



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every individual child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents/ carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, October 2024](#)

Vision

At Elm Wood Primary School, we strongly advocate play and concrete learning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and beyond. Children learn through first-hand experiences, books, explorative resources and rich conversation. Children's physical and mental well-being is at the heart our curriculum and planning. We aim for our children to be:

Active Learners: Children have a 'Have A Go' attitude towards their learning and challenges they face. They are interested in the world around them and keen to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences. Learning about their community and the world develops their sense of belonging within each of these.

Resourceful: Children show initiative, ask questions and are prepared to use a variety of strategies to learn. They feel empowered to make independent choices to meet their own needs.

Reflective: Children are curious, able and willing to learn from their mistakes. They grow to become critical thinkers by building upon their past experiences.

Resilient: Children are prepared to persevere and stay involved in their learning, even when the process is challenging. They are problem solvers both collaboratively and independently.

Reciprocal: Children are prepared to help each other and work as a team. They develop friendships and empathy. They can collaborate with others and use positive relationships to further their learning.

Creative: Children further their imagination through opportunities for exploration and play. They learn to express themselves and their strengths in diverse ways.

These values and intentions underpin all of our provision across the seven areas of learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Physical Development; Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; Expressive Art and Design). They support children to become lifelong, confident and enthusiastic learners and prepare them for their journey into Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Structure of the EYFS

In Elm Wood Primary School, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is comprised of Nursery and Reception.

Children can start Nursery the September after their third birthday and Reception the September after their fourth birthday.

We offer both part- and full- time Nursery places. Part-time places may be in the mornings from 9.00am-12.00pm (subject to availability). Full-time places usually run from 9.00am-3.30pm. For children who receive 15/30 hours of funding but have a full-time place, there is a weekly top up fee. Please contact our school office for price lists.

To find out if your three- or four-year-old is eligible for 15 or 30 hours of free childcare, please read the government guidance linked [here](#).

Curriculum

Our EYFS follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that has applied since January 2024.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Each area of learning contains aspects that support thorough development in that area.

The prime areas of learning and their aspects are:

- Communication and Language (CL)
 - Listening, Attention & Understanding (LAU)
 - Speaking (S)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
 - Self-Regulation (SR)
 - Managing Self (MS)
 - Building Relationships (BR)
- Physical Development (PD)
 - Gross Motor Skills (GS)
 - Fine Motor Skills (FS)

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas. The specific areas of learning and their aspects are:

- Literacy (L)
 - Comprehension (C)
 - Word Reading (WR)
 - Writing (W)
- Mathematics
 - Number (N)
 - Numerical Patterns (NP)
- Understanding the World (UW)
 - Past & Present (P&P)
 - People, Culture & Communities (PCC)
 - The Natural World

- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)
 - Creating with Materials (CM)
 - Being Imaginative and Expressive (BIE)

We use a number of strands to plan for a broad, rich and personalised curriculum for every cohort:

- Termly themes and overarching topics
- High quality texts and stories
- Children's interests
- National, international, religious and cultural holidays, celebrations and events
- Local community events and news
- Enriching experiences
- Parent and carer feedback and communication

Practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children develop and use a pedagogy rich in play to support children's development in the three characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experiences things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

4.1 Planning

All areas of learning are planned for and taught through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities which enable children to develop and learn effectively. To plan effectively, staff observe children during child-initiated play, identifying their current interests and fascinations and using these to respond in the moment and to direct future planning. This includes planning and preparing continuous provision and enhancements which reflect the areas of learning, current topic and children's interests in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Staff also consider the individual needs, different ways of learning and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In Nursery, the focus is strongly on the 3 prime areas. As children progress and develop a solid foundation in the prime areas, focused teaching on the specific areas is introduced. The prime areas of learning are always considered to complement skills development in the specific areas.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

In Nursery, children take part in class group-time activities focused on the prime areas. Such activities will often involve stories, songs, concrete resources and lots of participation. The planning reflects the children's developing attention skills. The teacher may work with the whole class with support from the teaching assistants, or each adult may lead a smaller group session each. Teaching then centres on focus activities in which staff teach specific skills and scaffold children to achieve their individual next steps in an area of learning.

In Reception, children take part in three to four whole class carpet-time activities per day. Phonics is taught daily and maths is taught at least four times per week. Other carpet-time teaching focuses on a key text of the week, the class topic, special events and other areas of the curriculum, to ensure

broad coverage. Children are supported with learning to read from books that match their attainment in phonics. This support is through one-to-one support or small group sessions. Children also take reading books home to share with their families. At least one other focus activity is planned in advance for the week for all children to take part in, while other focused teaching is planned for as the week progresses to take account of arising interests and areas for development.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more directed activities, which may be adult supported or set as an independent challenge. At Elm Wood Primary School, we want to prepare our children for their journey into Key Stage One. However, we thoroughly recognise and value the importance of play. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a time for play and exploration. This core value guides our practice to the end of Reception and into Year One.

Assessment

At Elm Wood Primary School, ongoing assessment is at the heart of early years practice. Staff use the rich information gathered from observations of and interactions with children to identify children's interests, strengths and next steps. Staff then use this to carefully plan both independent and adult directed learning opportunities to support and extend each child's learning. We also consider observations shared by parents/ carers as their child's first and most enduring educator. We use the online learning journal Tapestry to record observations. Parents/ carers are supported to access Tapestry, respond to classroom learning and share learning from home.

Within the first six weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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 ('expected')
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents/ carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/ carers for their child.

The profile is moderated within Elm Wood Primary School (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#), Early Learning Goals and [exemplification materials](#)), to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with parents and families

Parents are their child's first and most enduring educator. They make a crucial difference to children's development and outcomes, and we know that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/ carers. We therefore aim for the school and parents/ carers to work closely together, welcoming and listening to all families.

This begins with children's induction into Nursery and Reception. Through a combination of stay and plays, staggered starts and 1-1 meetings with parents/ carers and children, we get to know each child and listen to the valuable information parents/ carers share. This helps ensure that children feel safe and secure and have a smooth transition into school.

When a child starts school, the class teacher takes on the key person role for each child. With the support of teaching assistants and early years educators, they ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. They also support parents/ carers in guiding their child's development at home and help families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

A two-way flow of information and knowledge between parents/ carers and the school remains key throughout your child's time in the early years. We maintain an open-door policy and parents/ carers

are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. Parent consultations early in the year establish how a child is settling into the school environment as well as to build on community cohesion and wellbeing.

Tapestry, our online learning journal, is where we record our observations of each child's learning and provides parents/ carers with ongoing access to their children's development and participation. Parents/ carers can also add their own observations of their child to Tapestry to further develop home-school partnerships.

The EYFS profile also helps to provide parents/ carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

We further develop partnership working with parents through approaches such as:

- A thorough and supportive induction process
- An open – door policy
- Parent evenings
- Phone calls
- Newsletters
- The school website
- Tapestry
- WeDuc home-school communication platform
- Notice board
- Email

Parent workshops (to give parents and carers the tools needed to support learning at home)

We are committed to ensuring all families feel welcome and included in the setting and we have adopted certain practices to help support families with EAL. We also support children within the setting by using lots of visual aids, signing, props and puppets, labels and signs in home languages, multi-language books.

The long-term benefits of building constructive partnerships between parents/ carers and staff will have a positive impact on a child's development and learning experiences.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good health – including good oral health - in the early years by talking to children about the following things:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- Mental well-being and feelings
- Listening to our bodies
- Healthcare professionals and 'people who help us'
- Taking some local area trips to look at the facilities in our communities
- Encouraging independence and self-care as appropriate, e.g. taking care of belongings, managing toileting

Children have access to water throughout the day. They are taught to recognise their needs and manage their hygiene by washing their hands and washing their cups. Healthy snacks are also provided. Teachers may choose to share these during a 'snack-time' to facilitate socialising and turn-taking, or have them available for the children to help themselves to throughout the day.

Full-time Nursery children and Reception children are encouraged to have school dinners at school. In doing so, children have a choice of balanced meals, take part in a whole-school routine and learn to use cutlery which supports their fine motor skills. Kitchens are able to cater for allergies and provide for most dietary needs. Healthy packed lunches are also welcome. We work closely with our SENCOs, school nurse and other external professionals to support children and families as necessary.

Your child's diet is very important for developing and maintaining strong and healthy teeth. It is helpful to include good sources of calcium (yoghurt, broccoli, and milk) in your child's diet to help build strong teeth. Teaching your child about healthy eating habits is one of the best practices for a lifetime of good health. Here are some helpful tips for supporting this at home:

- Eat fruits and vegetables for snacks rather than sweets and biscuits.
- Brush your child's teeth twice daily.
- Serve water at mealtime rather than juice.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Please visit our website to find out more about our early years curriculum offer, information about each school and to view our other federation policies:

<https://www.elmwoodprimary.co.uk/>