



Early Years Policy

Policy Creation & Review

Author(s)	Headteacher & Early Years Lead
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Mission statement:

At Ellen Wilkinson Primary School we aim to provide every child with the skills to become a happy, independent and curious lifelong learner. Our priority is that our provision provides a rich learning environment through high levels of active learning and engagement of learning through play, using a range of skill based activities.

Aims:

This policy aims to ensure:

- All pupils whatever their race, gender, age or ability, feel valued and supported to achieve their best and can access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- We promote positive learning behaviours and attitudes and create a safe and effective learning environment, where all children and staff promote and demonstrate the British Values through characteristics of effective teaching and learning and show a mutual respect for one another.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress from their starting points, no child gets left behind and all children reach high standards of attainment.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers to raise standards of the quality of education and promote a healthy home school partnership.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and supported and guided by the newly revised Development Matters September 2023.

The statutory framework clearly sets out the parameters of expectations and this is used as our long term curriculum planning.

We also work with all new guidance documents that are released by the DfE to support learning and teaching and any toolkits/audits released to provide a holistic approach to the Early Years and identify areas for development.

Introduction to the structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Ellen Wilkinson Primary School, we provide educational provision for 3 year olds in Nursery with children attending part time sessions of 3 hours every day, equating to their universal 15 hour funded hours each week. Our Nursery structure is sessional with a morning or afternoon attendance. Some children have more than a year in the Nursery, depending on the year of birth, and the rest of the children join us at the start of their Reception year at the age of four. The admittance into Reception is decided by the Local Authority through an application process and is independent of the admissions policy of the school Nursery. EWPS Nursery children who are likely to be starting Reception the following September, are given guidance and information on how to apply for a Reception place early in the Autumn term. The Reception year marks the end of the foundation stage and all children are assessed against the EYFS statutory framework and this information is submitted to the Local Authority in the Summer Term.

At Ellen Wilkinson Primary School we have:

- Two Nursery classes per day; one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with one class teacher and two Nursery Nurses.
- Two Reception classes; each with one class teacher and one Support Staff/Nursery Nurse.
- All areas have continual access to the outdoor learning environment.
- The leadership and management duties of the EYFS are carried out by the Senior Leadership Team

The EYFS is based upon four fundamental principles:

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

A Unique Child

“Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;”

At EWPS we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in different 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 celebrations of work and achievements to encourage children to have a positive attitude to learning. We want to develop an ‘I can do it’ attitude in all children.

Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at EWPS are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations matched to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests developing 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 learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect equality and diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other professionals and outside agencies to enhance the lives of children who may require additional support.

Positive Relationships

“Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;”

At EWPS we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in 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 educators in the home and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carers about their child, before their child starts school, through inviting the parents into school prior to their child's start as well as carrying out home visits.
- Providing information about the school and what to expect in the EYFS.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the EYFS staff and school staff generally if there are any concerns. We discuss our open door policy with the parents during home visits and regularly remind parents which adults they can talk to.
- Providing a written report on the children's progress in the Summer Term.
- Inviting Nursery and Reception parents to a 'Stay and Play' session four times a year where the adults working with their child will talk about the progress they have made.
- Inviting Nursery and Reception parents throughout the year to promote communication, vocabulary and language development through storytelling, role play and other activities. This also gives us an opportunity to promote the parent voice in order to demonstrate how they can support their child's learning at home.
- Using 'Star of the Week' in Reception so that good achievement can be celebrated at home as well as at school.
- Communicating with parents to report on reading outcomes, daily comments, and behaviour as well as through parent teacher meetings, three times a year..

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 both the teachers and Support Staff act as a key person to an assigned group of children.

Enabling Environments

“Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;”

At EWPS we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. The environment is planned to ensure all areas are used to enable learning for every child. The children have the choice of where they choose to learn. All activities are based upon current assessment and all have a main learning intention that can be accessed with and without adult support. Our basic provision is linked to the age related expectations of each cohort. We encourage child initiated activities and adapt our continuous provision accordingly. We enhance our provision through objects/resources, prompts, conversation and questioning.

Our Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2025 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected.

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

We offer a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which has four main elements:

Teaching and Learning developed from a BIG QUESTION and follows through on children's interest	Teaching is introduced via a big question. Hook days are used to elicit curiosity and questioning. All aspects of our curriculum require practitioners to be flexible and take account of children's interests and develop them further through a balanced adult-initiated experience (guided learning) and child-initiated experience.
A sequence of learning	This is initiated through core books, rhymes and songs. Books and language development is a running theme through the curriculum. We enhance each area of development within a vocabulary rich environment. For example, our cycle of 'Core Books' begins with very simple, repetitive texts. Over time, children progress onto texts with more complex vocabulary and structures.
Developing and enhancing learning through core experiences	Developing children's interests through real experiences such as visiting the farm and museums. Emulating experiences by providing a well planned environment through a Forest School learning approach. Introducing children to new concepts and ideas that they may not have encountered and adding to their cultural capital.
Deepening and extending learning + Parent Partnership	Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children. Parents have the opportunity to participate in workshops and in class learning, to facilitate learning that imbibes the familiarity of home and bring it to the

classroom. These might be in the form of storytelling in multilingual languages and adults interacting with children in many different languages. This is particularly important for children with English as an additional language.

Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their understanding rather than introducing new skills or concepts.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively making learning memorable. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to initially focus strongly on the 3 prime areas in Nursery.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, 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 and use effective interactive teaching methods on an individual basis.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

The planning within the EYFS includes:

- Long term plans that are guided by the non-statutory document Development Matters. These are also used to ensure progress in attainment is made from starting points.
- Medium term plans and short term continuous provision plans. These plans are evaluated weekly and reviewed annually. They are changed to suit the cohort and meet the needs and interests of the children. Teachers annotate when required to highlight changes or extensions.
- Medium term plans are curated with leaders and teachers and further enhanced by support staff.
- Planning leads on from a Big Question in which to guide the learning through the curriculum. There is also detailed planning for the Continuous Provision areas in the classrooms. (Sand, water, dough, mark making/ writing, mathematics, construction, small world and the workshop area)
- Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.
- Teachers use the model of 'teaching in the moment' as they interact with children, using high quality questioning when playing alongside children. This offers the adults an opportunity to move a child's skill and knowledge on in that moment to expand on their learning and this is recorded as a next step.

We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We endeavour the children to experience concepts and ideas and ensure we make them as real and as memorable as possible. The activities offer opportunities for extended learning and are structured to develop their learning. Planning takes into account children with individual needs in line with the SEND policy.

SEND Provision

At EWPS our SEND Policy outlines how we develop and further opportunities to enhance the skills of our pupils with additional needs. Through high quality resources and practice, children are provided opportunities of exploring and deepening their skills both within the classroom and through the provision of specific projects and activities. We work in partnership with parents to meet the children's needs and support plans are reviewed regularly through the year. See *SEND policy*.

Assessment

On-going formative assessment is at the heart of our effective early years practice. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The capture of evidence through observations and books forms the EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) which summarises pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Our aim is for the system to be proportionate, and to ensure it is not overly burdensome.

Assessment in the EYFS is in the form of:

- Photo/video observations on our digital app Evidence Me. This is also shared with parents and parents also feed into the app with learning that takes place at home.
- Baselines are done as soon as the children begin in our settings. Reception uses the statutory DfE baseline assessment in the first few weeks of the academic year. In Nursery, our assessment starts with home visits/meet and greet meetings and a ten day settling-in and starting points assessment. This allows Key people to spend quality time getting to know their key children and their families.
- We use our own assessment tracker system to capture our summative data and this occurs 4 times a year. Checking that individual children, and groups of children, are making progress and taking prompt action where this is not the case
- Teachers are supported through the year to set end of year targets for their children and thereafter keep track of all children through pupil progress meetings with SLT. Children who may require additional support are recorded on to an action plan and all children with known additional needs are recorded on to a Tracker. It is the responsibility of class teachers to ensure all children's learning is monitored and all gaps are closed through supportive interventions.
- Dialogue with parents: All targets are shared with parents at the first Parent's Evening. Thereafter, 2 more Parents Evening are conducted in the year to support children's attainment and next steps. The teachers will refer to the checkpoints in Development Matters, checking children's development against these.
- Dialogue with children, focused on how they learn, to promote metacognitive thinking
- Early identification of children who need extra help, and children who may have special educational needs.
- More informally, we meet with parents throughout the school year as and when necessary to discuss their child's particular needs.

Transition at EWPS

We recognise that transition can be a stressful time for young children and as a result of this; we have a staggered approach to starting school in both Nursery and Reception. This ensures that children have time to settle into their new surroundings and practitioners get to know the children well.

At EWPS we have created good links with our main feeder nurseries and pre-school establishments in our local area.

To ensure the best possible transition we:

- Value the parent as the first educator of their child

- Make contact via phone and email with every feeder pre-school within our new intake to discuss essential information on every child
- Visit as many pre-schools and homes as possible to meet children in a familiar setting prior to starting school
- Share important information about our school during new-parents meeting (July)
- Use written information sent by pre-schools/nurseries to inform early planning
- Hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children in September the week before they begin formal transition in school.
- Share information in a transition meeting with key adults for children with additional needs
- Stagger entry of the whole cohort in September; over 2 weeks for Reception children and over 2 weeks for nursery children, to enable calm, focused and more individualised start to school. Nursery can at times have points of entry in January and April where class sizes are not yet full and children's date of birth does not allow them to start until later in the year.

Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person in Nursery, who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. Teachers are usually responsible for the developmental progress in Reception with the support of support staff. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

This is done by:

- Parent meetings with the teachers and staff three times a year
- Parent invitations to support communication and language sessions in multilingual ways in class
- Stay and Play sessions four times a year to promote quality first teaching tools and ideas so parents can support their child at home
- Key workshops throughout the year to help parents support their child at home
- Event days such as World Books day and other celebratory festivals encourage children to learn about other stories, cultures and traditions from their parents.
- Home school learning projects used to support development and learning taught in class, by creating an original masterpiece with parents at home.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

Oral Health

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by invoking learning around healthy eating practices. We also look at the importance of sugar levels in food and drinks and the do this by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- How much sugar content there is in drinks
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We give guidance to children and parents around good practices to do with oral health and the importance of visiting the dentist every six months. We follow statutory guidance for safety around supervised tooth brushing.

Toileting and intimate care

We believe that children with toileting needs should be admitted into the nursery with their cohort. These children have an educational entitlement irrespective of their difficulties with toileting. No child is excluded from participating in our nursery who may, for any reason, not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing nappies or equivalent. We work with parents towards toilet training, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time.

We see toilet training as a self-care skill that children have the opportunity to learn with the full support and non-judgemental concern of adults. All children are treated with dignity, care and compassion during nappy changing/toileting. Staff will ensure this time is relaxed; they do not make negative comments about nappy/toilet contents.

Within our nursery we aim to provide the opportunity for all children to use the toilet independently and to provide assistance for children who require it. Where children are in pull-ups, we will remind them at frequent intervals to use the toilet. If a child is in nappies, these will be changed as necessary and their changes documented accordingly. Our stance in Early Years remains one, that is supportive of toilet training and we aim to work in partnership with parents and Newham Family Hub to help children achieve independence over their self care and personal hygiene. Parents will be encouraged to toilet train children during the meet and greet/home visits before a child begins the EYFS setting.

If a child wets themselves and isn't able to get to the toilet in time, we will support this by having a member of staff change the child into dry clean clothing.

Should a child soil themselves, and there are no washing facilities to wash down the child in the setting, we may ask the parents to come in and help support their child, otherwise if suitable washing facilities are available (eg. a working shower room), staff will fulfill this. Alternatively, should a parent wish to take their child home to change and bring them back before the end of session this will also be accommodated.

If over time, there seems to be a regular occurrence of a child wetting and soiling themselves, parents will be asked to come in and meet initially with the class teacher. This may require a further meeting with the Inclusion Lead to better support the family and the child's needs.

In the case that a child has a known medical or SEND need, we will work collaboratively with the parents to ensure the child's needs are met and will support to change the child. (See nappy changing policy and intimate care policy)

In all circumstances, a member of staff will be supervising this process to ensure the safeguarding of all children. No staff member will change a child without another staff member present.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy and meet the needs of the EYFS.