**Approved by Governors (date)………………………**

 **Head Teacher………….....................**

 **On behalf of Governors ……………………………**

**POLICY FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

**INTENT**

This document outlines the philosophy, intent and principles of early years teaching and learning at Castle View Primary School. This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) September 2025.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Castle View Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life as well as preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS applies to children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual, teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Castle View Primary School, we intent to:

* Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
* Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development.
* Teach the early skills of reading and writing and number.
* Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment.
* Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
* Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
* Work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions.
* Ensure that all children feel valued, respected and included and that classroom resources and activities reflect the culture and language of their homes.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Our Pedagogy: helping children to learn.

We believe:

• Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right support.

• Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.

• Our Early Year practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. They make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Adults may join in to sensitively support and extend children’s learning.

• Children in our Early Years also learn through group work, when adults guide their learning. Children in our Reception Class, or as a child development allows, will receive more of this guided learning compared to younger children in our Nursery class or those who have yet to develop.

• A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of our pedagogy.

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all our practice. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, our practitioners build children’s language effectively.

In planning and guiding what children learn, our practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. There are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:

• Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.

• Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.

• Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

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, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement. The school’s SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information, see Equal Opportunities and Diverse Policy and our SEN Policy.

Equal Opportunities

At Castle View Primary School, we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For further information, see our ‘Equal Opportunities Policy’.

Partnerships with Parents

We recognise that parents/carers are the child’s first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child’s development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

We value Parents and Carers by:

* Organising a thorough induction programme to welcome children and parents into our school community.
* Operating an “open door” policy, whereby they can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
* Outlining the core areas of learning in The Early Years Foundation Stage during regular stay and play sessions, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child’s learning at home.
* Providing termly curriculum information to inform parents of their child’s current curriculum and learning opportunities.
* Providing regular updates and sharing their child’s personal learning experiences in school through ‘Evidence Me’.
* Sharing learning experiences at school through ‘Come and play’ sessions.
* Encouraging parents and children to share their child’s special moments or achievements at home by using ‘Evidence Me’.
* Extensive experience in early literacy indicates that, if children are taught well, their backgrounds, ethnicity, level of disadvantage, their disabilities and other variables, such as being a boy or summer born, should rarely prevent their learning to read. Therefore, we teach reading skills as soon as they start our Early Years Provision. See our Early Years Reading Statement for more information.
* For all children ready to formally read, we encourage parents to listen to their child read each night, to make use of the phonics key rings sent home and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading record book.
* For those children not formally ready to read using decoding skills, we encourage parents to regularly share a book with their child at home by providing story books for the children to take home and enjoy with their parents.
* For Reception children, discussing individual targets at parents’ evenings in Autumn and Spring terms and providing a formal annual written report in July, summarising the child’s progress against the early learning goals. If we feel a child is not on track to meet these end goals, parents are informed immediately, and shared plans are put in place to close the identified gaps.
* For our Nursery children, discussing individual targets at regular intervals as the need arises. Also, providing a formal parent meeting at the end of the academic year, with the aim of ensuring a smooth transition into our Reception Class.
* Inviting parents to help in the reception class, or other classes in the school, and to accompany children on school visits.
* Inviting parents in to watch their children in performances such as our Lyrical Recital and Christmas Nativity.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At Castle View Primary School, the class teacher acts as 'key person' to all the children in their class supported by other practitioners.

Our Induction Process

We place a high priority on meeting children’s individual needs so transition into our school is successful.

Generally, our induction includes;

Nursery Class:

Short visits to our school with parents to stay and play. Visits increase in length of time and frequency, with and without parents, in accordance with a child’s needs.

Reception Class:

All children are visited by the reception class teacher and teaching assistant in their pre-school setting, if possible. Our reception class teacher speaks on a 1-1 with all parents of children new to our school, as well as contacting all previous preschool/nursery key workers, if possible. All these conversations form how we plan for a child’s successful start to Castle View Primary School. During Summer Term 2, other setting pre-school children, who will be starting school in September, are invited to school with their parents/carers to take part in a Come and Play session with the existing Nursery class children who will be starting Reception class too. This is an informal opportunity for parents and children to ‘get to know’ the school and meet with staff and other members of the school community. The children and parents are then invited to’ Come and Play and Stay for Lunch’. This is an opportunity for children and their parents to sample our school dinner menu and experience the lunch time routine. The children are then invited to a further 4 short sessions to come and play without parents. Children are given a ‘Summer Scrapbook’ that they can fill with photos, pictures and comments to bring in to share on their first day in September. Opportunity is also given to the parents to ask any questions they may have about their child’s induction. Parents/carers are invited to an information meeting where they have the opportunity to meet the Head teacher and key teaching staff. Here, parents are given a ‘New starters pack’ with a prospectus and leaflets outlining school routines and arrangements. A Safeguarding leaflet is given, and parents complete specific consent forms.

Each child has a ‘Year 5/6 Buddy’ and this buddy writes to them to welcome them to the school. We send the letters by post to be received by the reception child a few days before starting school. This Year 6 buddy supports them in the initial few days of starting school, particularly at lunch times.

We work closely with parents to ensure individual needs are met. This induction process will be expanded and tailored where appropriate to ensure all children’s needs are met.

This carefully planned schedule allows:

* Children to feel secure in their new environment and gradually build up to full time attendance.
* The teacher and teaching assistants get to know the children individually and establish good relationships.
* The reception teacher to carry out a baseline assessment through observing the children and playing games.

Admission on a full-time basis is introduced at the start of September, unless it is mutually agreed between parents, the EYFS Leader and the Headteacher that the child will benefit from a continuation of an induction period.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Castle View Primary School:

* Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
* Reception practitioners plan for more structured and independent activities to be undertaken as children develop, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
* Reception children meet the year 1 teacher during assembly, singing, playtime and other whole school activities during the reception year.
* Individual EYFS profiles and reading records are passed on to the year 1 teacher. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.
* An EYFS Profile end of year class summary is passed on to the year 1 teacher.
* Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
* Reception children visit their year 1 classroom and teacher on several occasion in the weeks of July.
* The ‘Letters and Sounds’ national approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout year 1 and 2 and for other age groups where appropriate.
* There is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term whist the children transition from The Early Years Framework to the National Curriculum.
* During year 1, children continue to have access to the EYFS outdoor area and equipment as appropriate.
* There is an overlap in approach and routines, e.g. fruit time, behaviour systems, timetables, etc.
* Where possible, the year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually become more formalised during the academic year.

**The Learning Environment**

The children have daily access to the indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Children have frequent visits to our school garden area. Here, the children have the opportunity to discuss and investigate plants and wildlife in the local environment and can use natural resources to create artwork and build structures.

**Planning**

Our curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it provides children with the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in their journey at Castle View Primary School and later in life. We aim that our children will have the self-belief to be willing to have a go, get involved and concentrate, have their own ideas and enjoy achieving what they set out to do. Our children are provided with rich learning opportunities to teach key knowledge and skills but also to allow them the opportunity to initiate their own ideas and activities so that they can develop the learning characteristics required of them to succeed life.

Effective planning is informed by observations of children to ensure we follow current interests and experiences. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do ensuring challenge for all. Our planning is informed by observations we make of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

**Long Term Planning**

We plan the curriculum using a thematic approach. The themes cover areas that are familiar, of interest to young children and enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. We also plan to ensure the children have the range of experiences needed for them to be successful as the progress through our school and for later life. Please see our Whole School Curriculum Overviews to understand how our EYFS curriculum and long-term planning documents align and support a child’s whole school curriculum journey at Castle View.

**Medium Term Planning**

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. When planning, we follow children’s interest and teach so children have the opportunities to reach the End of Year Goals. These goals have been devised in conjunction with the new Development Matters documentation 2023.

There are seven areas covered by the EYFS profile and Development Matters. These are split into 'prime' and 'specific' areas:

**Prime areas**

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

**Specific areas**

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children’s development levels are assessed. 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 prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Medium term planning reflects a balance of these seven areas of learning. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

**Short Term Planning**

The weekly plan is informed in two ways; we refer to the medium term plans which detail objectives and activities/experiences linked to the half termly theme. Planning is also informed through on going observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and enhanced play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children’s needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this, learning objectives for the next short term plan are identified.

Planning is monitored by the Headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader.

Staffing and Organisation

Our EYFS provision is a shared Nursery and Reception classroom environment with shared, free flow access to our newly developed outdoor learning environment. For our Nursery aged children, our main focus is delivering the three prime areas of the EYFS curriculum: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional development. We believe these are particularly crucial for

igniting young children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. When children are developmentally ready or move into our Reception Class, all seven areas of learning shape the Early Years curriculum activities and experiences offered to our children.

To maintain the outstanding quality of teaching in the EYFS, staff access regular training and frequently meet with other EYFS providers within our cluster of schools and beyond. Sharing good practice and maintaining high standards and a commitment for all children to achieve a Good Level of Development and provide opportunities for them to exceed them.

Safeguarding

We aim to provide a safe and secure learning environment for every child. Safety checks on the indoor and outdoor areas are carried out daily by the class teacher. An indoor and outdoor safety check is carried out each morning. All adults who teach and support children hold a current DBS certificate. Class teachers working in the EYFS are paediatric first aiders. Parent helpers must sign in at the school office and always wear a visitors’ badge. Safeguarding all our children is a high priority, for more information please refer to our ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection’ Policy and ‘Health and Safety’ Policy. Additional reference should also be made to the EYFS Risk Assessment.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. While the seven areas provide a framework for the Early Years’ curriculum, young children’s learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the seven areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching and learning is supported through:

* The partnership between staff and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement.
* The understanding that staff have knowledge 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 of 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, including the effective use of ICT.
* The identification, through observations, of children’s progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

At Castle View, we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children’s learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most

effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is one if the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children’s lives, and it is an important way for skills to be developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High-Quality Play

* Play is an intrinsic part of children’s learning and development.
* Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
* Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
* Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
* Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills.
* Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
* Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
* Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
* Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
* Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
* Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
* Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Role of the adult:

* To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
* To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
* To support children’s learning through planned play activities.
* To extend and support children’s spontaneous/self-initiated play.
* To extend and develop children’s language and communication in their play.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Castle View, we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child’s development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child’s progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

• Meeting good level of development

• Not yet reaching good level of development

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child in a written annual report.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

**Formative assessment**

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child’s achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. Each child has an ‘Evidence Me’ account in which evidence is stored. This is a safe, secure, online system of recording that allows parents to view the account at any time and contribute to their child’s learning journey with home observations. This system also allows us to safely store photographers and observations of the children to support judgements against the end of year goals.

**Summative assessment**

The EYFS Profile summarises all the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child’s achievements. It summarises children’s progress towards the early learning goals. It is completed at the end of each term by the class teacher and data is collected on the school’s system and the Local Authority system. The teacher undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation to ensure judgements are accurate.

**IMPACT**

Children demonstrate high levels of engagement in activities, developing their speaking and listening skills and communicate well to both adults and children. Children develop skills across all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Children have developed a wider sense of the world around them and can draw on these experiences during interactions with others and link this to new learning. They have enjoyed a range of experiences and vocabulary needed for them to be successful as they progress through our school and for later life.

Children develop their characteristics of learning and can apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with adults, drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing.

From their own starting points, children will make excellent social, emotional and academic progress, developing a sense of themselves so that they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.