



Early Years Policy

January 2019

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Equal Opportunities

At Elstow School we are committed to positive action against discrimination with respect to all pupils regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, social class, age, religion or religious belief.

We provide all children with the opportunity for suitably differentiated, hands on, practical experiences in all aspects of teaching and learning. 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 (see *our policy on school inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policy*).

Philosophy

At Elstow we believe that all our children are entitled to the very best teaching. We develop a love of learning through a knowledge-based curriculum and inspire children to be curious, resilient and to persevere to succeed. We are very proud of our pupils and create a warm and inclusive atmosphere where children are encouraged to learn how to make mistakes and try their best. We work hard on a culture in which the highest expectations and aspirations surround our pupils.

We believe that young children learn when they feel secure and are well motivated. We balance child-initiated activities with a core curriculum to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn the basics of mathematics, reading, phonics, handwriting skills and social skills.

We believe that the home/school link should be well cultivated to allow for the child's existing knowledge, experience and interests to influence the planning of the curriculum. This is aided by the Interactive Learning Diary which all parents access to see their child's activity and progress in school.

Aims

- To establish an environment that is nurturing, bright and exciting and one that is full of interesting and challenging potential for learning to take place.
- To deliver a curriculum based on entitlement for all, that considers each child's existing knowledge and experiences, and where the child can engage in first hand experiences.
- To give child opportunities to practise, revise and extend knowledge and skills in a consistent and stable environment with 'low stakes assessment', minimizing fear of failure, based on careful observation.
- To resource the outdoor play area to provide scope for imaginative play and scientific discovery.

Safeguarding

Advantage Schools and Elstow School fully recognize the responsibility we have under section 175 (*Section 157 for Independent Schools, Academies and City Technology Colleges*) of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, staff at the school have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to Social Care via the schools designated Child Protection Officer. We follow the procedures set out in the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board "Safeguarding Inter - Agency Procedures". Our DSL is our Principal Sam Baxter and the DDSL is Liz Polson. All staff in the setting have annual in house training led by Mrs Polson. In addition to this, staff also undertake online training annually updating their understanding of KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education). All adults working with pupils in EYFS have a current Paediatric First Aid certificate.

Introduction and Subject Definition

At Advantage Schools we provide a rich and stimulating knowledge-rich environment to facilitate learning. The children are entitled to core content, and are also given opportunities to learn through self-initiated play throughout the Foundation Stage. A significant part of the week is devoted to teaching phonics, mathematics and writing and is

taught along with adult-lead activities. Structured learning activities encourage children to develop further understanding through directed play.

Aims of the Foundation Stage

The aim of the Reception Year is to establish an ambitious baseline of knowledge and development, while ensure that children develop an interest in learning. We aim for children to become inquisitive and explore through their own initiative, including indoor and outdoor experiences and through guided activities with an adult. Children learn to explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world.

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing pupils' knowledge and skills.

We include the following aspects in our Early Years Curriculum.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (P.S.E.D)
- Communication and Language (C & L)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- The World (W)
- Expressive Arts and Design (E.A.D)

Teaching and learning

The features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the carefully planned knowledge rich curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
- the range of approaches used that provide the core curriculum, allow access to first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the partnership between teachers and parents, 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 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 regularly shared with parents
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop their knowledge and skills, which helps them make sense of the world. They practise 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.

The role of play

Play is an important part of the EYFS curriculum. Children have the opportunity to play both indoors and outdoors where the children have access to The Outdoor Classroom. Through play, the children learn to explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. Play helps them to practise and build up

ideas, concepts and skills. Play enables them to see a need for rules and enables them to take risks and make mistakes. It allows them to think creatively and imaginatively and it also helps them to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Curriculum Organisation

Throughout the year, the curriculum is broken down into content, often structured around topics. There is a long term plan, a medium term plan and weekly plans to ensure complete coverage of the content to which we believe pupils are entitled. There are structured activities out in the classroom to cover all learning areas, which are changed or adapted often.

Continuity and Progression

Children's progression is tracked through *The Interactive Learning Diary* by the two Class Teachers and the EYFS Lead has overall responsibility for this. Children's age and stage of development is recorded every half term across all of the areas of learning. The information from this tracking also filters into future planning. Every half term the class teachers review the progress of the pupils in their class.

Differentiation

The data gathered from day to day observations recorded on *The Interactive Learning Diary* and the formal observations, and feedback on children's work (see marking and feedback policy) supports the class teacher with identifying groupings, planning lessons and setting the children individual next steps/targets.

Realistic and challenging expectations are set that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve 'A good Level of Development' GLD by the end of Foundation Stage, some children will progress beyond this point. These children may exceed the Early Learning Goals within an area and will begin to work on the Year 1 objectives.

Also see *SEND and Inclusion Policies*.

Special Needs

In Foundation Stage children who need additional intervention are identified following the baseline assessment period. This period includes consultation with the SEND Coordinator. Provision is made so that all pupils have access to resources to support the level appropriate to their age, stage and needs so that they can make progress. (see our policy on school inclusion).

Induction for new Foundation Stage children.

In April, once parents have been notified of a place for their child at Elstow School, a new starter pack is sent, which contains:

- An invite to an information evening (held in June)
- health forms
- admission forms
- local visits form
- image consent
- food technology form
- dates for home visits from the teaching team
- Pupil Premium funding forms for school lunches
- Information about Innovate catering

During July, pupils joining in September are invited for stay and play sessions with the EY team. These are designed to give our youngest children a good idea about the school setting, the adults in the class and set expectations for them from the start. We make sure our children are settled in school and in September the focus is on learning routines and becoming more independent. The children gain confidence in being away from home and learning to play confidently and share with others.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- ❖ the teacher visits children in their home setting prior to their starting school

- ❖ the children spend time with their teacher before starting school in Stay and Play sessions
- ❖ inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- ❖ offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class
- ❖ Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a 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 including open afternoons to look at work in class.
- ❖ Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's contact book.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage

- We have a baseline assessment period and the observations/judgements are recorded using The Interactive Learning Diary (ILD) at the start of the year. Nursery and Pre-School observations are also used to support their baseline judgements.
- On a daily basis teachers and teaching assistants record observations on the ILD app. The observations on the ILD are linked to outcomes as detailed in The Development Matters document.
- Formal observations are timetabled throughout each half term and cover all of the areas of learning. The children are observed for a period of 5 to 15 minutes and everything the child says and does is recorded. This information is then used to update the ILD in line with the whole school monitoring and evaluation timeline (half termly)
- Each half term pupils complete one piece of unaided writing for their progress book.
- Half termly Pupil Progress Reviews are used to identify and analyse progress and set targets, in the areas of learning.

Moderation

Staff will regularly attend the Foundation Stage Network meetings and moderation courses. Meeting with local foundation stage practitioners will happen annually and external moderators will visit the school every 3 years as part of the local authority moderation.

Policy Update:

A regular policy review will be undertaken by the EYFS Lead, Principal and Governors. This policy is reviewed annually.

The Curriculum

Our Early Years curriculum provides a broad and balanced range of knowledge and experiences to ensure pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills to move to the next stage in their development. We ensure that we address emotional, social, intellectual and physical and creative development at the foundation stage.

- The curriculum is based on a stimulating and knowledge-rich environment to facilitate learning
- It provides for learning experiences that underpin and dovetail into the National Curriculum where appropriate.
- It recognises that play is an important aspect of EYFS.
- It encourages independence and nurtures respect for others.
- It extends each pupil's learning through the sensitive interaction of teachers and helpers.
- It ensures that all children have the same opportunities whatever their gender and that support will be given to those who need it to access all that is on offer.
- It promotes a love of books and develops language and vocabulary.
- It encourages children to ask questions.
- It recognises that children start school with a variety of experiences and that their starting point should be from what they can do.
- It recognises that there is a time to intervene, support and extend and a time to observe in order to understand a child's learning.

- The social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of the children is of significant importance and regular PSHE sessions are planned to focus on particular issues.

Intended Outcomes

Our policy enables pupils to:

Gain the knowledge and skills necessary to move to the next stage

Feel motivated and enjoy learning

Feel secure and confident

Feel valued as individuals

Ensure that home and school are in harmony

Work and share with each other

Our policy enables staff to:

Have a clear understanding of their role and the ethos of the school

Work on an ambitious curriculum that enable pupils to make progress throughout compulsory schooling

Access professional learning that enables the effective delivery of the EYFS curriculum

Have clear aims and purposes when planning

Observe children closely and prepare learning experiences to meet individual needs

Work closely with all those involved in the child's education, especially the parents

Feel part of a team and supported in their work

Our policy enables parents to:

Feel involved and valued in their child's education

Understand the aims of our Early Years curriculum

Be fully informed of school procedures and the progress of their child

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Good assessment practice is based on day to day observations carried out to assess the progress or problems of an individual or group. These observations:

1. Identify the learning needs of individuals and groups of children
2. Inform the planning of the curriculum
3. Give an early indication of those children with special educational needs

Formal assessment takes place as follows:

1. Maths assessments every half term. Puma assessment in the summer term in readiness for Baseline for Year 1.
2. Writing samples monitored every half term.
3. Letter sound and sight vocabulary checklists will be kept for each child. Pira assessment carried out during Spring term 2 and summer term 2 to support Baseline Assessment for Year 1.

Parents will be invited to consultations and encouraged to consult on an informal basis at any time.

A written report will be given to parents at the end of the summer term.

Detailed records will be passed on to the child's next teacher.

The electronic version of the Foundation stage Profiles will be completed by the end of the year and data sent to the Trust and LEA. Information from the EYFS Profile will be used to monitor the achievement of all children.

January 2019

Review Date: March 2020