



Elmsleigh  
INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

Grow to be the best we can be

# Curriculum Policy

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Policy Owner: Ms Jodie Bailey (Head of School)

Ratified by: Mrs Nicola Price (Executive Headteacher)



## Our Overall Curriculum Intent and Objectives

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School, our overall curriculum intent is to ensure that all children will achieve their full potential and become as independent as possible, preparing all pupils for their next stage in education. Through our curriculum objectives we want all children to be able to:

- Enable every pupil to make the greatest possible progress and achieve the highest outcomes they can.
- Communicate as effectively as possible
- Be as independent as possible
- Self-regulate their emotions improving their ability to access learning and the community they live in
- Be as healthy as possible, in mind and body
- Follow an exciting, differentiated, broad and sequenced curriculum pathway, which has been designed to ensure that all children will grow to be the best they can be, reaching their full potential, educationally, socially and emotionally.
- Develop their sense of self and character through the school's strong SMSC approach underpinned by the school/MAT values which are generic skills that are essential to life, learning and work.
- Be unique, creative, resilient and challenged to be the best they can be
- Welcome diversity, appreciate and understand different religions and cultures
- Forge and develop their own talents

## Our Overall Curriculum Design and Implementation

Our curriculum has been designed into curriculum pathways which are fluid to enable pupils to move across pathways depending on the individual education they need. At the heart of each design is a clear curriculum vision for all types of learners. Each pathway is set to ensure that every child's prior knowledge is built through precision teaching and firsthand experiences. Some subjects are interwoven through a holistic curriculum, but some subjects are taught discretely following a scheme. This scheme is always adapted to meet the needs of the children and is always taught sequentially with steps of progress recorded and built on. The implementation of our curriculum also supports our teachers who are teaching subjects where they are not specialists as all schemes provide CPD opportunities within them.

Within each pathway, the learning environments are purposeful and stimulating with enhanced enrichment opportunities and memorable moments, such as educational visits and theme days within school. These experiences excite and encourage life-long learners, building each child's cultural capital. In addition to this and underpinning everything we deliver in school are our school and MAT values, which are centered around *'Community, Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, Ambition and Compassion'*. These values are taught and celebrated contributing to the children's Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education.

## Our overall Curriculum Impact

Every pathway ensures that every child makes the best possible progress and attainment. This is demonstrated in a variety of ways, through the summative assessment collated for each pathway, through children's work in books, floor books and through tapestry. Alongside feedback provided by all stakeholders (children, parents/carers, Governors and the Esteem Multi Academy Trust's School Improvement Team and staff), the school's website and all our school events which celebrate all of the children's achievements.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Intent

The intent of this curriculum is to develop the 'Unique Child', who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and 'self-assured'. All children in Nursery and Reception (as well as some children up to year 2 in the adapted classes) follow the Early Years curriculum. We aim to ensure that all children from an early cognitive level, lay one skill upon another, to form a building block in a holistic manner. Whilst learning through play and some formal teaching approaches, children will experience the awe and wonder of the world through the seven areas of learning as intended in a conventional EYFS curriculum, facilitated by an all-encompassing educational environment, which embraces both indoor and outdoor learning spaces.

This curriculum intent is also designed to develop each child's cultural capital and the teaching of positive relationships, social interactions and an awareness of different experiences and cultures. Throughout the teaching of this curriculum, we intend on developing the strategies that children need to progress their communication and self-regulation. In conjunction with this and wherever needed, each child's Education Health and Care Plan outcomes are also addressed, worked through and evidenced

## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is delivered with differentiated adult led tasks and child-initiated learning opportunities. This well-planned curriculum follows EYFS thematic projects, lifted from the Cornerstones Curriculum but then further differentiated by class teachers ensuring that all planned activities match each individual child's educational level and learning needs whilst also ensuring breadth and balance for all. Alongside this, are planned sessions for the teaching of communication, emotional literacy, early reading and phonic skills (implemented through the teaching of the Read Write Inc phonic scheme). Other whole school strategies to support pupils understanding further, such as Numicon and widgit are used throughout. Pupils in Butterflies class follow a hybrid curriculum, which combines child initiated learning activities with a more structured learning model. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of pupils who can access small group work for Maths and Phonics.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Impact

The impact of this curriculum is that children (by the time they transition into the next pathway) will be as independent as possible and be prepared for the next curriculum pathway. They will have the skills, knowledge and confidence for future learning, as well as beginning to become self-regulated with a well-rounded character. Each child's learning is assessed by following Birth to Five Matters. Pupils' progression is evidenced through a range of floor books, Read write inc books, subject folders and tapestry.

## Subject Specific Curriculum Intent

Given that our pupils include a higher-than-average proportion with SEN and a larger number eligible for free school meals, it is vital that every learning opportunity is maximised. As research shows, including that from the EEF, less-able pupils are at risk of slower academic progress when placed in predominantly play-based curricula, especially where adult interaction is limited. Studies show delayed progress, engagement difficulties, widening gaps for disadvantaged or

SEN pupils, and inconsistent implementation across settings. In contrast, structured, explicit, formal teaching provides clearer routines, direct instruction, and more reliable scaffolding, which are essential for helping lower-attaining children secure foundational skills early.

Therefore, wherever possible when pupils are in Key Stage 1, including those in one of the adapted classes, follow a more formal subject specific curriculum. This curriculum is largely based on the Cornerstones Curriculum with each class following a carefully planned sequential Long Term Plan. The intent of this curriculum is that all children will have the knowledge and skills to learn and achieve independently, with opportunities to practice and consolidate information, allowing all to make continual progress.

Through the promotion of our school values, we intend for all learners to be positive, reflective and promote responsibility for success. Each child will have the chance to think about their adult lives and the achievements that they desire. They will all be encouraged to be aspirational for their future roles in life.

Underpinning this curriculum are the strategies taught to every child to develop their communication, behaviour for learning and self-regulation. In conjunction with this, every child that has an Education Health and Care Plan has their outcomes continually addressed, worked through and evidenced.

## Subject Specific Implementation

The implementation of the Subject Specific Curriculum has been carefully thought out and is continually evolving, with regular reviews to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of our learners well.

### Reading, Communication and Language, how it's taught:

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School we aim to foster a love and enjoyment of reading which encourages all children to read regularly both at home and in school whilst experiencing a range of books from a wide range of genres and authors. All pupils in school, including those in Reception, are taught phonics/communication skills daily. Reading is taught through the Read Write Inc programme. This programme is a structured synthetic phonics programme that teaches both reading and spelling. The child progresses through the scheme according to their individual needs. A lot of revision and repetition is built in, as well as the application of phonic skills in all reading and writing. Research shows that children are best taught using this approach, leading to better word reading, spelling and reading comprehension. (Johnson et al, 2012)

We are very keen for all children to enjoy books and to progress as far as they are able to with independent reading. We teach reading using phonics and we have a well-stocked library with a wide range of books for children to browse and choose for themselves. All children are able to change their books in the library on a regular basis, these books can be taken home and enjoyed with parents/carers.

Some children will also receive a Read Write Inc (RWI) book or online book. This book will be matched to each child's reading ability. This is a finely graded approach to the teaching of the wider skills of reading and enables children to apply what they have learned in phonics lessons. These books also give the children a very meaningful approach to reading, using pictures, whole words and their own experiences.

Every child in school has a reading book (library and or RWI) and therefore progress of their reading can be recorded in the reading record. Reading is regularly assessed and monitored by class teachers

and the Lead Teacher for English. Parent Workshops on reading are offered regularly, so that parents/carers can learn more about how to support their child with reading.

Daily grouping by reading level and regular half-termly assessments ensure that all children receive targeted teaching that matches their stage of development, preventing gaps from emerging and enabling all pupils, including those with SEND, to make strong progress as well as the Pre-Key Stage Standards and mainstream end of key stage 1 expectations. Read Write Inc provides formative assessment from which teachers can plan a child's next steps in reading.

### Writing, how it's taught:

Writing at our school is taught through the Read Write Inc. (RWI) programme, which provides a highly systematic and structured approach to developing pupils' transcription and composition skills. Children learn accurate letter formation alongside each new sound through linked handwriting phrases and mnemonics, ensuring that handwriting and phonics progress hand-in-hand. Spelling is taught explicitly using 'Fred Talk' oral segmentation and 'Fred Fingers', enabling pupils to break words into sounds and write graphemes confidently and independently. Sentence-level skills are developed through carefully sequenced routines such as 'Hold a Sentence' and 'Build a Sentence', which strengthen memory, grammar, and language structures through oral rehearsal and partner talk before writing.

Pupils gradually move into extended writing through the 'Get Writing!' books, which provide scaffolded tasks linked directly to the decodable texts they read, ensuring writing is meaningful, accessible, and vocabulary-rich.

Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School also uses Mighty Writer as a writing intervention to help support pupils in project lessons. Mighty Writer is a tactile teaching and learning resource designed to transform the way children learn to write through a visual and engaging experience. Mighty Writer was created by Emma Ralph. The resource looks to overcome issues such as:

- the range of abilities and specific needs of children
- the range of abilities and approaches of teaching staff
- identifying and addressing areas for improvement and delivering tangible results
- Emotional Regulation

Mighty Writer encourages children to master the skills of speaking, story planning and writing without having to completely overhaul current approaches. We implement the teaching of this into project sessions where pupils need some support.

### Mathematics, how it's taught:

All pupils in school are taught Maths daily, including those in Reception, following the White Rose Maths scheme. This scheme has a clear research base and identifies that 'effective early mathematics teaching strategies are playful, not formal' (Gifford, S. 2017) and that 'the most effective early numeracy approaches include small group work'. (EEF 2018) Effective questioning and substantive feedback are paramount in these sessions. This ensures that all learners make continual progress in their mathematical skills and understanding. Maths is taught in line with the school's long-term plan.

Alongside this scheme the school uses Numicon to support a child's use of mathematical vocabulary and language. It is also reported to improve a child's confidence, fluency and

versatility nurtured through a strong emphasis on problem solving. With Numicon, children are using structured apparatus, every day, in practical ways. It also offers a multi-sensory approach to the teaching of Maths, providing children with a visual representation of numbers. Maths is evidenced in books and Maths folders. Pupils' success is assessed through the progression guidance implemented by Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School, which uses Pre-Key Stage Standards and end of year expectations. This is dovetailed with the White Rose assessment.

### Science, History, Design and Technology, Geography and Art, how they're taught:

Some subjects (Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology) are only taught following the Cornerstones curriculum providing the foundation for the implementation of these subjects, with learners following carefully planned sequential Long-Term Plans, with driver projects. These projects act as the central threads through which subject-specific knowledge and skills are taught, ensuring that learning is meaningful, coherent and directly rooted in national curriculum expectations. Each project is carefully constructed to link explicitly to individual subjects, such as history, geography, science, art and design, and design and technology, by delivering the core content through subject-specific project pathways. For example, a history driver project will prioritise historical concepts such as chronology, significance and cause and consequence, while a geography-led project will emphasise place, space, environmental features and processes. These subject-specific projects are delivered over a half term and ensure that pupils develop disciplinary knowledge through projects that are firmly grounded in the conceptual frameworks and skills progression of each subject. This structure allows children to engage deeply with subject matter while experiencing rich, interconnected learning that still maintains the integrity of each subject discipline.

That said, as a Leadership Team we have recognised some gaps within the Cornerstones Curriculum, therefore alongside 'Cornerstones', whose methodology, is highly research led are other subjects which are also taught and delivered through an educational approach underpinned by research evidence to provide the foundations for other subjects.

These are highlighted below. All plans are then further adapted by each class teacher, supporting all pupils' individual outcomes.

### Religious Education (RE), how it's taught:

All children are taught aspects of RE at a level that they are able to access, on a weekly basis, with pupils in KS1, having a discrete lesson. At Elmsleigh, pupils are taught RE, following the Jigsaw scheme which is an enquiry-based, worldview-inclusive approach that aligns with the statutory requirement for RE to be taught to all pupils and with the updated national guidance shaping RE from 2024–2026. Each enquiry begins with a "big question" that is rooted first in the child's own experience before exploring how different religions and worldviews respond to that same theme. This aligns with national expectations that RE must promote curiosity, reflection and respect for diversity in early childhood. The programme is mapped to locally agreed syllabi and the latest national frameworks, ensuring that children in Reception and Key Stage 1 gain secure foundations in understanding Christianity and other worldviews through concepts, stories and guided discussion.

Across Key Stage 1, Jigsaw RE provides structured progression through a spiral curriculum of more than 80 enquiry units, enabling young children to develop knowledge, critical thinking and empathy over time. Enquiries typically follow a four-step progression: engagement; investigation; evaluation

and reflection, which supports statutory expectations for RE to deepen children's understanding of belief, identity, values and the ways people live. Learning is creative and multi-modal, using stories, artefacts, drama, craft and discussion, ensuring accessibility for infant learners and alignment with the requirement that RE must be age-appropriate and experiential. Lessons build from familiar experiences to exploring celebrations, rituals and stories from Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other worldviews, consistent with locally agreed syllabi and with the strengthened national emphasis (effective 2026) on introducing multiple worldviews early in primary education.

Jigsaw RE also supports the wider statutory aims of RE: spiritual; moral; social and cultural development; respect for others; and preparation for life in a diverse society, by explicitly teaching children to reflect on their own beliefs and values while learning to understand those of others. Each enquiry ends with an assessment activity that allows pupils to express their conclusions, justified with knowledge they have gained, meeting the expectation for RE from 2026 that assessment must be meaningful, reflective and rooted in enquiry. Regular opportunities for reflection, dialogue and personal response help children develop empathy, identity and respect, supporting statutory duties under the Equality Act, safeguarding guidance and strengthened expectations for worldview-inclusive RE.

This ensures that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure foundation in understanding religion and belief and are prepared for deeper RE learning in Key Stage 2.

Pupils' work is evidenced in subject folders and assessed using the scheme on insight, using the end of year expectations.

### PE, how it's taught:

Physical Education in our school is delivered through the *Real PE* scheme, a fully inclusive, child-centred approach designed to develop pupils' physical literacy alongside their emotional and cognitive skills. Real PE provides structured learning journeys and clear progression through fundamental movement skills such as agility, balance and coordination, supported by its six multi-ability 'cogs': personal, social, cognitive, creative, physical and health and fitness. Teachers are supported with high-quality resources and digital planning tools through the Jasmine learning platform, enabling them to deliver engaging, ambitious and developmentally appropriate lessons that are fully aligned with the National Curriculum and Ofsted expectations.

All pupils in Key Stage 1 receive two hours of Physical Education each week, ensuring consistent access to high-quality physical activity and skill development. These are taught by either school staff using Real PE, with a strong focus on fundamental movement skills, personal challenge and developing confident, physically literate learners or delivered by Derby County Community Trust, who provide specialist coaching that enhances pupils' wider physical development through additional sporting experiences. This dual-delivery model ensures that pupils benefit from both consistent pedagogical progression through Real PE and enrichment opportunities through specialist coaches, reflecting established practice in infant PE provision.

In addition to weekly PE lessons, all Key Stage 1 pupils take part in half a term of free swimming sessions at Fountains Primary School, broadening their physical education experience and supporting early water confidence and safety skills. Swimming forms part of the wider entitlement

within the school's PE offer, complementing the Real PE curriculum's focus on fundamental skills by enabling pupils to apply physical literacy in a new environment. Together, Real PE, Derby County specialist coaching and swimming provision ensure a balanced, ambitious and inclusive PE curriculum that supports every child's physical, social and emotional development. Pupils' work is assessed through pupil assessment on insight.

### PSHE and RSE (Personal, Social, Health, Education and Relationships, Sex Education), how it's taught:

Pupils at Elmsleigh are taught PSHE/RSE through the Jigsaw scheme, within which all children work on the same half-termly theme, ensuring consistency and progression across Key Stage 1. Lessons combine PSHE knowledge with mindfulness practices such as 'Calm Me' time, helping pupils regulate emotions, build resilience and prepare for learning. Each session uses engaging, varied teaching strategies that reflect the developmental stage of infant learners, ensuring all pupils can access and apply concepts relating to themselves, their relationships and their wider school community. This aligns with the statutory focus on emotional wellbeing and self-regulation required within the Relationships and Health Education curriculum.

The programme follows the six Jigsaw puzzles: Being Me in My World; Celebrating Difference; Dreams and Goals; Healthy Me; Relationships and Changing Me, each delivered through six sequential lessons that build towards an end product. These lessons include dual learning intentions covering both PSHE content and emotional literacy, supporting the statutory duty to teach children about friendships, respect, similarities and differences, and staying healthy in developmentally appropriate ways. Whole-school assemblies and weekly celebrations further embed behaviours and attitudes linked to statutory RSHE outcomes, ensuring learning is reinforced beyond the classroom and children practise positive social behaviours as part of school culture.

Within Key Stage 1, Jigsaw provides structured coverage of statutory RSHE expectations, including healthy family life, caring relationships, recognising unsafe or unkind behaviours, seeking help, understanding body awareness and early scientific vocabulary for body parts. These elements of statutory content are already embedded in infant-appropriate units such as Relationships and Changing Me, ensuring schools meet the requirements that will remain mandatory into September 2026. Character-led sessions (e.g., Jack in Year 1 and Jo in Year 2) help children explore sensitive themes safely, developing empathy, communication and confidence in expressing worries or seeking adult support, as required by statutory safeguarding guidance. As the updated 2026 RSHE expectations continue to emphasise respect, safety, emotional literacy and early readiness for later puberty education, the Jigsaw approach ensures continuity, compliance and age-appropriate delivery across the infant phase.

Pupils' work is evidenced in subject folders and assessed using the scheme on insight, using the end of year expectations.

### Music, how it's taught:

At Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School, the Charanga music scheme is taught through active, practical and progressive music-making that aligns with the EYFS Framework and National Curriculum for KS1. In Key Stage 1, Charanga provides structured, weekly lessons that cover singing, listening, playing tuned and untuned instruments, improvising, composing and performing, all centred on the interrelated dimensions of music. Lessons follow a consistent sequence that includes warm-up games, learning and appraising songs, engaging with instrumental work and developing creative responses through improvisation and simple composition. This approach ensures clear progression, with children revisiting and deepening key skills over time while benefiting from an exploratory, child-led ethos supported by high-quality digital resources. Performance opportunities throughout the year further enhance confidence and musical development.

Music is evidenced by teacher observations and assessed using the scheme on insight, using the end of year expectations.

### Computing, how it's taught:

Computing is taught following the Purple Mash Scheme of work and is typically taught through a blend of continuous provision and structured computing sessions that introduce children to technology in an age-appropriate and engaging way.

In the Early Years, children access Mini Mash, an interactive virtual classroom designed for Nursery and Reception, where they explore themed topic packs, creative tools and simple digital activities mapped to all seven areas of the EYFS framework. This allows children to develop early technological skills such as using a mouse or touchscreen, creating pictures, listening to stories and exploring digital role-play environments, all within a safe and intuitive online space. Technology is integrated into everyday classroom experiences, supporting areas such as communication, expressive arts and understanding the world, and children learn online safety as part of their wider personal development curriculum. Nursery / EYFS / SEND – Although there are not specific objectives for computing in Early Years, mini mash is used to support the foundations of early computing. Alongside this 2Be safe is taught to promote the understanding and the implementation of teaching for Online safety across school.

In Key Stage 1, Purple Mash is delivered through the structured Purple Mash Computing Scheme of Work, taught in weekly lessons that build children's skills in computer science, information technology and digital literacy. Children engage in units such as grouping and sorting, simple coding, pictograms, digital art, animated storybooks, spreadsheets, effective searching and making music, with progression carefully sequenced across Year 1 and Year 2.

Online safety is taught explicitly and revisited frequently, and learning is supported through interactive tools, self-marking quizzes, knowledge organisers and digital portfolios. Activities are practical and creative, enabling pupils to develop confidence, problem-solving skills and safe digital behaviours, while teachers benefit from detailed lesson plans and assessment tools that ensure coverage and continuity. In addition to the embedded online safety units within Purple Mash, schools also draw on 2Be safe, which provides age-appropriate outcomes, discussion prompts, and high-quality resources to deepen children's understanding of online relationships, identity, information management and digital wellbeing.

Computing is evidenced in purple mash online folders and assessed using the scheme on insight, using the end of year expectations.

## Subject Specific Impact

The impact of this curriculum is that children will have the sound knowledge and key skills needed to build on during their KS2 journey. All young people will have made the best possible progress and attainment through subject specific learning which has been assessed through Pre Key Stage Standards and end of year expectations. All progress is evidenced different subject-specific books.

Young people will also be thriving, tolerant, healthy and accept each other's differences. They will have the confidence for future learning, as well as becoming more self-regulated with a well-rounded character. Every young person should have the tools to communicate expressively and listen to others.

## Other whole school interventions

Alongside all of these and because of the wide range of learners we have within our school, we have an extensive range of other interventions we implement to improve the outcomes for children within our school.

Examples of some other interventions we use in school, to enrich our curriculum offer are:

- Wigit symbols to enhance communication, eye gaze, symbols and object of reference, blank level knowledge, switches, Story Massage, Read, Write, Inc and various online Apps to support communication and English
- Lego Therapy, Mindfulness, Drawing and Talking and The Thrive Programme to enhance our Well being offer.
- 1:1 work and small group sessions
- Input from Specialist Speech Therapists who give staff knowledge on how to communicate with specific groups/individual children
- Occupational therapists who are trained specifically in sensory integration and advise staff how to ensure children have the sensory feedback they need in their day to ensure that the child's behaviour for learning is at an optimum.

## Responsibility

This policy has been agreed and put together with the help of the wider Leadership team, staff and School Council. If you would like any additional information regarding the curriculum at Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School please contact Ms Bailey (Head of School) at [enquiries@elmsleighinfantschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@elmsleighinfantschool.co.uk)