



Elm Grove Primary School

Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Spring 2023			
Applicable to: Children, Staff Parent /Carers and Governors	Governor Responsible:	Person Responsible: C Prichard	Date for next review: Spring 2024



Our Mission

Elm Grove's mission is to provide a positive learning environment for all, where children and adults are included, value each other and are supported to thrive. This is captured in our motto:

Everyone Included, Everyone Valued. Learning and Thriving Together.

Rationale

"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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, Department for Education, 2021

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Elm Grove Primary School children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

At Elm Grove Primary School we recognise the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development as well as social and emotional wellbeing.

We also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life's journey and that it is important to view the EYFS as preparation for a happy and fulfilled life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

The Early Years framework sets the standards to which Early Years practitioners must adhere in order to ensure children learn and develop appropriately and are kept safe and healthy. It provides Early Learning Goals for every area of a child's learning. At Elm Grove Primary School we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners to enable them to work towards these goals right up until the end of the Reception Year. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We do this by:

- Providing a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Providing 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.
- Using and valuing what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Developing excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Providing a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
- Recognising that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning. By recognising how capable and resilient they are, we ensure that children develop their own sense of self belief and have agency over their own learning
- Providing stimulation, challenge and opportunity through teaching and through enabling environments indoors and outdoors.
- Building on what children know and what they can already do, and designing provision around this.
- Providing a structure and routine within which they feel safe and can learn.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers and recognising the role they play as the child's primary educator.

Transition into Reception

New class 'Stay and Play' sessions in July The children are given an opportunity to come in to school and spend time in their new early years environment. They will meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend an hour after school in our outside play area with their new class. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

Nursery Visits Before the children start they are visited in their nursery by the Reception teacher / Early Years Lead. This will be a chance to meet up and to talk to their key workers; ensuring information is communicated across, thus ensuring the start of the school journey is as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

September Intake - When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- Half the class attend for half a day and go home at 12:00 on the first two days of term (This allows for adults to establish daily routines and behaviour expectations with smaller groups and to be able to give the required attention to children on their first day)
- All the class stay until 12:00 on the third day of term
- All the class stay and have lunch and go home at 1:00 on the fourth day of term
- All the class stay all day, pick up at 3:20 on the fifth day of term
- After the initial settling in week, children will attend for the full school day unless staff/ SENDco and parents or guardians agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child to start on a full-time timetable.

Inclusion

At Elm Grove 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.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Elm Grove Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.

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 do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

We set realistic and challenging expectations based on the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. We do this through:

- 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;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs and disabilities, of children who are more able, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds (EAL);
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy)
- 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.

Parents/Carers as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school, at our play sessions, and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Providing a brochure of information about commencing Reception.
- Outlining the school's expectations.
- Giving parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in Reception Class for a stay and play visit before starting school.
- Providing detailed information for Reception parents/carers about school routines, expectations.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment and sharing targets.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. If Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Written contact through the school newsletters.
- Publishing weekly photos and messages on Class Dojo to parents / carers- detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the week.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Floor Book' with parents/carers and valuing the on-going positive contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

Staff

In Reception there are three class teachers and two members of support staff. We sometimes also have additional support staff to ensure the needs of all the children in the cohort are met.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is best practise for children's growth and development that they interact with a range of adults. Therefore at Elm Grove Primary School, all staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to get to know them.

The education, wellbeing and safety of the children is the responsibility of all staff, as is the development and upkeep of a stimulating learning environment.

All staff are required to:

- Set up and resource activities inside and outside
- Tidy away activities and sort storage areas
- Work 1:1 with children and in small groups
- Keep records and gather assessment data for the class teacher to analyse
- Change nappies and assist with toileting (as per intimate care plans)
- Follow a rota for break, setting up, sorting and tidying away duties.

Learning and Developing

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage develops the necessary skills across all areas of learning needed to achieve 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 a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order 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 are:

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

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the government approved 'Sounds Write Phonics' scheme.

Characteristics of Effective 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'.

'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.'

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.

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

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.

"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 the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can 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.

Enabling Environments

At Elm Grove primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The children have opportunities for free flow access to an indoor and outdoor environment that supports discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. These areas include our reception activity room, classrooms and our outside boat area.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, 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.

Assessment and Monitoring

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test. 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. Regular observations and focused activities form part of their daily routine and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities, and involves the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

The teacher keeps progress records and a class floor book. Examples of each child's work are kept in individual Maths and English books.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term detailing whether children are at the expected level. This feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be entering, developing or securely working within age related expectations.

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

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 gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

Transition into Year One

We 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 in to their new class quickly and happily.

Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the older children.

In the Summer term there is a shift towards longer carpet sessions and longer adult guided activities to build up the extra stamina needed to transition into Key Stage One.

Children also have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend an afternoon in their new class during the summer term.

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 2020)

At Elm Grove primary school, we understand that we are legally required to comply with statutory welfare requirements as stated in the Early Years Framework, which states that:

'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...Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well'.

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.

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times. They learn about other skills such as teeth brushing and eating a balanced diet.

Intimate Care - Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following a toilet accident.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Reception at Elm Grove primary School (see intimate care policy).