



# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

April 2024

### Document control and record of amendments

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## Introduction

At Elmbridge Primary School we agree that:

*"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. 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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."* (The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. DfE March 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

At Elmbridge Primary School all children join Reception year, full time, after an initial period of transition, commencing with pre visits in July, and home visits and induction from September.

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** in different ways and at different rates.

## **A Unique Child**

At Elmbridge Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first year at school, the children are introduced to the learning behaviours. They are encouraged to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. The children are taught how to learn, how to become successful learners and that everyone can learn with practice and effort.

## Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We believe that all of our children matter, and take pride in giving them every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

Early identification of special or additional 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 SENDCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Special Educational Needs & Disability policy.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and 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;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## Welfare

*"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." (The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. DfE March 2021)*

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and provide them with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

## Positive Relationships

At Elmbridge Primary School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts school;
- inviting all parents and children to 'stay and play' sessions during the summer term before they start school;
- inviting the children to spend a morning with their teacher in the classroom before starting at school;
- offering home visits during the first week in September to meet the children individually in a familiar environment and to answer any questions prior to starting school;
- offering phonics and maths information sessions to all parents;
- using the Tapestry program to complete observations on the children in school which the parents can view and comment upon;
- encouraging parents to contribute to the child's Tapestry profile by including any home learning or special moments from home and family life;
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings to discuss their child's progress;
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Family tree event, Open afternoons, Sports Day etc.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school each EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistant. As the children freely mix in our outdoor learning environment, children build up positive relationships with all staff and we ensure there is continuity and coherence by sharing information about all of the children on a need to know basis.

We have good links with the local feeder playgroups and regular visits are undertaken throughout the year. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

## **Enabling Environments**

At Elmbridge Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated activities reflecting the children's interests and topic where they can develop motor skills, communication skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

## **Monitoring, Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Planning within the EYFS is based loosely around topics which have stemmed from the children's own interests. The plans include adult directed activities, independent challenges and enhancements to provision for both indoors and outdoors. Teachers use weekly focussed, objective led plans which are linked to the EYFS curriculum and highlight individual children's current achievement and next steps in the specific area of learning. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and next steps of learning. Assessment in the EYFS is based on observation, discussion, questioning and evidence of children's independent learning. Valuable evidence of children's learning is obtained through observation of both independent and targeted learning. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants throughout the year. The Tapestry program is used to record observations and provides a learning journey for each child. Parents are encouraged to contribute by adding their own observations. Any children that are assessed to be not 'on track' will be flagged as a concern and appropriate measures put in place.

Progress is tracked against the ELG statements using the Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters documents as a guide. A progression of skills document is also used by teachers to provide a reference of the expected progress in skills acquired at each assessment point. A gap / strength analysis is completed after baseline assessment, and at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6. This provides information on where the greatest areas of need and strength are within the cohort and allows provision to directly reflect the identified needs. Each child's level of development is assessed as 'on track' or 'not on track' against the ELGs (Early Learning Goals).

Within the final term of the EYFS, a written summary is provided to parents reporting the children's progress against the ELG's. The characteristics of effective learning are reported in the form of a personal comment. We give opportunities for the parents to discuss these judgements with their EYFS teacher.

## **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. In addition, the EYFS has its own enclosed outdoor area. The outdoor learning environment is seen as incredibly important at Elmbridge Primary School with its impact on health and wellbeing being a significant factor. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

## Learning and Development

At Elmbridge Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected. Through a carefully planned timetable and 'freeflow' approach, the children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

### Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

#### PRIME AREAS

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

#### SPECIFIC AREAS

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All of these areas are linked closely together and cannot be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### Playing and Exploring

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which enable them to make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Our children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own, whilst being given the space to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. We allow the children to have some independence and control over their learning, and room to develop their confidence in order that they learn to make decisions. We believe it provides children with a sense of satisfaction when they take ownership of their learning.

We provide the children with the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Our children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

As a school, we **work together** to enable our pupils to be:

**Ready, Respectful, Safe**

Elmbridge Primary School supports SMSC in all subject areas.

### **Spiritual development**

The children are given the opportunity to explore a range of different beliefs and faiths through celebrating different festivals: Diwali, Christmas, Lunar New Year, Ramadan, Easter, Eid-al-Fitr, Eid-al Adha. They explore feelings and values and learn about themselves, others and the world around them. The children are introduced to the idea of looking after themselves and others, the importance of healthy eating and a good sleep routine and how to relax and reflect through mindfulness activities.

### **Moral development**

The children are taught to recognise right and wrong and respect the law through learning school and class rules. Positive behaviours are promoted, modelled and praised by adults and a positive reward system is used to promote these behaviours. Through play, the children learn how to be a good friend. How to share, work together and how to listen and respect others' ideas and wishes.

### **Social development**

Through continuous provision, the children are given the opportunity to freely choose their activity and play with or alongside other children from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The children learn that we all have different likes and dislikes and that this is ok and good to be different. Respectful behaviour is modelled and expected at all times, for example, turn taking, listening and use and response of 'please stop, I don't like it'.

### **Cultural development**

The children are taught to appreciate other cultures through celebrating different festivals throughout the year. The children learn songs, listen to stories and visitors, role play, dance to music, make crafts, take part in activities and taste food from other cultures.

