

Elm Tree Primary Academy



EYFS Policy

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Intent

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, DfE, 2021)

Aims of the EYFS at Elm Tree Academy

- To provide a relevant curriculum that is broad and balanced as well as being enjoyable and exciting
- For pupils to be the best they can be
- To prepare pupils for lifelong learning and nurture an enjoyment for learning, building the foundations for learning
- To develop partnerships with people that are important for the child
- To support and promote all the EYFS areas of development
- To support and promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning
- To ensure that all children are safeguarded
- To provide equal opportunities for the pupils.

Over Arching Principles of the EYFS are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. We intend to develop all areas of development from the EYFS with all children with a focus on the Prime areas of development: Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development.

Thinking and Literacy (including phonics) are also given high priority especially in Reception. We offer plenty of creative opportunities as well.

Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage is for children from birth to the end of Reception (the academic year in which they turn five). Within Elm Tree Academy, the majority of the children in Key Stage One will not have achieved many of the early learning goals so some children in Year 1 will continue to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage practice guidance and its principles as they are more appropriate to their needs and learning.

Characteristics of Effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning help us to focus on and understand how children learn. Following characteristics of young children's learning enables them to become effective lifelong learners. We look for and think about how the children learn when accessing all areas of development. The characteristics of effective learning are split into three different areas:

Playing and exploring

Our classroom environments are set up to actively encourage and offer pupils the opportunity to play, explore and investigate using open ended activities. Play is essential for children's development. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

Active Learning

We provide opportunities for pupils to follow their interests for extended periods of time, fully engaged in what they are doing and concentrating deeply. In their activities, pupils will be encouraged to persist in the face of challenge or difficulty, thereby developing a resilient disposition.

Creative and critical Thinking

Pupils will have many different opportunities to be creative - generating new ideas, being inventive, finding problems and challenges and figuring out their own ways to solve them. Adults will be attentive to individual children's interests and will provide new materials and experiences to extend and enhance these processes. We try wherever possible to give children more autonomy in how they approach tasks and focusing on the process of problem solving, not just on the final outcome.

Areas of Development

In the EYFS framework there are 7 areas of development 3 prime and 4 specific areas. The prime areas begin to develop in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The prime areas are the main focus alongside the characteristic of effective learning.

Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED)- This is taught throughout the day every day and in every activity. It will be a priority in child-initiated learning

both inside and outside. We will work at building relationships, with peers and staff, sharing and turn taking as well as make a choice. Managing behaviours and emotions throughout the day is also a high priority.

Communication and Language (CAL)- This is also taught throughout the day every day and built in to every situation. We provide adult led communication activities each day working towards personal targets in conjunction with the Speech and Language therapist. In reception and Year 1 the children have adult led communication groups working towards personal targets.

Physical Development (PD)- We try to develop personal care and independence skills during snack, lunch and toileting routines every day. We also provide activities to develop gross and fine motor skills in child-initiated play. We also have adult led activities with physical skills as the main focus four times a week. For many of our children their gross motor skills are a strength. For these children a big part of their physical development will be around the sensory processing and this will be supported by a range of sensory diet opportunities. Children with more significant issues around movement, physical development and mobility may follow a specific programme and assessment alongside physio plans.

Specific Areas

At Elm Tree Academy **Thinking Skills** incorporates Mathematics and Understanding the world

Thinking skills incorporates early maths skills as well as developing skills around object permanence, anticipation, cause and effect and problem solving. There are adult led sessions with a thinking focus as well as developing thinking skills in child initiated play. Mathematics is mainly taught in thinking skills but our most able Reception and Year 1 pupils will have more of a Mathematical focus during the adult led activities as well as opportunities to develop any interests around mathematics during child-initiated play.

Understanding the World - Pupils will have opportunities to learn more in this area through project-based approach. This is how children will be supported to learn about their community and the world around them. Children will be supported to appreciate the diverse nature of the world through books, stories and role models.

Literacy - Every reception class has a book area with a selection of suitable books for all the pupils in the group. We also have an adult led story time each day. Mark making opportunities are available in child-initiated play and may include activities to develop fine motor skills. We also have adult led mark making activities. In adult led sessions we also develop understanding of letters and sounds. In Reception we work on Phase 1. In Reception we will work on phonological awareness, early reading skills including Phase 1 and 2 phonics, symbolic development and book knowledge.

Expressive Art and Design- Pupils will have opportunities to explore and experiment with a range of materials, tools and props with a focus on stories and characters. They will be provided with a range of sensory experiences to promote

sensory regulation and development, imagination and expression. An important part of this area is around developing characteristics of effective learning and Personal Social and Emotional Development.

Reading in EYFS

Adults support pupils to develop a love of books and stories. The pupils have a story time each day when they explore a story in a multisensory way as part of a group. Development of reading in its widest sense (understanding of objects, miniatures, pictures and symbols) and development of early narrative understanding is often the focus of learning at group time through small world and role play. In reception pupils have reading time each day. They take part in small group activities to develop communication skills and early decoding skills using a range of approaches including 'reading' pictures and symbols, whole word recognition and phonics.

The cycle of plan do review, is used and observations of the pupils and assessment will inform all levels of planning.

Long term planning This is completed on a yearly cycle and makes sure that there is an appropriate balance of all the areas of development and a range of themes ensuring continuity and progression as they move up the school.

Medium term planning This is completed for each learning challenge by the class teacher each half term. The planning covers both adult lead learning opportunities and continuous provision enhancements to support child-initiated learning. This will be a mixture of indoor and outdoor provision and enrichment experiences.

In Reception there will be detailed planning for adult led Literacy and thinking sessions., separate to the other areas of development. Planning is differentiated to meet the individual needs of the pupils.

Short Term Planning

This is completed weekly and outlines what learning opportunities will be available that week and the desired outcomes. This will include adult led learning times and child led provision. Planning will be influenced by feedback from the previous weeks plans and learning that has taken place. All planning should be kept on the server within Curriculum Planning – Early Years. Short Term Planning should be available in class for all the class team.

Next Steps and Targets

Each pupil will have next steps which show a target for each of the Prime Areas of Development, Thinking skills and maths and literacy. Each target will also have suggested activities and strategies to support the pupil in achieving that target. Next Steps are shared with parents and other settings where the child is on a split placement.

Reception pupils will have termly next step targets that link in with their yearly annual review targets and EHCP targets.

Observations

Observations of the pupils will be made and recorded using Tapestry. All staff working with the pupils will take part in observations and recording. Tapestry will incorporate branch maps to ensure all children make progress from starting points.

Child Initiated learning Play is vital to the Early Years Foundation Stage as it underpins all development and learning for young children. Some of the pupils at our school will need adult support to play or learn to play. Adults teach the children during play by modelling communication and language, demonstrating, supporting, encouraging, facilitating challenge, commentating play and having fun. The learning environments are thought out to meet the learning needs of all the children in the class. We provide opportunities both inside and outside.

Intensive Interaction

This is an approach used with many of our children devised by Dr Dave Hewitt. This approach is a way of implementing our aims to develop Communication and Language and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Intensive Interaction is also a fundamental part of communication and play.

Adult Led learning There are a range of adult led activities throughout the day. Some may be 1:1, or small group and some may be with the whole class they will also vary in length of time depending on the pupil. Adult led activities will have a focus of an area of development but may have opportunities to develop other areas too. We use aspects of the TEACCH approach where pupils will access their adult led learning using workboxes. There is a balance between pupil led activities and adult led activities when the younger children will access more pupil led activities and the older children will access more adult led structured activities, preparing for more structured and adult led lessons as they move up the school. In reception there will be adult led sessions for literacy and thinking skills each day, these will be taught in small groups or 1:1. There will also be a circle time and a story each day. Alongside this there will be a different curriculum area in an adult led activity. The school day will be structured and follow routines to support the children's learning and understanding. We use many of the TEACCH principles within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Some of our pupils may have health needs and we work closely with health professionals that support our children, especially with Speech and Language Therapists. We work with other professionals – Physiotherapist, Speech and Language Therapist and other therapists which link to the school. We carry out programmes set by them to achieve specific targets for the individuals.

Working with parents

We work very closely with parents and carers sharing information and learning with them. We use Tapestry online learning journey so parents can see observations and learning that has happened during the school day. Parents are also able to share observations from home. We also share information with parents at meetings (each term), regular contact by phone to promote partnership working with parent alongside chats at pick up and drop off times. We work with the parents to support transition through home visits, visits into School, Stay and Play sessions and meetings when they are starting school to aid a smooth transition.

Environment

Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage will access learning both inside and outside and both areas are of equal importance. We will have times throughout the day when both inside and outside areas are available. The environment is carefully set up each day for learning play opportunities and the safety of the environment and the equipment is also considered. Risks in the environment are assessed, these risk assessments are shared with all staff, they are available in the classroom and on the server. They will be updated when the situation changes, adapted for weather issues and reviewed regularly. Part of learning is to allow the children to learn to assess risks themselves.

Communication

We use total communication in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes, Makaton, photographs, objects of reference, situational cues, symbols as well as key word language and body language. All staff will carry photo / symbol visuals on them when with the pupils.

Multi Sensory Learning

For pupils with sensory processing needs, we will work to reduce the barriers and make all activities accessible. All children use their senses to learn. Activities are made as sensory as possible and the pupils access sessions in the specialist areas. Individuals will have sensory diets to support their sensory integration needs.

English as an Additional Language

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are provided opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. We also ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn English. Considering diversity plays a prominent part in the planning process.

First Aid and Medicines Management

There will be support from paediatric first aiders in school. There must be a qualified Paediatric first aider with the group when they go off the school site. Pupils with medical issues and medication will have a folder with care plans and record of medication given. These will be kept in class and medication is locked away. Classes will follow the school's managing medical needs in school policies.

Mental Health

Mental health and wellbeing issues for pupils are raised and discussed. Elm Tree Academy is a trauma informed school and ongoing CPD will reflect this.

Emotional Regulation

We follow the school's Relationship and Regulation Policy. Incidents of risk behaviour are recorded electronically this is monitored by SLT. Pupils may have safety support plans that record their individual needs and effective strategies for supporting them. This is shared with parents, the class team and others that work with the pupil. It is reviewed as needed.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is given a high priority and we follow the schools safeguarding policy.

Transition

We work with families, other settings and professionals to plan transitions for children coming into school. This will include visits to settings, home visits and meetings and phased transition where appropriate. Stay and Play sessions also support children starting school.

Educational visits

Educational visits and learning outside the classroom are encouraged where appropriate. Experiences are linked to our curriculum. We follow the school's policies on educational visits and learning outside the classroom.

Impact

Elm Tree Academy will assess progress through the use of engagement model, Towards Independence Hierarchy, Tapestry branch Maps or Sandwell skills Ladders depending on the progression pathway of the child.

Formative Assessment

All staff in EYFS will observe learning during both child initiated and adult led times. Observations are recorded in observation proformas and also with photos and videos. These are recorded on the Tapestry app and help to share the learning with parents and carers. Observations are also made on their response to the learning environment and provision these are recorded on the planning and informs the following weeks planning.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is completed each term. For new pupils a baseline summative assessment is also completed during the first half term that they attend.

Reporting

Each year class teachers will complete a short report to go to parents and carers. This will describe progress the pupil has made within the areas of development and characteristics of learning.