

## **Comberton Primary School Early Years Policy**

**Reviewed – Oct 2026**

**Agreed by Raising Standards Committee**

**Date of Next Review – Oct 2028**

**Our Intent:** Our role at Comberton is to spark curiosity, creating a world of opportunity, awe and wonder for our children and staff. We aim to equip our children with the knowledge, skills and values to lead productive, healthy and inspired lives in modern day Britain.

### **Our Values**

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| Our core values, supported by the British Values of: <i>democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; and the mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs</i> , are: |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Respect</b>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>for all members of the school community; for the beliefs and ideas of others and the environment we create.</i> |
| <b>Responsibility</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>for our own actions, our own learning, and our pursuit of excellence.</i>                                       |
| <b>Tolerance</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>celebrating and understanding differences, and learning from each other.</i>                                    |
| <b>Collaboration</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>working together with different people for a common goal.</i>                                                   |
| <b>Perseverance</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>never, ever giving up. To be the best we can be.</i>                                                            |
| <b>Determination</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>to do the right thing and wanting to succeed.</i>                                                               |

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

***Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025***

### **Principles**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

## **A Unique Child**

At Comberton Primary School 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 and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion – all children and their families are valued at Comberton Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We ensure children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a comprehensive range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life. Importantly, we take into account our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

Within the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations specific to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We do this through a variety of ways:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support and challenge as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

## **Positive Relationships**

At Comberton Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through many ways:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open events and induction meetings. This is also provided via phone calls between the Nursery teacher for children joining our Nursery and the EYFS Lead for children starting in Reception.
- Providing effective transition sessions prior to starting Comberton Primary School.
- Providing an induction pack of information about starting Nursery and Reception at Comberton Primary School.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.

- Providing a 'Stay and Play' session for Nursery parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment, followed by a further parent/teacher consultation meeting later in the year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Regularly sharing children's individual books (Reception only) alongside our 'Topic Books' with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through the 'Seesaw' app, school newsletters and school website.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Nursery and Reception. The Reception report will state whether their child has met or is working towards the ELGs.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Comberton Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, alongside somewhere where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up with planned continuous provision.

We plan a learning environment that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### **Learning and Development**

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across all learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas which underpin all learning are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

Children's development levels are assessed at key points throughout the year and as the year progresses, 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 of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception pupils also participate in daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in our Read Write Inc scheme.

At Comberton Primary School we follow the RE agreed syllabus for Worcestershire County Council. We teach PSHRE through the SCARF scheme of work which matches the aim of developing a child's personal, social and emotional development as set out in the ELGs. Citizenship education is developed through the child's knowledge and understanding of the world.

All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with difference faiths and beliefs. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability and social circumstances.

### **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- *Playing and Exploring* - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- *Active Learning* - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- *Creating and Thinking Critically* - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

### **Aims**

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. We will ensure quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.

At Comberton Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

### **Planning**

The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are taken from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. These statements provide the basis for our planning, which is based upon themes with phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. The long-term plan reflects the necessary experiences and opportunities that we wish our children to have within the EYFS. Our planning, in order to deliver the children's next steps in learning, is adapted to take account of our children's interests which therefore responds to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working within the EYFS.

EYFS staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's individual books and/or Topic Books.

## **Assessment**

During the first six weeks in Nursery and Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline ('On-Entry Assessment'). These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. Assessments points are incorporated throughout the year to track the progress of children, to see if children are meeting key targets. Children are recorded as 'On Track' or 'Not On Track'. Children who are not accessing the curriculum at these points, are regularly reviewed in progress meetings held with the EYFS Lead to discuss barriers to learning, needs and provision.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a nationally employed assessment tool (statutory from 2021). The RBA is an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting points in language, communication and literacy, and mathematics. Pupils use practical resources along with an individual iPad to complete these tasks and teachers record the results on a laptop or tablet. It is not used to label or track individual pupils. Schools are required to carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of pupils starting Reception. No numerical score will be shared, and the data will only be used at the end of year 6 to form the school-level progress measure (via The Standards and Testing Agency). However, teachers receive a series of short, narrative statements that inform them how their pupils performed in the assessment. These can be used to inform teaching within the first term. The RBA will enable school-level progress measures for primary schools which show the progress pupils make from Reception until the end of Key Stage 2.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise the pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging (1) or Expected (2). We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

Teachers keep progress records and 'Maths' and 'Writing' books are maintained in Reception. Topic Books show a collection of evidence linked to all areas of learning and records examples of children's work, including quotes which demonstrate their learning. These books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis (EYFSP). The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We also share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and provides details of the child's general progress. These are completed in the summer term following the submission of data and passed on to parents at the end of each academic year.

## **Teaching & Learning Styles**

The features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- the understanding that teachers have 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 EYFS.
- 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 for 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.
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school.
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it.
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the EYFS.

## **Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily. Parents of all children starting Nursery will have communication via telephone initially from the Nursery teacher and then attend a 'Stay and Play' session prior to their child starting. Nursery staff will also host a private meeting where parents will complete a profile, providing staff with information all about their child. Parents of all children starting Reception in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to

- Share the school induction pack.
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain expectations for children starting school
- Explain the arrangements for the transition into reception.

The children are given opportunities to come into school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class whilst spending time in their new classroom environment. Parents are encouraged to leave their child during this session so that they can begin to build positive relationships with staff. This means that before they join their new class, the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them. Children who are transitioning into Reception from our school's Nursery will have additional sessions in the Reception area, and also allocated times for Reception staff to visit

them in Nursery. Current Reception children also spend time in their new Year 1 classroom with members of staff. Depending on the children's needs, additional time will be given to ensure that the transition runs smoothly.

### **Safeguarding & Welfare**

*'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'* (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Comberton Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework, a whole school medicines policy is in place, ensuring that there are systems in place to make sure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021). A first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.

### **Keeping Safe**

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy. At least one staff member has a paediatric first aid certificate, and is always available (including accompanying on trips) at all times.

### **Good Health**

All children are provided with healthy snacks each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times. All snack is prepared in a way to prevent choking, and all safety precautions are taken. Children partake in weekly PE sessions and there is a secure outdoor area that the children access daily. Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required. If children fall asleep, staff must ensure that they are within sight and hearing of a staff member, are lay

on a firm and flat waterproof mattress on the floor, and that the child's head must not be covered. Any use of screen time in school is limited to educational programmes or websites e.g. RWI portal, for specific learning and development aims.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. Members of the Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed in October 2028 or as necessary.