



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

All staff at Elmsleigh School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and are aware of procedures for reporting concerns.

“No job is more important than working with children in the early years. When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow” Development Matters 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, most children join us; at the beginning of the term after which they turn three in foundation stage one our nursery unit. Our nursery unit consists of 13 full time spaces, 11 morning places and 11 afternoon spaces. Children then start full time school in the September of the academic year in which they are five.

Our Vision and Intent

At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School we believe that all children deserve the best possible start in life and their education. All children deserve an education full of awe and wonder and memorable experiences, an education that provides them with the skills they need to succeed in life. We know that children enter our school with varying life experiences and we aim to plan teaching and learning opportunities in order to provide all children with their cultural capital they need in order to succeed. Through a carefully planned curriculum, based on what our children need, we endeavor for all children to be happy, confident and resilient individuals, ready to take on the ever changing world around them.

Early language and communication skills are at the forefront of our provision at Elmsleigh. By the end of foundation stage we aim to ensure that all children leave with a strong foundation of early language and communication skills. That they are confident communicators in a range of situations, regardless of ability. That children will be able to express themselves effectively, speaking in full sentences and that they will develop their vocabulary and expressive language skills. We aim to ensure all children have the essential early reading and writing skills they need in order to thrive in their next stage of learning.

We aim for our children to become respectful citizens who are ready to go forward onto their next stage of learning and life. It is our mission to ensure that children believe in themselves, believe that they can achieve their dreams, ambition and potential.

We aim to achieve this vision by implementing the EYFS in the following ways.

Implementation and Structure of the EYFS

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery 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.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. We ensure that we plan experiences based on what the children need in order for them to acquire their cultural capital to be successful in life and move on to their next steps in learning.

We have an Enhanced Resource Diagnostic & Assessment facility within our nursery unit for children with SEND, We also have a specialist facility for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder with places designated for Foundation Stage 2 children and KS1 children.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Ensuring a language rich environment exposes children to high quality interactions from the very beginning of their early years' experience at Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School.
- 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 to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe' and feel 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. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

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 the EYFS 2021

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Promote good oral health.
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We endeavor to meet all these requirements. Please also refer to our school safeguarding policy.

Positive Relationships

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through developing secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Through establishing positive relationships and getting to know the child we build knowledge on the child throughout the year which informs our expert professional judgment. This knowledge is largely based on day-to-day observations and interactions with the child.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We actively encourage parents to be fully involved in school life and their child's education.

We do this through:

- home visits are organised for all new starters in foundation 1 and any new families to school in foundation 2.
- We talk to parents about their child before their child starts in our school, parent questionnaires are sent out which inform the all about me section of the child's learning journey;

- Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey by filling in proud clouds and completing home learning challenges.
- Parents are encourage to share home learning vis Class Dojo.
- We encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns making full use of our open door policy and our Class Dojo messaging system.
- There is a formal meeting for all our foundation 1 and 2 parents in the Autumn and Spring terms in which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- All parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation Stage 1 and 2;
- Parents have the opportunity to take part in our 'HENRY' programme which focusses on developing healthy lifestyles.
- Parents may also be encouraged to take part in our Incredible Years programme which aims to support parenting at home.

Foundation 1

- Upon enquiring about a space for their child in our nursery parents are contacted by our nursery teacher who discusses their child's needs and arranges a visit to nursery;
- Following an initial visit and telephone conversation parents are invited to a stay and play session with their child before starting nursery, to meet their new teacher, discuss their child starting nursery and to arrange their home visit.
- Foundation 1 parents are invited into throughout the year to celebrate their child's learning with the star of the week.
- There is opportunity for foundation 1 parents to have contact with the nursery teacher at the beginning and end of each session.

Foundation 2

- All foundation 2 parents are invited to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- all foundation 2 children and parents are invited to two 'Mouse Club' sessions. These sessions focus on establishing positive home and school routines and also the transition to school. Parents are encouraged to take part in the sessions to gain further knowledge on how to support their child at home with routines, teeth brushing, toileting etc. and also share any information that helps us as practitioners support their child in school;
- all foundation 2 children have the opportunity to attend our whole school transition week;
- Any new families to school are offered a home visit prior to transition week.
- foundation 2 children and their parents are invited to a stay and play session at the beginning of transition week to get to know their new teacher and ask any questions about starting school in September.
- Foundation 2 parents are invited into school throughout the year to celebrate their child's learning during our whole school celebration assemblies and class assemblies.
- Throughout the year parents are invited into school to take part in curriculum workshops/meetings and open sessions.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and parents, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants, in our nursery unit children take part in key worker groups so they have opportunity to develop relationships when in a smaller group. Staff in the Foundation Stage meet each term to share good practice and discuss current issues. Where children attend other settings in a day, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children.

Enabling Environments

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. By knowing the children well, and assessing their starting points we plan purposeful learning opportunities within our provision and adult led activities. We ensure our classrooms are calm and promote language and vocabulary development. Activities are planned to be engaging, challenging and achievable. Experiences may be planned or may be spontaneous in response to the child's learning, interests and progress.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

On entry to Elmsleigh all children are baselined against the development matters profile. In reception children take part in the recommended Baseline Assessment within the first 6 weeks of starting. The planning within the EYFS is based upon the development matters framework and our knowledge of the children. We use this as a skeleton to develop our curriculum plans, to ensure a natural progression of skills throughout the key stage and through to KS1. We then assess each cohort and build upon this 'skeleton' half termly by designing a curriculum that supports our children best, reacting to their needs throughout the year. A curriculum that provides experiences to ensure children achieve their cultural capital and life skills they need. In EYFS we base our learning upon books and use our whole school talk for writing approach when learning stories. Early language development and early literacy skills are at the forefront of our curriculum and underpin everything we do. Our explicit teaching of phonics begins in nursery and follows our whole school consistent sounds-write scheme. Whilst we have these plans in place teachers and support staff encouraged to follow the interests of the children and may alter these in response to what is observed and assessed.

Every child has their own Learning Journey from Nursery to Reception which is based upon, ongoing observations- incidental and formal, assessments, photographic evidence, discussions with parents and any other relevant information. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFSP. Staff knowledge of the child is key, this may not always be recorded, staff share their knowledge of the child at regular pupil progress meetings throughout the term. When assessing children's development throughout the year staff will use the observational checkpoints (Development Matters 2021), alongside their professional judgment, to identify children at risk of delay. Plans are then put in place to support children in their learning and progress.

At the end of reception, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goal's. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgments with the teacher and both parents and children are encouraged to complete a feedback sheet. Staff indicate whether the child is emerging or expected in relation to their age related expectation and make a best fit judgement about their development and readiness for year 1. This is the EYFS Profile.

The profile must be completed for all children, including those with special education needs or disabilities.

All information is then sent to the local authority by the specified date.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation classes are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage classes have their own enclosed outdoor area, this is a shared area across all foundation stage classes. The area gives children access to a range of learning environments including our garden and sensory area and a range of climbing equipment to develop their physical skills. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Learning and Development **Educational Programmes**

The EYFS is made up of 7 areas of learning and educational programmes. (3 Prime areas and 4 specific) Our curriculum design supports these and ensures we are meeting the requirements and experiences required as outlined in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2021)

Prime Areas

1. Communication and Language
2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
3. Physical Development

Specific Areas – *prime areas are strengthened and applied.*

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. The prime areas are particularly crucial in igniting the curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. These areas help build children's capacity to learn, build relationships and thrive. At the beginning of the year class teacher's focus on these areas to ensure children have a strong foundation to build upon. These prime areas are then strengthened and applied through the teaching of the specific areas. In each area of learning there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. (17 in total) Please refer to the Statutory EYFS Framework 2021. In order for children to achieve a good level of development by the end of their Reception year they need to achieve the ELG's in the Prime Areas, Literacy and Mathematics, (12 ELGs in total).

All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

At Elmsleigh Infant School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Characteristics of Effective Learning within the Foundation Stage

In planning and guiding children's activities in foundation stage our practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and incorporate these in their planning and practice. Parents are informed at the end of the school year what their child's characteristics of learning are. The Development Matters Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 identifies three characteristics of effective teaching and learning;

Playing and exploring

"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 have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“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 to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

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 opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. 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.

Our Impact

We recognise that every child is unique and that they develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates. We want all our children to develop a positive attitude towards learning and therefore strive to become curious, resilient, and self-assured in order to prepare them for the next stage in learning. We want children to have the communication skills they need to be able to communicate effectively in a range of situations, unlocking their learning potential and ability to understand the world around them. Most importantly we want our children to feel loved and valued within our community and to have a solid foundation of life skills and knowledge in order to succeed in life and their future education.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Foundation teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and subject coordinators carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation, work sampling and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Links with other policies

The Foundation Stage policy operates in line with whole school policies including;

- Safeguarding Policy
- Teaching & Learning
- Assessment, recording and reporting
- SEN & Inclusion
- Gifted and Talented
- Behaviour
- Equal Opportunities
- Health & Safety
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Admissions
- Physical Education

Written by Laura Mansfield (Foundation Stage Leader) December 2021

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