



Prospectus 2025-2026





High Road
Cotton End
Bedford
MK45 3AG
01234 740100

office@cottonendforestschool.co.uk

Dear Parents/Carers,

I warmly welcome you and your family to Cotton End Forest School and look forward to building a strong home/school partnership with you. Cotton End Forest School provides a caring, happy and safe environment where every child is valued and encouraged to develop a positive attitude to learning which will continue throughout their lives.

We are dedicated to striving for high academic standards whilst encouraging the core values of integrity, understanding and loyalty so that our pupils grow into independent, responsible citizens. Our curriculum is designed to enable each child to discover their strengths by providing a wide variety of outdoor learning as well as sporting, musical and artistic activities.

This prospectus aims to give you information about our school and its organisation.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Headland
Head Teacher



Gateway Building



Aims of Our School

The Staff and Governors of Cotton End Forest School are dedicated to providing all the children at our school with a good foundation for lifelong learning. We have agreed upon the following set of aims which we hope will prepare our pupils to become responsible citizens of tomorrow:

- to be receptive, enthusiastic, inquisitive, independent and willing learners
- to respect and value others
- to develop the social skills to form positive relationships with others.
- to have a positive attitude to life, high self-esteem, and a 'can do' mentality striving to reach their full potential
- to be happy, friendly and caring to others
- to be healthy and active
- to be able to express themselves confidently and appropriately in any situation
- to develop a sense of community, belonging and commitment

Values Education

Over the school year we explore different values with the children. The value changes on a monthly basis to give an opportunity to learn a wide variety of qualities. We cover the skills through the assemblies and take home tasks.

The values we encourage are:-

September—New Beginnings

October- Co-operation

November—Keeping Safe

December—Equality

January—Courage

February—Patience/Tolerance

March- Friendship

April—Caring

May—Appreciation

June—Respect

July—Happiness



School Staff

"I feel that the headmistress knowing all the children's names and greeting them each morning is fabulous." Parent

Mrs Headland	Headteacher
Miss Grey	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs Sohanpal	Assistant Headteacher - KS1
Mrs Russell	Assistant Headteacher - EYFS
Mrs Catchpole	Assistant Headteacher - SENDCo
Miss Beams	Lower KS2 Lead
Miss Joseph	Upper KS2 Lead
Mrs Chan	EYFS Teacher
Mrs McCarthy	EYFS Teacher
Miss Burt	LKS2 Teacher
Miss Wright	KS1 Teacher
Miss Pryor	UKS2 Teacher
Miss Birkinshaw	KS1 Teacher
Mrs Tree	KS1 Teacher
Miss Mulcahey	LKS2 Teacher
Mr Goodman	UKS2 Teacher
Miss Potter	LKS2 Teacher
Miss Hendry-Taylor	UKS2 Teacher (Maternity Leave)
Mrs Hunter	Business & Facilities Manager
Mrs Coe	Office Manager
Ms Askew	Receptionist/Administrator
Miss Reid	Administration Assistant/MDSA
Mrs Chesters-Lewis	Family Support Worker/Safeguarding Officer
Miss Davey	P.E. & Forest School Leader
Mrs Bird	Teaching Assistant
Miss Plenty	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Rowland	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Taylor	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Rance	Teaching Assistant



Miss Davidson	Teaching Assistant
Miss Harris	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Winn	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Wojnicka	Teaching Assistant
Miss Khinda	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Nsonwah	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Zobian	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Stravens	Teaching Assistant
Ms Badley	Teaching Assistant
Ms Cahill	Teaching Assistant
Miss Fields	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Childs	Teaching Assistant
Miss Long	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Della Santa	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Harris	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Durrani	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Abbott	Teaching Assistant
Miss Ayliffe	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Nizal	Apprentice Teaching Assistant
Miss Harpin	Apprentice Teaching Assistant
Mr Warner	Site Agent
Mr Hardy	Care Taker
Miss Garrigle	MDSA
Miss Wharton Mrs Guilherme Miss Kirby Mr Bulling-Cutting	Cleaning Team



We are committed to safer recruitment and all staff undergo an enhanced DBS check and sign a Staff Disqualification Declaration. They also complete Prevent Training as part of the recruitment/induction process.

"Once again I am extremely impressed at the dedication and drive of all staff to make the school a safe and welcoming environment. I hope that all parents take a minute to understand the complexities of creating a Covid safe environment" August 2020 Parent

"I would just like to thank the teaching staff in my child's class for their approach to Black History Month. She talked about the subject at home and seemed fully aware of the situation. It is reassuring to see that sensitive subjects are taught to them." October 2020 Parent

The Children

The School has 370 children on roll and the Nursery has 46 children on roll

Willow	-	30
Oaks	-	30
Wagtails	-	30
Owls	-	30
Woodpeckers	-	27
Skylarks	-	26
Kingfishers	-	29
Nightingales	-	29
Eagles	-	29
Falcons	-	30
Ospreys	-	26
Harriers	-	27
Kestrels	-	27
Kites	-	27

Reception - 60, Year 1 - 60, Year 2 - 53, Year 3 - 58, Year 4 - 59, Year 5 - 53, Year 6 - 54

These numbers do vary as people occasionally move in or out of the area. Please telephone the school for up to date information.



School Organisation

Cotton End Forest School covers the Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Our school is organised into 15 classes;

Nursery	-	Cherry
Year R	-	Willow
Year R	-	Oak
Year 1	-	Wagtails
Year 1	-	Owls
Year 2	-	Woodpeckers
Year 2	-	Skylarks
Year 3	-	Kingfishers
Year 3	-	Nightingales
Year 4	-	Eagles
Year 4	-	Falcons
Year 5	-	Ospreys
Year 5	-	Harriers
Year 6	-	Kestrels
Year 6	-	Kites

Our learning support staff are deployed to support children's individual needs, either in class, in small groups or on an individual basis.

Children are taught in mixed ability age groups where a variety of teaching methods are used to cater for the individual needs of the child, including whole class teaching, group work and individual work.

Curriculum

At Cotton End Forest School, we are committed to providing a knowledge-based curriculum which is linked to 'Learning Beyond the Classroom' opportunities. This approach is hands-on, broad and balanced, and provides our pupils with opportunities to gain essential knowledge, skills and understanding. We intend that all children should enjoy their learning, achieve

their potential and become independent life-long learners with skills which will allow them to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Through a knowledge-rich, holistic, outdoor-focused approach, we will aim high, striving for every child to achieve highly, both academically and socially. Through learning opportunities in the classroom and beyond, including Forest School, our curriculum will nurture curious minds, stretch imaginations and provide opportunities for every child to become leaders in their own right. We believe that education takes place beyond the walls of the classroom, and we utilise our outdoor space to promote a fully inclusive environment where children feel safe and confident to try new things.

Homework is set on a regular basis and we ask that you support your child's learning at home by ensuring that they complete homework tasks and listen to them read regularly.

"My child loves to learn and always has. This has been enhanced by his teacher's passion for learning and teaching and making every topic real and exciting and using lots of different ways to show them the topic." Parent

Religious Education

Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The children attend a daily act of Collective Worship and parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE or Collective Worship. RE contributes educationally to the development of our children as individuals and members of society by encouraging a reflective approach to life in the context of a growing understanding of the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and religious practices of mankind. RE is taught through specific units of work, cross curricular links and through spontaneous experiences

Forest School and Learning Outside the Classroom

Forest School actively encourages outdoor learning and each class has a dedicated session within their timetable to engage the children in all sorts of activities including den building, campfire activities including toasting marshmallows etc.

Outdoor learning will aim to develop:

- Self Awareness
- Self Regulation
- Intrinsic motivation
- Empathy
- Good social communication skills
- Independence
- A positive mental attitude, self-esteem and confidence



"Leaders have crafted a new vision for the school. They have focused on maximising learning opportunities outdoors. The spacious and vibrant outdoor learning environment supports this vision.." Ofsted January 2023

"It's particularly satisfying to see the report acknowledge how pupils prize the special outdoor ethos of Cotton End Forest School and happily attend". Ofsted June 2025.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery and Reception follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

There are seven areas of learning and development.

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, are:

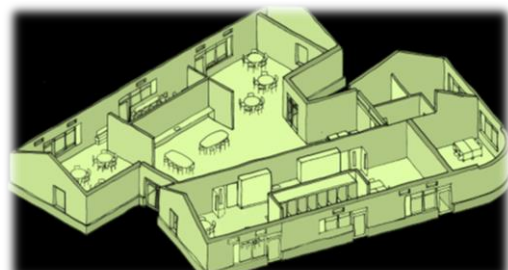
- communication and language;
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development



Early Years Pavilion

We also support children in four *specific* areas, through which the above areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.



Early Years Pavilion Plan

These areas are developed within the child through initiated play-based environment with focused teaching sessions at an age appropriate level. We make full use of both the engaging indoor and well-equipped outdoor provisions.

A child's first experience of school is crucial in developing their enjoyment of learning and encouraging their natural curiosity. Here at Cotton End Forest School we aim to nurture these qualities in all our children within our caring surroundings.

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008.

Play and Exploration

At our school, we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, through observation of child-initiated or adult-led play activities and by providing a framework for individual and group learning opportunities.

We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning during play by getting involved in the play ourselves and modelling and extending that play. We believe that children learn by doing, seeing, feeling, experiencing, understanding, experimenting, listening to instructions, hearing and sharing.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested and we think children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions. Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

"Your staff team should feel incredibly proud. The investment in training and development that you've prioritised has clearly paid dividends and shows in every classroom" Ofsted June 25



Nursery Children

We accept children from the age of 3 into Nursery at the start of each academic year in September. We also offer a small number of limited spaces for 2-year-olds. Parents need to apply for a place with us and sessions will be allocated:-

"My daughter absolutely loves coming to school, she loves her teacher and she cried this morning because she isn't at school". Parent

"I want to say a massive thank you to you and all the Pre-school team for everything you have done with my daughter. She started as a shy little girl but has come so far in her confidence and engaging in positive interactions with others. We are really proud of her and look forward to seeing her grow and develop in her next chapter of school life as she moves into reception." Parent

"It is very hard trying to keep her entertained! Hats off to you girls! You are super amazing at what you do!" Parent



Special Educational Needs

Cotton End Forest School follows the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Where children have special educational needs the curriculum may be adapted to suit them. Children needing extra help will usually be supported within the classroom but they may be withdrawn in small groups or individually where appropriate. Children are closely monitored by their class teacher who will provide additional resources or support in the classroom and will write a personal plan for their needs. The SENDCo will oversee all children's needs in school. Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress, and Individual Needs Action Plans will be shared with them. We may also use professional staff and outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist, whose expertise will help us to try to ensure all children reach their full potential.

Any children showing an exceptional talent will be encouraged to develop this further.

Cotton End Forest School Results

2024/25

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

	School 2025	National (2024)
% achieving a GLD	65%	67.7%

Phonics

Year 1 Phonics Screening

	School 2025	National (2024)
% achieving required standard	75%	80%

Year 2 Phonics Screening

	School 2025	National (2024)
% achieving required standard	94.9%	89%

Multiplication Tables Check

Year 4

School Average Score (2025)	National (2024)
21.04	20.6

Year 6 Assessments

% at expected	Year cohort (2025)	National (provisional 2025)	Cotton End High Standard
Reading	93%	75%	40%
Writing	77%	72%	3%
Maths	83%	74%	30%
GPS	83%	73%	33%
Combined	77%	62%	-

N.B. Combined is R, W and M – GPS isn't included.

Average Scaled Score	Cotton End (2025)	National (2025)
Reading	106	106
Maths	106	105
GPS	107	105



School Times

The school gates are opened at 8.45am and children go straight to their classes to start the day with independent learning tasks, this gives them an opportunity to settle in before school starts. The school day starts at 9am (when the gate closes).

Children are not allowed to leave the school premises during the day unless it has been requested in writing prior to the appointment. Children arriving late or leaving early should be signed out from the school office.

Children who arrive after 9am will be considered as late. Parents/Carers will need to sign them at the school office and state a reason for the lateness. Persistent lateness is reviewed by the Education Welfare Officer on a termly basis and they monitor and act where necessary.

Morning Break	10.30am to 10.45am	Owls, Wagtails, Woodpeckers & Skylarks
	11am to 11.15am	Kingfishers, Nightingales, Eagles & Falcons
	11.15am - 11.30am	Ospreys, Harriers, Kestrels & Kites
Lunch Club	12pm to 12.30pm	Cherry
Lunch Break	11.30am to 12.30pm	Willow & Oak
	11.45am to 12.45pm	Owls & Wagtails
	12pm to 1pm	Woodpeckers & Skylarks
	12.15pm to 1pm	Kingfishers, Nightingales, Eagles & Falcons
	12.30pm - 1.15pm	Ospreys, Harriers, Kestrels & Kites
Afternoon Break	2.15pm to 2.30pm	Owls, Wagtails, Woodpeckers & Skylarks

School ends Monday to Friday 3.30pm

Willow, Oak and Cherry classes have free flow play so do not have a designated morning or afternoon break.



School Lunches

Children may have a school lunch or bring a healthy packed lunch. Hot meals are prepared freshly on site by HCL and cost £2.75 per day. Universal Free School Meals are available for children in years Reception, 1 and 2. Free School Meals (FSM) are available to all children whose parents receive the relevant benefits. You can speak to Mrs Coe in the office or apply on line through the Bedford Borough website

www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/education_grants/free_school_meals.aspx

Packed Lunches

We have several children in school with a nut allergy, therefore please do not send your child with nuts or items containing nuts.

We are committed to being a "Healthy School".

Packed Lunches should be placed in a clearly named box or bag and should ideally include:

- At least **one** portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables **every day** (e.g. apple, banana, cucumber, baby sweet corn, carrot, raisins etc. **not fruit winders**)
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel) **every day**
- Oily fish, such as salmon, **at least once every three weeks**
- A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals **every day**
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard **every day**
- A treat such as small cake may be included but we do not encourage snacks such as chocolate bars or sweets.
- A drink such as fruit juice, squash or water. **Fizzy drinks are not permitted in school.**

Snack

All children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2 are provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable at morning break, under the government '5 a day scheme'. Key Stage 2 children are encouraged to bring fruit or a healthy snack from home, not fruit winders. All children under the age of five in Cherry, Willows & Oaks & FSM children are also entitled to free school milk. Parents may order school milk through our milk provider Coolmilk at www.coolmilk.com/parents. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact Ms Askew in the School Office.

As part of our healthy eating ethos we also encourage children to drink water and we provide each child with a named water bottle from Year 1.

Partnership with Parents

We encourage and welcome parents into our school on both formal and informal occasions.

Parents are encouraged to attend open mornings, special assemblies, coffee mornings and other events such as Christmas concerts and Sports Day. We also value parental help in school for reading or small group work, on educational visits and forest school sessions.

We regularly send letters and newsletters home via Parentmail, with up to date information and important diary dates, this information is also displayed on our website.

All children and parents receive a Home-School agreement to sign to reinforce and strengthen the partnership with the school.

The school operates an open-door policy allowing parents to raise any concerns, with the Class Teacher or Head teacher.

It is lovely to hear about her progress and achievements. Thank you for your kindness and nurturing her love of learning-Parent 2025

Parents, Teachers and Friends of Cotton End Forest School (PTFA)

Parents, Staff, Governors and members of the community form our PTFA. Members help to raise money for the much-needed funds for school by organising a range of sponsored events such as a school fair, prize draws, beetle drive and quizzes etc.

We welcome parents to join the PFTA and we encourage any new ideas or suggestions to raise extra funds for our school. We aim to provide a mixture of fund raising and social events which greatly benefit the school and help us to grow as a school community.





Breakfast and After School Clubs

Our Breakfast Club and After School Club is run by Junior Adventures Group (JAG)

They provide a safe, healthy and stimulating environment for your child.

Your child can choose from the many activities on offer, or play in the pavilion or out in the playground. They can be sure of a freshly prepared meal or snack in a relaxed and inclusive environment.

Music

Children are encouraged to pursue and develop their musical talents both during and out of school. Bedford Music Service offer recorder, violin, flute, guitar, piano and ukulele tuition for children in Year 2 and above via Bedford Music Co-operative.

Sports Clubs

Sporty Scholars offer a variety of sports clubs for KS1 and KS2. Activities include speed stacks, tag rugby, football, hockey, tennis, basketball, gym etc.

After School Clubs

We also offer the service of After School Clubs including Art Club, DT Club, Football and other sports etc. which are bookable on a half termly basis.

"I just wanted to say a special thank you to Miss Long who has been amazing and just simply her pure sunshine despite busy days has been very much noticed and greatly appreciated".
Parent May 2024

"The staff are amazing and my children love attending." Dawn Until Dusk customer

School Uniform

We are proud of our uniform and expect children to wear it smartly. The uniform is practical for school activities, and gives the children a sense of school identity.

Please mark all items of clothing clearly with your child's name.

Children should wear a navy school sweatshirt/cardigan, white polo shirt, grey trousers, skirt, shorts or pinafore dress, plain white socks or grey tights and black shoes. In summer they may wear a blue and white checked dress with plain white socks.

School shoes should be a sensible black shoe, easy fastenings are recommended e.g velcro or buckle fastening so that your child can dress themselves with limited help until they can tie their own shoe laces. Trainers, high heels, open toed or sling-backed sandals may not be worn.

Nursery

Children in Cherry Class (Nursery) can wear school uniform if you choose however it is not mandatory. Please send in a change of clothes & shoes in a named draw string bag just in case of a little accident.

"I like my child to wear a smart uniform in preschool as it saves their normal clothes from getting dirty and covered in paint" Pre School parent

Outdoor Learning/ Forest School

Children need to have waterproof trousers, coat, long sleeved t-shirt, tracksuit bottoms, spare socks and pants and wellies in school to enable them to take part in outdoor activities in all weathers.

Logo Uniform

Sweatshirts, cardigans, book bags etc with the school logo can be purchased from My School Clothing online at <https://myclothing.com/> or Earth Uniform at www.earthuniform.com

Jewellery

Children should not wear jewellery to school for health and safety reasons. They may wear small stud earrings which must be covered for PE and a watch.



Admissions Policy

The Local Authority will apply the following criteria (in the rank order shown) to decide the order in which places will be allocated when there are more requests from parents / carers than the number of places available:

1. All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after' (see definitions);
2. Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school (see definition of sibling);
3. Other pupils living in the catchment area;
4. Other siblings (see definition);
5. Any other children

In the case of multiple birth applications to school, in most cases twins will be separated in different classes where possible. This will be standard practice and in liaison with parents.

For the full admissions policy including definitions please refer to our website.

For details regarding the admissions process please see Bedford Borough website:-

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges/school_admissions.aspx

We have a few children who join us from other schools during the school year. As we are a friendly school they settle and make friends very quickly.

*"My child has learnt so much in this first year at Cotton End Forest School and she really loves her school. A massive thank you to Mrs Russell, Mrs Disbury and the Reception Staff".
Parent May 2024*

"Leaders have high expectations for the attendance of their pupils. They are consistent and tenacious in ensuring pupils come to school every day. Pupils are motivated to win 'Charlie Bear', given weekly to the class with the best attendance". Ofsted January 2023



Governors

"Governors' strengths currently lie in how they oversee some aspects of provision, such as safeguarding and school finances. Their checks and challenge help to ensure these systems work well" Ofsted January 2023

Cotton End Governing Body

Karen Headland	Headteacher, Health & Safety
Sandra Thacker	Chair Person, Local Authority, Leadership & Management, Science.
Sarah Gallagher	Safeguarding
Matthew Clarke	
Angie Toms	
Di Catchpole	Staff Governor
Mr Dinneya	
Neil Mills	

Committee Meetings

Governors meet monthly

Roles and Responsibilities:

Chair - Sandra Thacker

Mental Health - Sandra Thacker

Safeguarding - Sarah Gallagher

SEND - Angie Toms

