



COTTESMORE SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2025)

Overview

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s school readiness and provides the broad range of knowledge and skills that form the right foundation for good future progress.

From September 2025, the revised EYFS Statutory Framework strengthens safeguarding, attendance and welfare requirements, while maintaining the principles of play-based learning, inclusion, and strong parental partnerships.

Aims in the EYFS

At Cottesmore School, our EYFS provision (Reception class within the Pre-Prep setting) aims to:

- Provide a safe, stimulating and nurturing environment for learning to enable children to learn how to work, play, co-operate with others.
- Support children to develop confidence, curiosity and independence.
- Promote equal opportunities and celebrate diversity.
- Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that encourages exploration and creativity.
- Build positive relationships with families to support each child’s learning journey.
- Lay strong foundations for future learning and wellbeing.

EYFS Principles

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- A Unique Child – Every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships.
- Enabling Environments – The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending



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children's development.

- Learning and Development – Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

A Unique Child

At Cottesmore School, we recognise that every child is unique and develops at their own pace. The EYFS Framework emphasises the importance of high-quality interactions, secure relationships and a deep understanding of each child's developmental stage. We view all children as capable, resilient learners who are naturally curious and keen to explore.

We value children's dispositions and attitudes to learning and understand that these are shaped by the environment, relationships, and feedback they receive. Through warm, supportive interactions and consistent encouragement, we help children develop confidence, self-regulation and a positive sense of themselves as learners. We celebrate effort, perseverance and achievement, helping children recognise their own progress and take pride in what they can do.

Inclusion

We warmly welcome and value every child and family within our school community. We are committed to inclusive practice and ensure that no child is disadvantaged because of their gender, race, home language, culture, family background, religion, health needs, SEND or any other individual characteristic.

We believe all children matter and are entitled to an ambitious curriculum that supports them to achieve their best. We take account of each child's experiences, interests, strengths and needs when planning for learning. This includes considering children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and recognising the important role families play in shaping children's development.

Our provision is designed to set high expectations while ensuring learning is accessible for all. We plan to meet the needs of girls and boys, children with SEND, children who may be more able, children learning English as an additional language, and those from diverse backgrounds.

We support inclusion by:

- planning meaningful learning experiences that build on each child's prior knowledge, interests and developmental stage;
- using a broad range of teaching approaches tailored to children's learning needs;



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- providing rich, engaging opportunities that motivate children and promote deep-level learning;
- creating a supportive, language-rich environment where every child's contributions are valued;
- selecting resources that reflect the diversity of modern Britain and promote equality and respect;
- offering appropriate challenge for children whose cognitive understanding is developing ahead of their communication skills;
- closely monitoring progress and acting swiftly to provide targeted support, early identification and effective intervention.

Keeping Children Safe and Promoting Welfare

Keeping children safe is at the heart of our EYFS provision. We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and Cottesmore School safeguarding procedures to ensure every child's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing is protected. We provide a secure, nurturing environment where children feel valued, respected and confident to explore.

We establish clear, consistent routines and boundaries to help children understand how to keep themselves safe. Rules are taught positively and age-appropriately to support self-regulation and responsible decision-making. Children are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks that develop independence and resilience, while being taught how to recognise and manage hazards.

Our safeguarding practice includes robust safer recruitment checks, ongoing staff suitability monitoring, high-quality safeguarding training, and clear whistle-blowing procedures. We follow statutory expectations relating to intimate care, children's privacy, attendance monitoring and early identification of concerns. Through strong relationships, vigilant practice and a well-planned learning environment, we promote children's welfare and ensure they feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

Positive Relationships and Parental Partnership

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators, and we value the vital role they play in supporting their child's learning and development. We work closely with families to build positive relationships and ensure continuity between home and school.

Before starting school, children and parents have the opportunity to meet their teacher during their taster session as well as meeting the other children in their class during our 'Move Up' morning. In September, the parents are invited to a welcome meeting that



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introduces the curriculum, routines and expectations and they are provided with a Parent Handbook. Throughout the year, we offer regular opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress, including consultations in the Autumn and Spring term, informal conversations and school events. Parents also receive written reports three times a year and are encouraged to share observations and insights from home.

We provide a range of activities that promote collaboration between home and school, such as performances, celebrations and whole-school events. All EYFS staff build warm, supportive relationships with the children, taking time to listen and respond to them. Each child's Key Person is their class teacher, supported by the Teaching Assistants, who together monitor and nurture children's personal, social and emotional development.

To ensure continuity and coherence, the Principal, Head of Pre-Prep and Reception teacher meet to discuss new intake children, and where transitions occur, the class teacher shares relevant information with the receiving school. This partnership approach helps us support each child effectively and fosters a strong, trusting relationship with families.

Enabling Environments

Our Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and independently. The outdoor learning area offers opportunities for physical development, investigation and creativity.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn in different ways and at varying rates. Our curriculum reflects the seven areas of learning identified in the EYFS: three prime areas (Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development) and four specific areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design).

Learning is delivered through adult-led and child-initiated activities, with an emphasis on play, exploration and active engagement.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

At Cottesmore, we make regular assessments of children's learning to ensure that future planning reflects their individual needs and interests. Assessment in the EYFS is primarily based on observation, carried out by the class teacher and other adults working with the children. Observations are recorded in each child's individual learning journal, providing a detailed and ongoing record of their development.

Our learning journals are used to record judgements against the EYFS Profile, capturing each child's progress along the steps leading up to and including the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Staff observe children continuously to gain a deep understanding of their



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strengths, interests, and areas for development. These observations inform planning, enabling us to tailor activities and learning experiences to support each child effectively.

Ongoing assessment allows us to track progress over time and identify any additional support a child may need. We use this information to set meaningful next steps, challenge children appropriately, and ensure that each child achieves their potential. Parents are kept fully informed of their child's development through regular updates, consultations, and written reports each term, fostering a strong partnership between home and school.

Learning and Development

At Cottesmore, we recognise that every child is unique, developing at their own pace and in their own way. All areas of learning are valued equally and are interconnected, forming a holistic foundation for future growth.

Teaching and Learning Approaches

Our EYFS provision provides rich, meaningful experiences that build on children's interests and strengths. The teacher uses their knowledge of child development to plan activities that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and effective communication. Children are supported to develop independence, confidence, self-regulation, and social skills through responsive adult interactions and through adult-led and child-initiated learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We focus on the three characteristics of effective learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate, experiment, and learn through hands-on experiences.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, persist with challenges, and take ownership of their learning.
- **Creativity and Critical Thinking** – children generate ideas, make connections, and explore solutions, supported by adults through encouragement, open-ended questioning, and access to versatile resources.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS curriculum is structured around seven areas of learning:

Prime Areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):** self-regulation, managing self, building relationships
- **Physical Development (PD):** gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and awareness of healthy lifestyles



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- **Communication and Language (C&L):** listening, attention, understanding, and speaking

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy:** reading, writing, comprehension
- **Mathematics:** number, counting, patterns, problem-solving
- **Understanding the World (UW):** people, communities, culture, past and present, the natural world
- **Expressive Arts and Design (EAD):** creating with materials, imaginative play, music, and role play

All areas include Early Learning Goals (ELGs), which outline the knowledge, skills, and understanding expected by the end of the EYFS. Our curriculum is designed to provide a stimulating, supportive environment that encourages curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning.

Monitoring and Review

The Principal, Head of Pre-Prep and Reception class teacher monitor EYFS provision as part of the whole-school quality assurance cycle. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes, to ensure continued alignment with the EYFS Statutory Framework.