from external professionals such as the school nurse.