



Elton Primary School & Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

In our school, the wellbeing and education of all our children comes first

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What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS is a distinct stage for children from birth to the end of the Reception year. This policy relates to Foundation Stage 1 (Pre- school and Nursery- two years and three years old respectively) and Foundation Stage 2 (Reception).

Why is the Early Years Foundation Stage different and important?

The EYFS is important because it is in the foundation years that children develop learning attitudes, skills, social integration and personal organisation.

Play is a central tool for learning; it is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. Structured play is where the learning outcome has been identified. Careful planning and support is very important within the EYFS classroom and enables children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding at their own pace.

At Elton Primary School and Nursery, we believe it is important to provide an Early Years education that aims to meet the individual needs of every child in our care. Children feel safe and secure and are valued as individuals here. Through nurture and positive attitudes, independence is developed allowing children to become effective learners. We encourage children to feel proud of themselves and to reach their full potential regardless of their ethnic and socio-economic background, race, gender, creed or ability.

We want the children's first experience of school to be a positive one - filled with enthusiasm, wonder and happiness, as this enjoyment has the power to determine their attitude towards life-long learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Early Years practitioners refer to the non-statutory document 'Development Matters' (2021) to help review children's development in the EYFS and to support the implementation of the statutory requirements of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework for 2021.

Alongside Development Matters, non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is shaped by the children's interests and evolves based on where the children want to go with their learning. Planning starts with the child at Elton and a mixture of adult led and child initiated activities. Adult led activities are planned and led by the adult. Child initiated activities are when the children can plan and choose where they would like to play.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- 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 positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn at different rates.

The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2021) covers the education and care of all children in early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The following principles underline our practice:

- Learning begins at birth.
- Care and education are inseparable.
- High value given to the contribution of parents/carers.
- Every child develops at his or her pace, but adults can stimulate and encourage learning.
- All children benefit from a developmentally appropriate education.
- Skilled and careful observation is the key to helping children learn.
- Cultural and physical diversity should be respected and valued.
- Young children learn best through play, first-hand experience and talk.
- Carers and educators should work in partnership with parents, who are their children's first educators.
- Quality care and education require well-trained educators/carers and ongoing training and support.

We support children in using the following three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:-

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience 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.

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Planning

There are seven areas of learning and development; "prime areas," and "specific areas."

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards an equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENCO in order to access the relevant support required.

Well-planned learning experiences are key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs.

We meet the needs of all our children through: -

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- A progressive EYFS curriculum that provides the building blocks for future success through the use of a rigorous systematic, synthetic phonics programme and a math curriculum that builds upon children’s prior knowledge paving the way for the children’s future schooling.
- 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.
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking rapid action to provide additional support as necessary.
- Guidance and reassurance to enable children to take managed risks.
- Planning involves separate Literacy and Numeracy planning (3-5 year olds).
- We use Literacy Company schemes of work in both Nursery and Reception as a basis for children’s literacy development – this is a text-based approach that helps to promote a love of reading.
- Planning allows opportunity for a balance of child initiated activity and adult led activity.
- Play is an integral part of the planned activities.
- Planning is informed by observation.

Context of learning

School hours

Pre-school (two year olds)	8.45- 3.00 Monday- Friday
Nursery (three year olds)	8.45- 3.00 Monday- Friday
Reception (four and five year olds)	8.45- 3.15 Monday- Friday

Environment

We provide an environment for learning which fully supports the philosophy underpinning the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Both the Pre-school/Nursery and Reception classrooms are positioned in the KS1 part of the building. The classrooms are large and bright with direct access to cloakroom and toilet facilities. The FS1 classroom has a large kitchen with cooking facilities and all staff have current food hygiene certificates. We also have a designated nappy changing area. All rooms have appropriate sized furniture, which is adaptable and mobile - encouraging all our children to be as independent and self-sufficient as possible.

We also have secure outdoor areas specifically for the Foundation Stage. We have recently invested in new equipment for our outdoor areas - a large mud kitchen area with weighing scales and a transportation pulley system, a wooden stage with fixed music panels, a pond and pond dipping resources and bright new outdoor flooring. In the outdoor environment, children can play and develop their gross and fine motor skills, all whilst exploring our natural environment. We believe that outdoor play is a fundamental part of a child's education and has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being. Wellingtons and waterproofs are available in F1 classroom so that children can access the outdoors in all weathers.

Resources

A specific budget is designated for the Foundation Stage to ensure that the children have adequate and appropriate resources. Resources within the classrooms are well ordered, clearly visible and accessible to all children. This helps them to become independent and to take responsibility for their own learning. Outdoor storage equipment is used, making the resources more accessible to the children.

Including All Learners

Inclusion involves the identification and minimising of barriers to learning and participation, and the maximising of resources to support learning and participation.

The school places a strong emphasis on processes and provision to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Pupil Premium

In line with our school's Pupil Premium Policy, any child eligible for Pupil Premium will be allocated additional funds to enhance their learning and to help reach their full potential. Parents/Carers will be supported in applying for Pupil Premium funding. The Premium will be spent to support school's offer for all disadvantaged children, for example for extra support staff time, resources, or training.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

We aim to provide a Curriculum that is stimulating and challenging. We believe that all children deserve to access an education in which there is no limit to personal achievement and that we provide equal access to all provision available. Planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress as cited in the Parent Partnership section of the document. They are encouraged to support and help their child's learning. Two-year progress checks are completed for our children in Pre-school, sharing them with parents and their health visitor. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with Parents/Carers at an early stage and the school's SENCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's SENCO.

Equal opportunities

Please refer to the Elton Primary School equal opportunities policy.

Parent Partnership

We recognise parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise not only the role that parents have played but also their future role in educating the children. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We believe this is most effective when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

The EYFS team supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. We achieve this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- Providing children with the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school and Nursery during transition sessions.
- Supporting children through the transition into Nursery by stay and play sessions.
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's learning journey by sending "Wow Stars" home regularly with each child. This allows the family to communicate and celebrate their child's achievements with the school. These can be linked to any area of learning and will then be added to their learning journeys.
- Supporting children through the transition from Nursery to Reception and Reception into Year 1 through carefully planned transition opportunities in the summer term. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- Inviting all parents to a stay and learn reading session during the first half term of the child's Reception year to detail how we teach reading and phonics and how parents can best support their child with this at home.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a completed learning journey at the end of Nursery and at the end of the Reception year, this also contains the child's statutory assessment results for the end of EYFS.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration, school visits and school performances.
- Providing photographs and information on the school newsletter and on the school's Twitter page which parents can access.
- Providing written contact through home school diary (Reception) as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring school to contact staff.
- Ensuring all parents know who their child's teacher and teaching assistant are via the "Welcome Pack".
- Providing a quiet and confidential area where parents can discuss any concerns.
- Sharing of "Learning Logs" which are sent home for the children and their families to complete. These are then shared with the class in school.

Admissions

Prior to admission into Pre-school parents/carers are invited to spend time in the setting. Here we will talk about children's needs and requirements and we ask parents to fill in an 'All about me' booklet. These give us an important insight into children's likes/dislikes, things they enjoy or might scare them, family background, dietary requirements etc.

Our transition sessions are bespoke and are tailored completely to each child's needs. Some children only need one settling in session, others need far more. We work closely with the children and their parents to ensure that they feel safe, comfortable and happy in their new environment, before being left by their carers.

The school adheres to the local LA's admissions policy. Prior to the child entering the Reception class the parents are invited to a meeting at the school. At the meeting, the structure of the school day is explained and parents are given any information they may need. Written information is given as a "Welcome Pack".

During the summer term before entry to school, all children are invited to attend school for welcome sessions where they meet their teacher, explore the learning environment and try school dinners. The current reception class also take part in a transition into year one; allowing the children to meet their new class teacher and become familiar with their new learning environment.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Our assessment methods from FS1 to FS2 are used consistently; the same assessment tracking sheet moves with each child through from Preschool, to Nursery and then into Reception. It enables the child's journey to have been consistently recorded from their starting point at 2 years old to the Early Learning Goals in Reception.

Within the first 6 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 and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgments. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Each child has their own learning journey, which contains photos, observation notes, quotes from the child, samples of child-initiated activity, reflections from the child and input from the parents. The focus is on remarking on the children's 'wow moments'. The majority of assessments are based on child-initiated experiences as we believe that it is only when children are encouraged to explore, take risks and make decisions that quality learning occurs.

Parents also receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress according to the different areas of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

Transition

Transitions between Nursery/Reception/KS1 are exemplary and occur in a number of discrete and explicit ways. The following procedures have been put into place to ensure a successful transition into Nursery :-

- All Nursery children are invited to look around Nursery so they can get to know staff and see the setting.
- All children are then invited for stay and play sessions with a parent before they start Nursery. The number of sessions depends on both the child's and parent's needs.
- Parents are invited in to share information about their child's likes and dislikes along with any techniques they use to support their child. Additionally allowing parents additional opportunity to ask any question and get to know the adults that will be caring for their child.

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:-

- Before starting in the Reception Class the children are invited to make two separate visits.
- Any child coming from another Nursery either has a visit or contact is made with their current setting. They are also offered a place at our Nursery to support the induction process if the parents choose to.
- Physical barriers are removed in the outdoor provision - ensuring that children can move freely between FS1 and FS2
- Children having story time and talk time with the Reception team.
- Children attend whole school singing assembly.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting. Often these children will have been identified as requiring additional support or are part of the Common Assessment Framework (TAF) process.