'Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'

CONISTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

2024 2025

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Within this document, the term 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) is used to describe children who are in our Nursery and Reception classes.

Coniston CE Vision

We endeavour to embrace our school vision into the Early Years curriculum through PSHE. Each session ends with a prayer led by either the Class Teacher or a child in class. We reflect on the day and give thanks.

'Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' Joshua 1:9

Coniston Church of England Primary is a welcoming, happy and supportive school rooted in faith and love where everyone flourishes through the Christian values of service, stewardship, respect and perseverance. Our understanding of every child allows us to develop their unique gifts and talents. We enjoy learning together within our school family, our community and God's wider world drawing inspiration from our beautiful Lakeland setting and the awe, wonder and joy it creates.

Aim

At Coniston C of E Primary we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS framework, '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.'

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy: Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy; SEND Policy; Behaviour Policy.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS that we must 'ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.' We 'promote teaching and learning to ensure children's school readiness' and give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.'

- Every child is a **unique child,** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**

- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments,** in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different** ways (characteristics of learning), **and at different rates.** The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced and broad curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using purposeful play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and within the wider community
- Plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Respond to the child's emerging needs and interests guiding their developments through warm positive interaction
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out
- Make ongoing judgements to help children prepare for more formal learning and readiness for Year 1

Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners often interact to stretch and challenge children further where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out. We use the outdoor space increasingly, especially the pond area and have weekly Forest School sessions.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our interaction and observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

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.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:
Communication and Language
Physical Development
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.
The **specific** areas are:
Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Coniston CE and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS which include, for Nursery, a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds', and Reception follow Read, Write, Inc. Then the teaching of Mathematics and Literacy; including shared reading and writing; Physical development; PSHE and; RE through Understanding the World.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics - each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans are reviewed by the Head teacher and then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances, or children's responses.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways: Learning Journey;

parent newsletter and; parent social platform. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents. In the autumn and spring term, parents are invited to attend a parent's afternoon and their progress is discussed, highlighting each child's next steps.

Within the final term of Reception, we provide the parent's with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and by following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Child Protection, Supporting pupils with medical conditions, First Aid in Schools.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Coniston CE, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed some of the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and SEND policy.

Parents as Partners and the wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways – see our separate Home School agreement policy.
Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those

involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. The class teacher attends a home visit to help children familiarise themselves with her in their own environment. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive the Early Years Prospectus and complete an 'All about me' booklet.

Reception children have afternoons in a mixed Reception, year 1 and year 2 class. The Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years teacher and discuss each child's development throughout the year in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.