

ELMSTEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

POLICY CO-ORDINATED BY PIP HIGGINS
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Elmstead Primary School

Elmcroft

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Early Years Foundation Stage

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DCSF, 2007.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Elmstead Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception Year. At Elmstead Primary School our practice reflects the guidance set out in the ‘Early Years Foundation Stage’ document (Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007).

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning, although the vast majority will have attended Elmstead Nursery. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the Reception Teacher work effectively together to support children’s learning and development.

EYFS Principles

The EYFS principles, which guide the work of all practitioners, are grouped into four distinct, but complimentary themes, as listed below:

- **A Unique Child** – every child is a competent learner from birth, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development, inclusion, safety, and health and well-being.
- **Positive Relationships** – how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships, with parent and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect, partnership with parents, supporting learning and the role of the key person.

- **Enabling Environments** – states that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment and the wider context – transitions, continuity and multi-agency working.
- **Learning and Development** – recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Elmstead Primary School the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs;
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond;
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development;
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress;
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence;
- work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions;
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Learning and Development

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the Reception Year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' document .

(DCSF, 2007).

The six areas of learning and development are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL)
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (PSRN)
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Creative Development (CD)

At Elmstead Primary School we believe these six areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in the Reception Class R at Elmstead Primary School are involved in this process. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

> Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage.

> Term Topic

- Autumn 1: 'Colour'
- Autumn 1A: 'Ourselves'

- Autumn 2: 'Toys/Christmas'
- Autumn 2A: 'Celebrations'
- Spring 1: 'People Who Help Us'
- Spring 1A: 'Nursery Rhymes'
- Spring 2: 'Spring and Growth'
- Spring 2A: 'Animals'
- Summer 1: 'Fairy Tales'
- Summer 1A: 'Water'
- Summer 2: 'Holidays and Travel'
- Summer 2A: 'Holidays and Travel'

> **Medium Term Planning**

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

> **Short Term Planning**

We identify specific learning objectives (based on the Early Learning Goals and 'Development Matters' documents), activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

Staffing and Organisation

There is one Reception Class at Elmstead Primary School, with a maximum intake of thirty children. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistants, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues. They also liaise with our on-site nursery on a regular basis.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Elmstead Primary School we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to

meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. Each child has an individual EYFS Profile booklet in which this evidence is stored. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning.

Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against thirteen scales. It summarises children's progress towards the early learning goals. It is completed at regular intervals throughout the year by the class teacher. The Class Teacher also undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation. Teaching and learning in Communication, Language and Literacy and Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy is monitored by the Literacy and Mathematics Subject Leaders once a year in each class, through lesson observations, pupil interviews and whole school work sampling. The EYFS leader monitors teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage each year and analyses the EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the Headteacher.

Learning through play

"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', (DCSF, 2007).

At Elmstead Primary School we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves. Children are given the opportunity to explore and discover within a safe and supportive environment. Play

underpins the delivery of the EYFS curriculum. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. The children 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled or safe situations. The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners, working with a wide range of resources.

Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

The Learning Environment

“A rich and varied environment supports children’s learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.”

‘Early Years Foundation Stage’, (DCSF, 2007).

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside. At certain times children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, writing corner, maths corner, topic display table, listening centre, computer corner(including interactive white-board creative corner, making corner, sand, water, outside, construction/small world; plus, table-top activities. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Liaison with pre-school settings and induction

At Elmstead Primary School we have close links with the on-site Nursery provider. The Reception and pre-school teachers meet regularly to discuss induction issues, and attend training together. We are continually looking at ways to integrate the activities of

the Nursery and Reception Class. During Summer Term 2, Nursery children who will be starting school in September make weekly visits to the Reception Class. Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the Class Teacher and Headteacher, with a full guided tour of the school, together with an informative presentation of what to expect in Class R. Parents/carers are given a Reception brochure which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school. Uniform and reading folder orders are available for collection at this meeting.

During Summer Term 2, the EYFS leader undertakes visits to our Nursery to observe prospective pupils. Transfer records from pre-school settings inform the Reception Teacher about the new intake. In September four meetings are held by the Reception Teacher to introduce parents/carers to the school, Reception procedures and curriculum.

During the induction period in September, children stagger their attendance over a two week period, attending mornings only until the last Friday, when they attend their first full day. This allows children to feel secure in their new environment and gradually build up to full-time education.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

The Reception and the Year 1 Teacher work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. For example, at Elmstead Primary School:

- children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year;
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support;
- Reception children meet Year 1 teacher for story sessions and an afternoon in the last few weeks of the Summer Term;
- individual EYFS Profile booklets are passed on to year 1 teachers;
- an EYFS Profile end of year class summary is passed on to Year 1 teachers;
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July;
- the 'Letters and Sounds' national approach to phonics and spelling is dealt with via the Early Reading Programme (ERP), continued throughout the school;
- where possible, the Year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually becomes more formalised towards the end of the academic year.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the reception curriculum to parents/carers during the new parents meeting in September, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home;
- encouraging Parents/carers to complete the home/school admissions booklet;
- organising transition meetings as detailed above;
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner;
- sharing progress at school through regular dialogue between the Reception staff and parent/carers as part of the open door policy;
- inviting parents/carers to help in the Reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits, subject to Safeguarding procedures;
- encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night;
- encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g. maths take-home sheets;
- discussing individual targets with parents/carers at parents' evening in October and March (informed by the EYFS Profile);
- providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales

Equal Opportunities

At Elmstead Primary School we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those

with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy. The EYFS leader would discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The school's SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy, and all appropriate support policies which are posted on the school website, or available at request from the school office.

Safeguarding

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

Health and Safety

Please refer to 'Health and Safety' Policy with specific reference being made to Risk Assessment and Medical needs (First Aid Training). Additional reference should also be made to the EYFS Risk Assessment.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.