

ELLINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY



Written By	EYFS LEADER	
Frequency of Review	Every 2 years	
Date reviewed and approved by Governing Body	February 2019	
Date of next review	Spring 2021	
Display on Website	✓	
Purpose	To ensure children in the EYFS enjoy learning in a safe, healthy environment, make good progress and achieve at the highest standard.	
Consultation	Governors	✓
	Parents	x
	Pupils	x
	Staff	✓
Links with other policies	Teaching and Learning Policy	

Signed Janet Hutton (Chair of Governors)

Signed J. Fairweather (Headteacher)

Introduction

“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; 1.1 March 2017)

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:-

- The Childcare Act Section 39 (1)(a) 2006
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2017)
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2109 Handbook (November 2018)

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following plans and policies:

- Safeguarding Policy (including acceptable phone use)
- E-Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Medicines and Illness Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Ellingham Primary school we offer 52 Nursery places to three year olds and 8 government funded places to two year olds. We have 3 termly intakes and offer up to 10 spaces for children whose parents meet the requirements for 30 hours funding. All children enter our Reception class in the September of the year that they turn five. All parents are given the opportunity to have their child start school full time. ‘Summer born’ children’s parents have the right to keep their child part time until the term in which the child becomes five. There will be a single point of entry following LA guidelines.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Ellingham Primary 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, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; in line with our Behavior Policy we use praise and encouragement, as well as stickers, rewards and a behavior chart to encourage children to develop a positive attitude and a love of learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and in line with our Behaviour and SEND policies do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Ellingham Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, culture, gender or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children 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 EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all children.

We achieve this 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 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.

Safeguarding and 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."

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage; 3.1 March 2017)

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

At Ellingham Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2017).

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.
- 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

In line with the school's Safeguarding Policy all staff in Foundation Stage receive yearly safeguarding training to enable them to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. The Foundation Stage Leader holds a Level 3 Safeguarding Certificate. All staff in the Foundation Stage also receive Prevent Duty and Paediatric First Aid Training.

Safeguarding is also about pupils' emotional well-being. Foundation stage staff encourage pupils to speak out if there is something worrying them, or if they are aware of, or witness something unacceptable, untoward or disturbing. Staff promote tolerance and respect for each other and acceptance of individual differences. Staff help pupils develop confidence and resilience and discuss what to do if things go wrong. They are approachable and show their willingness to help pupils at all times.

In line with guidance from the EYFS and the SEN Code of Practice 2014 we will strive to:

- be alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and respond quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary;
- stretch and challenge all children;
- encourage children to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children;
- maintain records suitable for sharing with colleagues in an inter-agency team while acting as a point of contact for a child and their family.

Where staff feel that a child is not making expected progress or reaching expected standards they will speak to parents in the first instance to seek their opinion and to discuss how the child can best be helped.

Where children are identified as needing extra support within the setting, this involves the SENCO, the parents/carers and the child's key person working together to write a plan to identify how the child will be given extra support. We liaise very closely with the outside agencies, including Health Visitors, the School Nurse, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Educational Welfare Officers, Social Workers, Foster Carers, Paediatricians, Dieticians, GPs and anyone else we feel will be able to support and help the child and their parents or carers.

For the very small number of children whose needs cannot be met in this way and whose needs are more severe and complex, the Foundation staff will, with the permission of the parents/carers, request the SENCO seeks a formal assessment from the Local Education Authority.

Positive Relationships

At Ellingham Primary School we recognise that children learn to be independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Foundation stage staff offering to visit all children in their home setting prior to them joining our school;
- inviting Nursery parents/carers to a 'Stay and Play' session with their child prior to them starting;
- inviting Reception parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- inviting Reception children to two induction sessions to meet staff and familiarise themselves with the school environment;
- staff, where possible, visiting pre-school setting;
- having a staggered entry over a one week period for Reception aged children to ensure a gentle, non-threatening start to their school life;
- having a staggered entry to Nursery tailored to each child's individual needs;
- offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress both formally and informally and to look at their Learning Journeys;
- valuing the ongoing contributions from parents/ carers to their child's Learning Journey;
- our availability to talk to parents at the end of each day if there are any concerns;
- Parents/carers receiving a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- Inviting parents/carers of two year olds to meet with their child's key worker for their 'Two year old check;'
- offering parent/carer workshops e.g. How we teach phonics;
- offering Reception parents/carers a weekly newsletter to keep them abreast of their child's learning. Nursery parents receive a similar letter on a half-termly basis;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents such as a Christmas production, Class assemblies, Sports Day, stay and play sessions.

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. In Nursery, the class teacher acts as the 'key person' to all 3 year olds whilst the Nursery Nurse is the designated two year old 'key person'. Similarly in our Reception classes the class teacher acts as 'Key Person' to all children supported by the Nursery Nurse. The EYFS Leader is responsible for the safeguarding, welfare and progress of all Foundation Stage children. Reception staff liaise closely with Ellingham Explorers(breakfast/after school club) about children who attend both settings.

We have good links with our feeder nurseries/playgroups. Visits are undertaken by the Foundation stage staff, alongside the SENCO when appropriate, before the children start school and staff are met with to discuss new intake children.

The transition into Year 1 is carefully managed so that children continue to follow an early years' style day in the first part of the Autumn term.

Enabling Environments

At Ellingham Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

We understand that some children learn better when outside and so activities are planned weekly to allow this. Outside learning is available to all EYFS children daily on a 'free flow' basis.

Activities are planned that particularly allow the children to further develop their fine and gross motor skills and to experience the environment.

We are very aware of the health and safety of the children at all times and risk assessments of the Outdoor and Indoor areas are undertaken by both staff and children on a daily basis.

To ensure health and safety children are encouraged to wear suitable clothing for outdoor activities including keeping a pair of wellies available at school and good hygiene practices are taught alongside play in the 'mud kitchens' and work in the gardens.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS is developed weekly in response to the needs of the children. Teachers collaborate with children to ensure that there is a good level of challenge within the chosen topics.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults to ensure a full picture of the child's learning and development. These observations are recorded in children's individual Learning Journeys. They also contain information provided by parents.

At Ellingham Primary School, we use SIMs to record judgements.

Within the final term of the Reception year, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs. Following this parent/carers are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class 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 as well as be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Both Reception classes have access to a shared outdoor area while the Nursery has its own outdoor space. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity 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 areas of learning. Accessible outdoor storage units allow the children to independently choose some of their own resources.

Learning and Development

At Ellingham 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.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 & 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;

- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents/carers;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

Playing and exploring-engagement

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

(Early Years Foundation Stage, 2007)

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning- motivation

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

(Early Years Foundation Stage, 2007)

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

(Early Years Foundation Stage, 2007)

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

Areas of Learning

The areas of learning are divided into 7 areas:

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal and social development

The next steps are the 4 specific areas:

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

All areas are delivered through a balance of child initiated and adult led 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.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The named Governor with responsibility for EYFS is Janet Hilton. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the EYFS regularly and provide feedback to the whole Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The EYFS Leader in conjunction with the SIP and members of SLT will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.