

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy



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

1. Aims

“Giving children what they need so that they can succeed.”

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, memorable experiences and 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 that 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.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from January 2024](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery school, most children join us; at the beginning of the term after which they turn three in our Nursery unit. Our nursery unit consists of 20 part time afternoon places, totaling 15 hours per week. Children then start full time school in the September of the academic year in which they are five. We have two Reception classes and an ERS unit with places for pupils with an EHCP, these spaces are arranged through the local authority.

All children starting at Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School will follow a curriculum planned around the development matters, with cultural capital experiences planned to enhance learning and development.

4. Principles into Practice

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

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

4.1 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 give all of our children the opportunity to 'grow to be the best that they can be'. 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. (See Admissions policy)

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 through early intervention.

4.2 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 and communication with parents.

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 with an 'all about me' section to help teachers get to know the children.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey by contributing to their child's online learning journey, Tapestry.
- We encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns making full use of our open door policy.
- 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;
Foundation 1
- Upon enquiring about a space for their child in our nursery parents are contacted by our nursery teacher or SENDCO, who discusses their child's needs and arrange a visit to nursery;
- Following an initial visit and telephone conversation all children are offered a home visit to meet their new teacher and develop early relationships.
- Following a home visit parents and children are invited to a stay and play session so the child can become familiar with their new classroom.
- 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 have the opportunity to attend our whole school transition sessions.
- 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 'mouse club' session get to know their new teacher and ask any questions about starting school in September. This session focus on establishing positive home and school routines and also support 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;
- 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 adult led activities, so they have opportunity to develop relationships when in a smaller group. Where children attend other settings in a day, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children.

4.3 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. 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/zones, 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 a range of climbing equipment to develop their gross motor skills. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

4.4 Learning & Development and Curriculum

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.

5. 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. Our curriculum planning 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 sounds-write scheme. Whilst we have these plans in place teachers and support staff are encouraged to follow the interests of the children and may alter these in response to what is observed and assessed.

Every child in the EYFS has their own online learning journey. We use Tapestry to record children's learning experiences, ongoing observations- incidental and formal, assessments, photographic evidence and any other relevant information to create that adds to a child's profile. Parents are encouraged to add to their child's learning journey. 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 the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

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 profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

6. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

6.1 Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe' and feel safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries and rules 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)

Children's attendance in school is monitored by our School Attendance team inline with our attendance policy.

6.2 Safeguarding

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. (See whole school behaviour policy)
- 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. We follow [Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

All staff have performance management reviews in line with the EYFS supervision requirements. This ensures that the setting fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement.

Staff working within EYFS receive support and training and weekly staff briefings as an opportunity to discuss any issues. If staff have safeguarding concerns about a child, they follow our whole school safeguarding policy to report these concerns. Teachers have half termly progress meetings to discuss the development and progress of each child.

Where staff use electronic devices, including iPad's and cameras, to take pictures of the children when working; all children have permissions from parents/carers regarding image sharing permissions which all staff are aware of. Ipad's that children use within school are locked with child safety settings and restrictions and children are supervised by a member of staff at all times when using electronic devices.

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.

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

Appendix 1.

- Safeguarding Policy
- SEN Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Online Safety Policy