



EYFS Policy



Rationale

This policy details the provision we make for the early experiences, learning and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at The Elms Primary and Folly View Primary. We believe that every child is an exceptional individual, and we celebrate and respect differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge and values that equips our children for their future success. We inspire our children to become accomplished, happy individuals, ready to reach their potential in an ever-changing world.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards for learning, development and care from birth to 5 years.

Aims

“We didn’t realise we were making memories. We just knew we were having fun.” A. A Milne.

We foster an inclusive ethos that promotes flexibility within the curriculum to provide a learning journey that reflects individual needs. Through building relationships with the whole family, we have a positive impact beyond the classroom. We promote vital skills to support children to develop empathy and kindness, enabling children to feel happy at school and fosters confident learners who are physically and emotionally ready to learn. Our children have pride in what they do and the resilience to keep going. We nurture independent skills and thinking, encouraging curiosity, creativity and risk taking. Through hard work and self-reflection, we grow children who are brave enough to ask big questions.

We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to achieve. 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.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practise within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **Unique Child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through the **positive relationships** that practitioners make with the children and their families.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** in which their experiences respond to their individual needs.
- **Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.**

Principles into practice

As part of our practise we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practise.
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.

- Work in partnership with parents/carers, agencies and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning experiences based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult-led and child-initiated.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and outdoors.

Roles

Governors	The governing body has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
Senior Leadership Team	The EYFS lead, Mrs Howell, in conjunction with the Executive Headteacher, Ms Smith and the Heads of School, Mr Jacques (The Elms) and Mrs Baird (Folly View), has the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
Staff	Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy. They must remain alert to any issues of concern for children.
Children	To abide by our school rules in order to reach their goals and shine.
Parents	To work with the school, communicate openly and ensure each child is given the best possible opportunity to thrive and succeed across the curriculum.

Health and safety and safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our children and expect all staff, parents and volunteers to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. If people have concerns about a child, please act immediately by asking to speak to the designated safeguarding leads or deputies as outlined below:

The Elms Primary	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Calum Jacques
Deputy Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Shelley McIntosh Emma Aspel Clare Haly

We follow whole school procedures for safeguarding (see separate policy). All staff are aware of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns. Concerns are logged centrally using a program called CPOMS. All staff have regular Safeguarding, Prevent and FGM training which includes reference and updates to the government’s ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ statutory guidance.

The statutory framework is adhered to for first aid cover and staff ratios. At least one member of staff in Nursery and one member of staff in Reception holds a current paediatric first aid certificate. They are available at all times when children are present in the setting or when off-site.

Staff do not use their mobile phones or personal devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This is in line with our safeguarding policy. Members of staff, do however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children’s individual learning journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to give permission for their child’s image to be used through paperwork in their initial starter packs.

All children receive free fruit and milk daily which is provided by a government scheme. Our staff discuss and model good eating habits and manners by eating alongside the children.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child. Equipment, resources and staffing are provided and adapted to meet specific needs.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. Each school has a SEND teacher who works with children at school to quickly identify extra support and interventions.

We encourage all children to start Reception without wearing nappies or pull-ups but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes available if the child doesn't have any spare clothes at school. We ask parents to keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed in a washed condition. Children are encouraged to change themselves and staff support this if necessary.

Parent Partnerships

We strive to create and maintain thriving partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that a child's first educator are their parents and together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways. Prior to the children starting Reception, Staff complete home visits for every child which is a huge first step in making these precious relationships. We keep parents/carers informed through weekly letters home detailing all the learning that has taken place that week and ways to carry on with this learning and to support their child at home. Planning is also available on the school website. We run successful phonics stay and play sessions and send home regular information on how to support their child with phonics and early reading. Parents are also encouraged to sign up to stay and play sessions where they can spend the morning shadowing their child, helping them with their work and playing alongside them. Our Mystery reader sessions are also very popular!

Every child in Preschool will be allocated a key worker, responsible for nurturing the needs and development of each child. The key worker will complete observations, assessments and will be the parent's reference point for communication about their child.

The EYFS Curriculum

The EYFS team follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2024 (EYFS) document. We provide an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable children to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are equally as important and inter-connected. There are three areas that are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are the **Prime** areas:

1. **Communication and Language** – Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking.
2. **Physical Development** – Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills.
3. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships.

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, which the three **prime** areas are strengthened and applied.

4. **Literacy** – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.
5. **Mathematics** – Numbers and Numerical Patterns.

6. **Understanding the World** – Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World.
7. **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. In the Early Years, we focus learning around children's interests. The provision is informed by our observations and conversations with children. Next steps in learning are based upon our observations of children's independent practice, rather than adult supported learning.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills, knowledge and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using Read Write inc., teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS document. 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.' We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years' practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children's understanding further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Pupils are further supported through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning and encouraged to achieve to their highest potential.

Playing and Exploring - Engagement

Through play children develop, extend and reinforce their learning experiences. Play and exploration is supported and nurtured by skilled staff and the provision reflects the pupils' needs. Access to learning experiences and resources is carefully planned and monitored to extend and consolidate play and learning.

Active learning - Motivation

We provide and promote an Active Learning approach and believe 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 own learning.

Creating and thinking critically - Thinking

To develop active learning, and creative and critical thinking a range of methods and resources are used. Staff support pupils in generalising their skills in play situations and making connections between different experiences and environments. Children engage in many different activities and begin to actively think about what they are doing. This helps them to develop an awareness of their own thinking and learning.

The Environment

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide the children experiences and activities in all the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a wide range of literacy and mathematics resources, a creative area, book corner, role play area, construction / small world zones, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom. We ensure that the range of activities outside, reflects the different curriculum areas. There is an outdoor role play shed and a stage where they can benefit from imaginative activities and a mud kitchen area where they practise their fine and gross motor skills.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support (DfE, EYFS, 2021, p.18). Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

Baseline

Prior to the children starting, staff spend time speaking to the child's parents, previous settings and read previous learning journeys to gain an understanding of the whole child and where they are academically, socially and emotionally. During the first half term in Pre-School and Reception, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual's starting points in all areas of learning so we can plan experiences and teaching sequences to ensure progress. Alongside our own baselines assessments, the statutory RBA (Reception Baseline Assessment) is carried out which focusses on Language, Communication and Literacy, and Mathematics. The purpose of this is to show the progress children make from Reception until the end of KS2.

Ongoing Observation

All ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children or excessive paperwork. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing / making. Assessments are completed three times per year, whereby the class teacher updates the progress the children have made. In Summer Term 2, the EYSP is completed where teachers judge whether a child has met each of the 17 ELG'S. They will be assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected.' Whilst there is no judgement to state if a child is exceeding beyond ELG, teachers have a duty to provide a narrative for both parents and the Year 1 teacher.

Phonics Assessment

Phonics assessments are carried out every half term to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' not 'catch up' where possible. Children that have been identified as working below the expected standard, will partake in 1:1 Fast Track Tutoring which will be delivered everyday by a trained practioner.

Well Comm

Well Comm is an evidence based oral language intervention for children who show weakness in their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading and writing. The assessment informs us if the child is at the expected oracy level for their age or if they require additional interventions. This intervention is started in Pre-school and runs throughout Reception.

Transition to the Next Stage of Education

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved. Children attend introductory sessions from Nursery to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term of Reception, the Year 1 and Reception Teachers will meet and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals and curriculum in order to support a smooth transition. This discussion help teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Pre-school and Reception children are fully integrated within our school community and attend assemblies and whole school activities which helps to ease these transitions. EYFS and Year 1 share the outdoor area which allows the children who are still working on their ELGs to access the appropriate curriculum.

At the end of EYFS, we expect our children;

- To have strong communication skills, both written and verbal. To listen respectfully and with tolerance to the views of others;
- To take pride in all that they do, always striving to do their best;
- To demonstrate emotional resilience and the ability to persevere when they encounter challenge;
- To develop a sense of self-awareness and become confident in their own abilities;
- To be kind, respectful and honest, demonstrate inclusive attitudes and have a sense of their role in our wider society.

Shelley Howell (EYFS Leader)

September 2024