



Eastfield Infant and Nursery School

Early Years Policy

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

“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.” (DfE, 2021, P 5)

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. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults. In the policy the term ‘setting’ refers to the Early Years educational provision at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School.

In the EYFS setting at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

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 welcoming environment where children feel happy and families know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after their children.
- Providing a sensitive and effective transition from home/nursery to school.
- Ensuring that all children are and feel included, secure and valued.
- 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 different to 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 based on observations 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.
- Establishing positive relationships with parents and keeping parents well informed about the curriculum and their child’s progress.
- Building positive relationships with and work closely with other professionals involved with a child.

- Ensuring that children with special educational needs are identified and receive early intervention and appropriate support (see SEND policy)

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE FRAMEWORK

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (September 2021). 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 with teaching and support from adults',
'Learning and Development.'

The curriculum is centred on 3 **prime areas** of learning:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Physical Development
3. Communication and Language

Providers must also support activities through four **specific areas** which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

OUR CURRICULUM

Our Early Years Curriculum at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School has been carefully designed to allow all children to be able to be successful and achieve the best they possibly can. We use the Educational Programmes set out in the Early Years Framework to provide the basis for our curriculum and then use professional documents including Development Matters and Birth to 5 to help ensure that our curriculum is progressive, in-depth and inclusive for all.

Along with the use of high quality key texts, we provide the children with learning experiences and topics that not only build on their interests but more importantly, develop their skills and understanding across all 17 areas of learning, in a way that is engaging, broad and promotes a love of learning.

Communication, language and vocabulary development plays a vital role within our curriculum. Having been awarded the Communication Friendly Setting Status, the Early Years team apply their comprehensive training to build and extend language and vocabulary for all children but can also help to close disadvantage gaps.

Our curriculum provides the children with experiences that promote cultural capital and strengthens links with our school and local community. We use our local area to deliver hands-on experiences that engrain and embed learning and skills.

By providing our children with the best possible start to their education, we are able to create strong foundations where our children are able to become confident and independent learners, who want to learn and feel safe enough to challenge themselves within their learning. All of which ensures that the children are then ready for Year 1 and all their future education.

OUTDOORS

As a school, outdoor learning is highly valued and promoted wherever possible. Both our Reception and Nursery classes have an outside learning space which children have access to each day. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In these areas, EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices. Children are encouraged to become independent in deciding what clothing and footwear they need to wear in the outdoor area, depending on the weather each day. Coats, wellies and aprons are all easily accessible for the children. Children in Reception have the opportunity to free flow between their classroom and the outdoor learning space during specific sessions of the day and Nursery children have daily opportunities to use their outdoor learning space. Both Reception and Nursery staff will complete a daily outdoor risk assessment to ensure the area is safe.

STRUCTURE

The Foundation Stage staff work as part of a team and we work as a unit, children from the classes have opportunities to work together during free flow times, accessing shared continuous provision outside. Children are taught within their own class groups, they are taught in a variety of ways; in whole class groups, small group work, colour group work, pairs and individually. We are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and education to those children in our care. Staff are fully qualified, have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating children. The staff are committed to professional development and attend up to date training courses and have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Practitioners in the early years use their professional judgements to assess where children are working across the EYFS 17 areas of learning. Within 6 weeks of the child starting, staff will carry out initial assessments to build an in-depth picture of each child's starting points. Our Reception children will also take part in the Reception Baseline Assessments (RBA) set out by the government. Information from the initial assessments will then support the staff in their future planning.

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School. 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 kept using Target Tracker and this is updated 4 times a year. Our EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. 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, schemas 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.

To ensure that our judgements are accurate, all Early Years staff take part in ongoing moderation throughout the year. Moderation is carried out within year groups, between year groups and between cluster schools.

Observations take place on a daily basis. Practitioners make time to carry out observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. These observations are a combination of planned against a learning objective, and spontaneous, in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats:

- Observation stickers narrating the children’s learning,
- Speech bubbles
- Photographs
- Annotation of children’s work
- Narrative observations noting children’s well-being and involvement using Leuven scales
- Learning journeys record children’s progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning

Within these observations, staff will work alongside the children to support them in moving the children’s learning on. This will often happen through in-depth discussions between the staff and children, with staff quickly identifying an aspect where a child needs further support or an opportunity to extend the child’s current knowledge.

At the end of the year we assess the children against the Early Years Profile which provides a summary of every child’s development and learning achievements. This is then reported to the senior leadership team, parents and Year One staff.

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children’s learning journeys and on the school website. All photos are to be taken on school cameras or iPads, mobile phones are not permitted in the environment.

PLANNING

The planning within the EYFS is based on our progressive curriculum document, which combines statements from Development Matters and Birth to 5 Years. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning, which is structured using medium term plans based around topics. This fostering of the children’s interests develops a high level of motivation for the children’s learning. We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Teachers ensure there is continuous provision of resources for all areas of the curriculum, at all times. In addition to this, enhancements are put in place, which are linked to targets, topic input and children’s interests to engage children and encourage them in their learning.

Large floor books are used as planning tools with the children. Using the children’s interests as a starting point, children then spend time on a ‘Learning Walk’ with a member of staff to develop their ideas and plans for that day. ‘Planning Time’ then takes place to help children to build upon their ideas and to set challenges to help extend their self-initiated learning.

PARENTS/CARERS AS PARTNERS

We recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators 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 about their child before their child starts in our school
- Home visits before the child starts at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school, in order to detail how we aim to work with their child;
- Providing Parent/Carer information sessions on different areas of the curriculum. These are held throughout the year.

- Parents and Carers are then invited into the classrooms to join their child in a Stay and Learn session. Staff set up high quality activities based around the previous information session. Parents and Carers can then join in with these activities to help develop their understanding of the Early Years Curriculum and how they can support their child's learning at home.
- Use of the class email address so parents/carers can send in learning opportunities from home
- Half termly parent/carer briefings
- Weekly learning overview emails are sent out at the end of each week. These highlight the key vocabulary their child has been learning that week and the sounds covered in our phonics lessons.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year 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;
- Asking parents to contribute to their child's learning journals
- Asking parents to bring in family photographs, in Nursery, which are made into a celebrating difference book
- Completing shared interests letters
- Class assemblies of their learning, school plays and sports days which parents and carers are encouraged to attend
- Open evenings
- Parent helpers

ADMISSIONS, INDUCTIONS AND TRANSITION

Transition is hugely important to us at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School and we understand that a smooth and successful transition into a new learning environment, can mean that children feel safe, comfortable and therefore ready to learn.

Transition opportunities are carefully planned to ensure that all children moving to a new environment are ready and well prepared. Separate transition events happen for children joining our Nursery, starting Reception or moving into Year 1.

Both our new Nursery and Reception starters, receive a welcome pack as part of our admissions and transition. This pack contains a welcome letter, a social story about starting our settings in particular, an 'All About Me' form where parents/carers can scribe some of the children's strengths, interests and worries they might have and a class animal page where their work can then be displayed in their new classroom.

Nursery

Eastfield Infant and Nursery School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception year and 15 or 30 hours for children in Nursery. Additional hours are available at a cost and subject to availability.

Before children start at the setting, practitioners go to visit the children in their home. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Eastfield Infant and Nursery School as smooth as possible. Practitioners are able to spend time discussing children and their needs and observe the children in their home setting.

Before their child starts in the Nursery setting, parents are invited to an information evening where they are able to meet the setting practitioners and have a tour of the setting itself. At this meeting, information regarding the induction process and what can be expected during the children's time here, is shared. There is also time for parents and carers to be able to ask questions.

We host a Stay and Play session, where children and their parents/carers are invited to come into the Nursery environment and join in with some of the activities. This allows the children to begin to get to know the new environment but with the safety of still having their main carer with them.

Home visits are carried out prior to children starting our Nursery and provides parents/carers and children an opportunity to get to know staff, go through arrangements and have time to pass over any important information such as medical or dietary requirements.

The children are then invited to join us for a 1 hour settling in session. This allows the children to be in the Nursery without the support of their parents/carers, but for a short amount of time. This encourages a very positive start to being separated from their parents/carers, often for the first time.

There are 3 intakes into Nursery one in Autumn Term, one in Spring Term and after Easter (spaces allowing).

Reception

In the summer term parents/carers are also invited into school for an evening meeting where they are able to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting, we share information regarding the induction process and what to expect during the children's first few weeks at school. Parents/carers are also given the opportunity to meet some of our school governing body and members of the school PTA (Eastfield School Association, ESA). We also offer parents/carers a taster menu from the school lunches.

This meeting is followed up with Stay and Play sessions. The new Reception cohort are invited to visit the Reception environments with the support of their parents/carers and are given the opportunity to meet the staff.

Practitioners visit those children who did not attend our Nursery in the home environment in September to build relationships with the parent/carers and the child. During the home visit, key information such as start dates will be checked, and another opportunity for parents and carers to ask questions is given. Time is spent observing and interacting with the child in their familiar home environment.

From September we have a short staggered intake to ensure a successful transition. Children will build up their time in school over the first full week, starting with either a morning or an afternoon session building up into full time by the end of the first full week. Every effort is made to ensure children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

Year 1

Moving from Reception to Year 1 also needs careful consideration to ensure that the transition is a very positive experience.

Transition is our final topic when in Reception. The children spend time visiting their new year 1 classroom, getting to know the staff they will be with, writing and receiving letters to and from both the staff and current children. They also have pictures of the staff and new environments within the small world and role play areas of their current classrooms.

Parents and carers are invited into school for a 'Welcome to Year 1' meeting, where they can find out what to expect when their child moves into the new year group, they can meet the staff and have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Children also receive a pack with Summer Learning Challenges and a social story about starting Year 1.

Due to the progressive nature of our Early Years curriculum, every effort is put in to help ensure that our Reception children are ready and eager for their next year of learning in Year 1.

SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

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 and Child Protection Policy is available on the school website for parents to read if they wish <https://www.eastfieldinfants.org/>

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff are familiar with. Staff in school are first aid trained, and training is renewed when needed. 5 members of the EYFS team are also trained in paediatric first aid training, across Nursery, Reception and lunchtime staff. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. A full Health and Safety Policy is available on the school website <https://www.eastfieldinfants.org/>

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All practitioners at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion and social circumstances have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School. The Single Equality Policy is available on the school website <https://www.eastfieldinfants.org/>

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

We support children with special educational needs as appropriate. This includes:

- providing additional support from adults
- adapting activities or environments
- using specialist aids and equipment
- using multi-sensory materials and experiences
- providing all children with quality first teaching
- Home school communication books

The SEND Policy is available on the school website <https://www.eastfieldinfants.org/>