



EYFS Rationale

The EYFS is recognised as a unique and important stage in education, giving equal importance to supporting social and emotional development alongside children's learning.

In line with the *Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)*, practice in early years is guided by the following principles:

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children develop strength and independence through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time.
- Children develop at different rates. Effective practice acknowledges this and addresses the needs of all students, including those with SEND and other vulnerabilities.

Learning Opportunities

Our children benefit from a well-rounded curriculum that includes both planned teaching and opportunities for spontaneous learning. This approach enables adults to introduce new ideas and experiences into the children's lives, while also respecting their interests and previous experiences. Teachers skilfully extend children's interests and build learning over time through a range of indoor and outdoor opportunities. Short, regular teacher-led sessions help children learn skills in a structured sequence, while longer periods in the continuous provision allow them to practice and reinforce these skills until they become automatic.

As set out in the *Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)*, children develop skills in the three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The children then strengthen and apply these skills in the specific areas of the curriculum;

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Through our curriculum, children also develop the characteristics of effective learning. This ensures our children become resilient and critical thinkers who are active and effective learners.

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go.'
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying even if something is difficult. They enjoy sharing their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links and develop strategies for doing things in different ways.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language forms the foundation for all areas of learning. Early interactions lay the groundwork for language and cognitive development. At Cavendish Primary School, children are immersed in a language-rich environment, engaging in regular, high-quality conversations with both adults and peers. Adults purposefully comment on what children are interested in or doing, reflecting back their words while introducing new vocabulary to enhance language development. They read to children regularly, actively engaging them with stories, non-fiction texts, rhymes, and poems. Additionally, they offer numerous opportunities for children to use and reinforce new words across various contexts. Children are encouraged to share their ideas with support and guidance from their teachers. Thoughtful questioning prompts them to expand on their thoughts and conversations, helping them become confident in using a variety of vocabulary and language structures. Teachers are skilled at identifying when children need additional support and use a range of interventions, including new to English support and speech therapy strategies to ensure these children receive the support they need.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Children's personal, social, and emotional development is essential for leading healthy, happy lives and is foundational to their cognitive growth. In our setting, there is a strong focus on relationships, both between teachers and peers. Children are supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set simple goals, have confidence in their abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they learn how to look after their bodies including healthy eating and how to manage their personal needs independently. Through guided interactions, children learn how to form friendships, cooperate, and resolve conflicts in a restorative manner. These skills create a strong foundation for their success at school and later in life. Adults consistently model and support the development of these skills while working alongside children in continuous provision. Circle times, where personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) is the primary focus, are an essential part of the timetable for all children.

Physical Development

Physical activity is essential for children's development, helping them lead happy, healthy, and active lives. Gross and fine motor skills are developed progressively throughout their time in our EYFS. Adults assist children in building core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination, and agility through weekly PE sessions and daily access to our outdoor provision. Frequent and diverse opportunities to explore and engage with malleable materials, arts and crafts, puzzles, loose parts, and the use of small tools, supported by adults, help children build proficiency, control, and confidence.

Literacy

Developing a lifelong love of reading is essential for children. Through the EYFS curriculum, we teach both comprehension and word reading. Adults teach language comprehension by engaging children in conversations about the world around them, reading a variety of texts, and enjoying poems, rhymes, and songs together. A long-term plan, built around high-quality texts and poems, ensures that children are exposed to a broad range of books and experiences. Skilled word reading is taught through daily, high-quality phonics sessions. Children have regular opportunities to practice by reading books that align with their phonics knowledge. A love of reading is fostered by enthusiastic adult readers during our daily story time, immersing children in literature throughout the classroom, the school library, and at home. Children are encouraged to engage in mark-making with a variety of tools and materials throughout the EYFS. The connection to physical development is acknowledged, and a range of gross and fine motor activities provides children with opportunities to develop control while using mark-making tools, including writing implements. Children progress from giving meaning to marks to being taught discreetly how to form letters correctly and develop legible handwriting. Spelling is taught through daily phonics sessions. Oral rehearsal is fundamental to teaching sentence composition, as it is recognized that children must be able to speak before they can write. Targeted English inputs, oracy sessions, and high-quality conversations support this process. Children are taught how to "hold a sentence" during phonics sessions and how to apply their phonics knowledge to arrange letters and words to record their ideas.

Mathematics

Building a strong foundation in number is crucial, ensuring that all children acquire the essential skills needed to excel in mathematics. Children are taught to count confidently. They develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and then patterns within each number. By offering frequent and diverse opportunities to build and apply their understanding through various manipulatives, children develop a solid foundation of knowledge and vocabulary, which serves as the basis for mastering mathematics. The curriculum also provides rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics, including shape, space, and measure. Children are encouraged to develop positive attitudes and a genuine interest in mathematics. They are taught to recognize patterns and relationships, identify connections, take risks, discuss their observations with adults and peers, and embrace mistakes as part of the learning process. Using the White Rose Maths programme, mathematics is taught through short, focused sessions regularly throughout the week. Children are then given the chance to apply their skills in small groups with an adult, as well as within the continuous provision.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical environment and the community around them. Our curriculum considers that the frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them and fosters their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. Adults use and teach the children a wide range of vocabulary that allows them to access subject specific learning. Knowledge and understanding of the world is taught intentionally through adult-led activities, providing enriching experiences for children, and by setting up the continuous provision in ways that encourage experimentation and exploration of key concepts and ideas. When the children leave the EYFS they have the knowledge and skills to access discreet subject areas such as History, Geography, Science and RE.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Our children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts and explore a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear, and participate in are essential for fostering their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary, and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition, and depth of their experiences are crucial for their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to, and observe. A balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for exploration and experimentation in provision allows children to understand how they can combine their imagination, creativity, and knowledge of media and materials to express themselves. Children leave the EYFS confident to design, to produce artwork, to take part in role play and to make music.

Assessment

Development Matters offers teachers a broad overview of typical child development at various ages, helping practitioners identify key goals in a child's development. This supports our teachers in planning the curriculum and conducting assessments, ensuring that children are progressing towards the statutory Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Early essence is a software tool used to record each child's individual assessment graph. At various assessment points throughout the years teacher update this graph to reflect children's current levels across each of the 7 areas of the EYFS curriculum. Teachers discuss their children at regular points; daily with classroom staff, fortnightly during planning meetings within the EYFS team and half termly with SLT or sooner should the need arise. It is understood that children develop differently in the EYFS and follow individual pathways, which is always considered when reflecting on assessments. Quality first teaching ensures that children are supported in reaching their full potential. If additional support is required, this is discussed with parents and the SENCO, and appropriate interventions are implemented.