

Elmwood Infant and Nursery School

Early Years Policy

Spring 2020



*Article 29 'Education must develop every child's personality, talents
and abilities to the full'*

Article 3 'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children'



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Date Policy Agreed: Spring 2020
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Rationale

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Elmwood Infant School.

“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”.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2014.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Elmwood Infant School, we have a Nursery and Reception provision.

We believe that early childhood is the foundation in which children build the rest of their lives and at Elmwood Infant School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

We are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

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

Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. Young children need an environment which is healthy, safe and secure, where they are able to grow in confidence and fulfil their potential. Each of our Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] classrooms across nursery and reception provide a stimulating environment where pupils can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence, be curious, and learn. We believe it is our duty to develop a joy of learning within our pupils, enabling them to feel motivated and excited by the opportunity to learn through play and first hand experiences. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Elmwood Infant School & Nursery. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Intent

In our Early Years setting at Elmwood Infant School & Nursery, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and morally in order to enable them to develop their full potential. As practitioners we recognise that all children are unique and special.

We believe it is our duty to develop a joy of learning within our pupils, enabling them to feel motivated and excited. We ensure that we plan for high quality learning through play-based, first hand experiences. We strive to provide opportunities for every child to develop their communication, independence and confidence. We provide a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners working with them.

Aims

In the EYFS setting across Elmwood Infant School & Nursery, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, spiritually and morally in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. Across the Foundation Stage, we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Elmwood Infant School, we aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure, caring and inclusive environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ from their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant, fun and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundation for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each child to progress. We will use a variety of assessments methods including formative and summative assessments.
- Develop positive relationships and parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

A Unique Child

We recognise that children learn and develop in various ways and at different rates and this is reflected in our provision. The characteristics of effective learning support the child to become a motivated and effective learner. Children will play and explore and 'have a go' at using available resources, developing their language and experiences. Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through active learning and will make links, explore their ideas and strategies for problem solving through creating and thinking critically. Practitioners support children in developing all these characteristics through playing alongside children and where necessary, scaffolding and supporting their thoughts.

Children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender or abilities. We welcome all children and families into our setting so that they feel included, safe and valued.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the Early Year is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years Education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates'. Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the learning aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in all early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected, and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning requires a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime Areas are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others
- **Communication and Language** – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment
- **Physical Development** - children have opportunities to be active and develop coordination (both gross motor and fine motor) and they learn about healthy choices.

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The Specific Areas are:

- **Literacy** – involves children learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write
- **Mathematics** – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculating skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures
- **Understanding of the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design

Prime Areas of Learning			
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development	Communication and Language	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Relationships • Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness • Managing Feelings and Behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving and Handling • Health and Self-Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and Attention • Understanding • Speaking 	
Specific Areas of Learning			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding The World	Expressive Arts and Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number • Shape, Space and Measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Communities • The World • Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and Using Media and Materials • Being Imaginative

We follow the children's interests when planning for each group of children and involve the children in choosing activities and resources. Children and parents are encouraged to be involved in the next steps for learning through sharing the children's learning journeys, the use of Tapestry and parent consultations.

Child-initiated learning and adult led activities are focused on the children's interests. We extend children's learning through observing, getting involved in their play, supporting their thinking and asking open-ended questions.

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, this information is shared with parents. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers in order to agree how to support their child.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning and the Prime and Specific areas of learning and development are all interconnected. A child reaches out to relate to people and things through the characteristics of effective learning, which are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – engagement. Children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** – motivation. Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties. They enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – thinking. Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. They also support a child to remain an effective and motivated learner, as children develop in the context of the environment around them. Our Super Skills also encourage the characteristics of effective learning.

At Elmwood Infant School we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

Active Learning through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and

rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the Early Years practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities both inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support them to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. The EYFS curriculum is essentially a play based curriculum, and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

Outdoor Learning

At Elmwood we believe that learning outdoors is just as important as indoor learning. We plan for outside learning opportunities, which enable children to experience activities on a larger scale. We ensure that they are different from indoor learning by planning 'real' outside experiences, such as through our mud kitchen and building zone. Children have the opportunity to access the outdoor learning environment both in the morning and in the afternoon. They are able to work alongside children from other classes and they have free-flow opportunities.

Observation and Assessment

At Elmwood Infant School staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity during the week, although they may not experience them each day. A mixture of directed and free choice activities are planned and children's choices are carefully monitored to ensure a balanced programme. The children begin Early Years by having free choice of activities for most of the sessions.

Good planning is the 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. All staff who work in the Early Years Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally) inside and outside. Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning.

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the Early Years. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is recorded in our Learning Journals, which are implemented across the Foundation Stage. Observations are recorded in different formats and these include using the 2Simple software package 'Evidence Me', sticky labels, photographs and longer narrative style notes. At Elmwood we believe that a Learning Journal should represent the child as a unique individual, reflecting their specific interests and learning styles.

All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play

schemes and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include adults engaging alongside children in their play and talking with them about their tasks or play. Children's written work is assessed in accordance with our Marking Policy. Children are given specific feedback about their writing linked to our differentiated marking strips. Next steps are shared verbally, and children also have the opportunity to practice them immediately if appropriate.

Learning Journals record children's progress over the academic year in all areas of learning. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations and provide a valuable journey of the learning that has taken place for each child. Parents/carers and children are encouraged to contribute to these journals over the course of the year on Proud Clouds. Parents/carers are invited to make a comment about something they are proud of in relation to their child's learning and achievements at each parent consultation evening. The children have the opportunity to look through their journals and write a comment in response to their work throughout the year.

Baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first two to three weeks upon entering the setting. Judgements made on children's development are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all areas of learning and development. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012). This is updated at least once each term using OTrack to monitor individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Early Years Stage Team each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's Early Learning Goals (see Appendix One).

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Two weekly planning is developed across the Early Years Foundation Stage, involving both the Nursery and Reception teaching staff. Our planning takes into account individual children's learning and developmental needs. All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access across the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Planning is reviewed as a team, and is recorded fortnightly for taught indoor learning, independent indoor learning and outside learning. Planning is monitored each term by the Senior Leadership Team, as well as by the Early Years Team Leader.

Key Workers

Each child within Nursery and Reception must be assigned a Key Person. The role of the Key Person is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. When a child starts attending Elmwood Infant School, practitioners must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role.

Admissions

Nursery - Parents are encouraged to apply for a Nursery place for their child when they have reached their third birthday. Application forms for admissions are available from the school office and Nursery places are usually allocated after the Easter holidays. Parents who are unsuccessful at gaining a place are placed on a waiting list.

Reception - Parents of children who require a Reception place must apply to the Local Authority where the school is located. Details of this process can be found on our website and at www.croydon.gov.uk/school-admissions.

All prospective parents are invited to visit the school throughout the Autumn term and are taken on an informal tour by our Senior Leadership team. A prospectus is available to all prospective parents. Once pupils have accepted a place they are invited to a New Parents evening which is held towards the end of the summer term; separate meetings being held for children starting in Nursery and in Reception.

Before children start Nursery or Reception, they will be invited to visit their class with their parents. Staff use the visits as an opportunity to start pupils' profiles and gather important information about the pupil.

The Induction Process

Both Nursery and Reception parents are invited to visit their child's new class in the summer term to provide them with essential information for the next academic year.

When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

Nursery – Parents and children are invited to a Stay and Play session, where the class teacher will meet with parents to find out about your child. You are also able to meet the other adults working within our Nursery setting. Children will be able to take part in a few 'Stay and Play' sessions before they start full time. During these sessions, we encourage parents to decrease the amount of time spent with your child, in order to support them in developing their independence when settling into their new setting. You may be asked to stay on call during the settling in period. When settling your child into Elmwood Infants you will be invited to work closely with your child's key worker and all other staff to ensure your child feels safe and secure.

Reception – Before starting in September, you are invited to attend meeting with your child's class teacher and teaching assistant. This could be either at home or in your child's new class. This meeting gives us an opportunity to find out about your child, and for them to meet us. Children will start at different times during the first few weeks of term so that they have some one to one time with their class teacher and teaching assistant. When settling your child into Elmwood Infants you will be invited to work closely with your child's class teacher and all other staff to ensure your child feels safe and secure.

Organisation of classes

In Nursery we have 2 classes, each having a maximum of 26 children. We offer Nursery education grant funded (Free) part time places where children can attend for 15 hours per week. There are a limited number of full time places available. Children can attend each morning from 8.30am-11.30am or each afternoon from 12.20pm-3.20pm for 3 hours per session. All children must be accompanied to and from school by a known adult. Elmwood Infants Nursery consists of two rooms and an outside space. Although your child will be registered within a 'base' classroom, they will be able to access activities in all the learning spaces throughout the nursery.

Reception is divided into four classes. Each class has a maximum of thirty children. The school day begins at 8.50am and ends at 3.10pm. All children must be accompanied to and from school by a known adult.

All Early Years classes have a Class teacher and teaching assistant based in each classroom. Additional adults may be in class to support children who have specific educational needs.

Parents as Partners

At Elmwood Infant School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports

practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Elmwood is committed to being available at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the Inclusion Manager of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Elmwood Infants School.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The school's Inclusion Manager is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary. When appropriate we engage with external agencies e.g. Health Visitor, Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist etc. in order to improve the provision for all children including those with Special Educational Needs. *See SEND and Inclusion Policy.*

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes

Safeguarding

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school and online for parents to read if they wish.

Monitoring

At Elmwood, monitoring takes place in a variety of ways. Planning is monitored each term by the Early Years Team Leader and the Senior Leadership Team and Learning Journals are routinely scrutinized. There are half-termly progress meetings to discuss pupil progress and attainment. Lesson observations take place throughout the year which are linked to the requirements of the school development plan.

Appendix One: EYFS Early Learning Goals

Prime Areas:

Communication and Language

ELG 01 Listening and Attention Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

ELG 02 Understanding Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

ELG 03 Speaking Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Physical Development

ELG 04 Moving and Handling Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

ELG 05 Health and Self-Care Children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG 06 Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help.

ELG 07 Managing Feelings and Behaviour Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.

ELG 08 Making Relationships Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

Specific Areas:

Literacy

ELG 09 Reading Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

ELG 10 Writing Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly, and others are phonetically plausible.

Mathematics

ELG 11 Numbers Children count reliably with numbers from one to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

ELG 12 Shape, Space and Measure Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

Understanding the World

ELG 13 People and Communities Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

ELG 14 The World Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

ELG 15 Technology Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG 16 Exploring and Using Media and Materials Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

ELG 17 Being Imaginative Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories.