



EYFS POLICY

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An academy within:



“Learning together; to be the best we can be”

1. Early Years at Coppice School

Coppice School is a community Special School catering for pupils aged 3-19 years. EYFS at Coppice caters for pupils from 3-6 years, our learners have a range of Special Educational needs including global delay, moderate to severe learning difficulties and Autism. While we maintain many of the principals of mainstream EYFS such as play based learning and the use of Development Matters to guide our assessments, sensory therapies and communication strategies for a large part of our daily sessions, ensuring a holistic approach for children with additional needs.

At Coppice we ensure that children are taught in enriching learning environments with highly trained staff and use of specialist provision. Our class sizes are small to ensure effective learning opportunities and allow our children to grow and develop at their own pace. We strive to open the world to the children through varied curriculum and real life experiences using both indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. Communication strategies are an essential part of daily life as are sensory and therapy interventions to ensure learning and sensory needs are personalised. There is an on site sensory specialist on hand to offer strategies and advice, along with regular consultations with Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists mean that we provide children with a bespoke learning package.

2. Aims

Intent – To teach pupils in our care, skills essential for life, help them to understand and navigate the world around them and to begin to communicate their needs and desires.

Implementation – We do this through sensory and real life experiences, consistency, structure and routine. We continually work on the following life skills:

- Finding a meaningful communication Strategy.
- Using tools for a purpose
- Tolerating others
- Developing Independence
- Following instructions
- Purposeful Play.

Impact – Pupils are able to communicate in their own way to familiar adults both at school and at home. They will become confident explorers who are resilient to new experiences. Pupils have strategies to support their self-regulation and are happy to engage in sensory support strategies through the positive relationships they have formed with familiar adults.

3. Early Years at Coppice School

At Coppice School we recognise that each child is unique and our early years practitioners work hard to develop adaptable enabling environments for children on the Autistic spectrum, ensuring children's needs are met. Our planning and learning takes a holistic approach through therapies and play based learning and communication strategies are at the core of everything we do. We have a strong collaboration between a number of professionals, meaning that all pupils regardless of their SEN have the best start to school life. By working alongside parents and skilled professionals we aim to overcome many of their barriers to learning.

4. At Coppice we are guided by the four principles on which the framework is based, these being:

1. ***A Unique Child:*** 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 we use praise and encouragement, consistent reinforcement and graded prompting as well as celebration and rewards to encourage positive attitudes to learning.

2. ***Positive Relationships:*** We recognise that children learn to connect to the world and grow in strength and independence from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with all children and their families.

3. ***Enabling Environments:*** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in scaffolding and extending a child's development. Through careful observation, we assess each child's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging, yet achievable, activities and experiences which are designed to extend learning.

4. ***Learning and Development:*** Our EYFS class is set up to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Areas are defined and resources are labelled so that children

learn to locate equipment and resources as independently as possible. The majority of the

pupils in our Early Years classes need a more structured approach to learning which requires a balance between adult led play based focussed activities and opportunities to practise and enhance skills.

5. Planning

Planning and assessment here at Coppice is based on Development Matters consisting of the following areas of learning;

Three Prime areas of learning:

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

Four Specific areas of learning:

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

We plan a broad and balanced curriculum through a topic based approach, ensuring that learning and experiences are meaningful and appropriate for the children in that cohort. Our planning is adaptable year on year to reflect the change in need for each cohort of children and while we can take the lead from the children's interests some of the time, ensure that topics help to open up the world to our children.

As in mainstream EYFS we learn through play and during this we model essential skills and encourage children to engage. We model purposeful play and using resources appropriately while tolerating others, accepting support and beginning to share resources. Underpinning all of this is clear and uncluttered communication, using both PECS and Makaton to support and explain play. We incorporate a weekly community visit to link with the topic to enable them to put skills into practise and learn outside the classroom. Literacy and Mathematic sessions are linked to the topic and have links to other areas of the EYFS curriculum, children are encouraged to take part through the use of motivators and using 'work first, then...'

6. Admissions

All parents of children with SEND are actively encouraged to look around the different Special Schools in the area to support them to make an informed choice as to the path their child's education should take. Special schools will be informed of any children in receipt of an EHCP, whose parents wish for them to attend a special school. Based on their individual needs and requirements, observations by staff and discussions with other professionals involved in the care or education of the child, a decision will be made for how effectively their needs can be met and the best provision will be offered.

7. Transition

At Coppice we recognise that starting school or changing settings can be a potentially stressful time for any child and parents, more so for a child with SEND. We endeavour to make this process go as smoothly as possible and allow time for children to adapt to the change.

Once a child has been offered a place at Coppice the transition process will begin. After initial discussions over the phone with the child's current setting, an initial observational meeting will take place, visiting the child at their current setting, observing them in a setting they are familiar in and discussions with the professionals who work the closest with them to build up a holistic view of the child. They, along with their parents initially, will be offered opportunities to visit the school, then increasing amounts of time spent in school with a familiar member of staff from their current setting. Based on how well their initial transition meetings have gone will shape the following part of transition. A home visit will also be arranged to meet parents and give them an opportunity to discuss and issue or requirements they have. During the home visit we will provide children and parents with a copy of our 'Getting to Know Us' booklet with photographs of the people they will be working with and the learning environments as well as parts of the school they will use regularly as a way for parents to discuss and show their new setting. During their first few weeks at Coppice they will have a staggered entry, building up their time in school to allow them to adjust to new routines, environments and experiences.

Children who are in FS2 attend Coppice 5 days a week and are picked up and dropped off by the school minibuses.

Children who are in FS1 attend Coppice on a two week rota of 2 full days one week and 3 full days the next, picked up and dropped by school minibuses. This is to ensure they receive their full Nursery hours entitlement.

8. Assessments

We assess the children against the Development Matters document to outline the objectives for our planning and guide our observations. Our evidence takes the form of observational assessments, photos and videos, all of which are recorded and stored on Tapestry, which then provides a learning journal for each child. Tapestry also logs the next steps in development, shows gaps in observations, our areas of strength and areas for development and helps to chart progress and set Development Matters Linked targets. However, as our children often fall below national expectations for their age development matters doesn't break down the steps into small enough steps, to account for this, Tapestry helps to support our judgements by using the SEND assessments developed by Tapestry and underpinned by Development Matters.

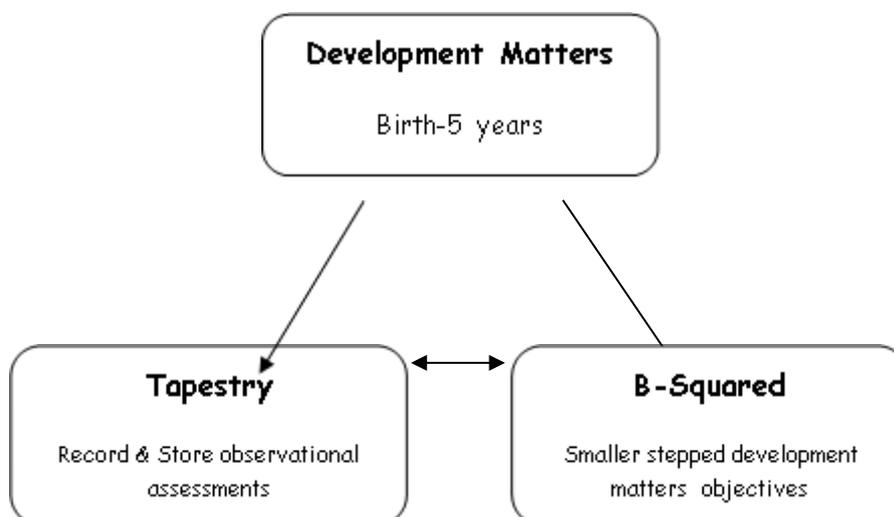
In conjunction with this all children are tracked using B-Squared as it is specifically designed to assess children with additional and complex needs. It links with the Development matters profile and was updated in 2012 to reflect the latest version of the document. B-Squared breaks each developmental stage down into smaller steps

to allow us to provide the children with manageable objectives to enable us to monitor the progress they make.

Parents also have access to their child's Tapestry observations and have the opportunity to share in their experiences and achievements, they can 'like' and comment on individual observations and even add their own, helping us to develop a fully rounded view of each child and their capabilities.

All children are base lined within the first six weeks of the entry to Coppice, this is done through our assessment tool B-Squared and through discussions with parents and other professionals who have worked closely with the children. This primarily comes from information provided through the EHCP document and guides their targets for the coming year.

To ensure observations and assessments are accurate, all members of staff are actively involved in contributing to Tapestry observations but are not published and accessible to parents or included in a child's journal unless checked and approved by the account holder. Samples of these observations are also taken every half term to the EYFS Special School moderation meetings to be analysed by fellow professionals.



9. Health & Safety

Many children with additional needs have behaviours and sensory needs which need to be closely monitored and safety is paramount. At Coppice there is a high staff to child ratio to enable children to safely explore their learning environment. At Coppice we are fully aware of the varying needs of our children, and that these needs may put them at risk of harm, such as Pica or a need to mouth and chew, so resources are

continually checked for broken or loose parts, small pieces and choking hazards are removed, chewelry is used to substitute this need or oral stimulation therapies. New resources are thought through carefully checking their material and robust nature. Children who have particular proprioceptive and vestibular needs are provided with sensory therapy time to ensure these needs are adequately met.