



Eastfield Infant and Nursery School

Early Years Policy

“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.” (Department for Education, 2021, p. 5)

Early Years education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their educational journey. It is a holistic approach that supports all aspects of learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, principles and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all practitioners working within the EYFS, including teaching and support staff. Throughout this policy, the term '*setting*' refers to the Early Years provision at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School.

At Eastfield Infant and Nursery School, we believe that every child is entitled to the best possible start in their education, both intellectually and emotionally, enabling them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's wellbeing, learning and development by:

- Recognising that every child is unique and valued.
- Understanding that children develop at different rates and in different ways physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure, caring and welcoming environment where children feel happy, supported and respected, and where families know they are valued.
- Ensuring a sensitive and effective transition from home or nursery into school.
- Ensuring that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- Fostering children's self-confidence and self-esteem through the development of their identity and role within the community.
- Supporting children to express and communicate their needs, thoughts and feelings appropriately.
- Encouraging independence and decision-making, and helping children to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills, positive relationships and the values needed to live and work cooperatively with others.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those whose beliefs, cultures and opinions differ from their own.
- Recognising the importance of play as a key part for learning and development.

- Providing engaging play-based learning experiences that reflect children's interests and curiosities, fostering motivation, enthusiasm and a lifelong love of learning.
- Planning learning experiences based on observations of children's interests, needs and stages of development to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning.
- Providing effective learning opportunities across a range of indoor and outdoor environments.
- Establishing positive partnerships with parents and carers and keeping them well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress.
- Building positive relationships and working closely with other professionals involved in supporting individual children.
- Ensuring that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are identified early and receive appropriate intervention and 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 enable all children to succeed and achieve their full potential. We use the Educational Programmes set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework as the foundation of our curriculum and draw upon professional guidance, including *Development Matters* and *Birth to 5 Matters*, to ensure that our curriculum is progressive, ambitious and inclusive for all children.

Alongside the use of high-quality texts, we provide children with meaningful learning experiences and engaging topics that build upon their interests while systematically developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across all seventeen areas of learning. Our curriculum is broad, balanced and carefully sequenced to foster curiosity, creativity and a lifelong love of learning.

Communication and language development are at the heart of our curriculum. As a recognised Communication Friendly Setting, the Early Years team uses their specialist training to create language-rich learning environments where children are encouraged to listen, understand, speak and communicate with confidence. Through high-quality interactions, purposeful conversations, storytelling, songs, rhymes and explicit vocabulary teaching, we support all children to develop their language skills and widen their vocabulary. This strong focus on communication and language helps to reduce barriers to learning and close gaps in attainment.

We recognise that strong communication and language skills provide the foundations for success in reading and writing. Therefore, early literacy development is woven throughout our curriculum. Children are immersed in high-quality texts and are given daily opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for writing. Through storytelling, mark-making, drawing, oral rehearsal, phonics and purposeful writing opportunities, children are encouraged to see themselves as writers and to communicate their ideas, thoughts and experiences in meaningful ways.

Our curriculum provides children with rich experiences that enhance their cultural capital and strengthen links with our school and local community. We make full use of our local area to provide meaningful, hands-on experiences that deepen understanding and help children to embed their learning and skills.

By providing children with the best possible start to their education, we create strong foundations that enable them to become confident, resilient and independent learners. We encourage children to take risks, challenge themselves and develop a positive attitude towards learning, ensuring they are well prepared for the transition to Year 1 and their future educational journey.

OUTDOORS

Outdoor learning is highly valued at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School and is an integral part of our Early Years provision. Both our Nursery and Reception classes have access to dedicated outdoor learning environments, which children use every day.

The outdoor area is viewed as an extension of the classroom and provides a rich variety of resources and opportunities to support learning across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Through carefully planned experiences, children are able to develop their communication and language skills, physical development, personal and social skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities and understanding of the world around them.

EYFS staff provide a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities, enabling children to explore, investigate and follow their own interests while developing independence and confidence. During outdoor learning, children are encouraged to engage in appropriate risky play, allowing them to challenge themselves, assess risks and make informed decisions within a safe and supportive environment. These experiences help children to develop resilience, problem-solving skills, self-regulation and an understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and personal needs, including selecting appropriate resources, adapting their ideas when faced with challenges, and choosing suitable clothing and footwear for different weather conditions. Coats, wellington boots and protective aprons are readily accessible to support independent choice.

To ensure a safe and secure learning environment, Nursery and Reception staff complete daily risk assessments of the outdoor areas and equipment, working alongside our Outdoor Risk Assessment documents.

STRUCTURE

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School consists of our Nursery provision, which admits children from the age of three, and two Reception classes. EYFS staff work closely together as a team to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning and development from Nursery through to the end of Reception.

The two Reception classes follow the same curriculum and learning experiences to ensure consistency across the year group. Children have opportunities to learn and play together during free-flow sessions, including access to a shared outdoor learning environment and continuous provision areas.

Children receive teaching and learning opportunities through a range of approaches, including whole-class teaching, small-group work, adult-led activities, child-initiated learning, partner work and individual support. This enables staff to meet the needs of all learners while providing appropriate levels of challenge and support.

We are committed to providing high-quality education alongside excellent pastoral care for all children. Our staff are appropriately qualified and bring a wealth of experience and expertise in supporting young children's learning and development. They are dedicated to ongoing professional development and regularly engage in training to ensure their knowledge and practice remain current. This enables them to maintain a strong understanding of child development and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that all children receive the best possible start to their education.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School. Practitioners use their professional judgement, informed by ongoing observations and interactions, to assess children's progress across the seven areas of learning.

Within the first six weeks of a child starting in Nursery or Reception, practitioners carry out initial assessments to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's individual starting points, strengths, interests and needs. Reception children also participate in the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Information gathered from these assessments is used to inform planning and ensure that learning experiences are appropriately tailored to support each child's development.

Ongoing formative assessment is central to effective practice within the EYFS. Regular, purposeful assessments enable practitioners to monitor children's progress, identify next steps in learning and respond to individual needs. Children's progress is recorded using the Insight tracking system, which is updated four times throughout the academic year.

Assessment is primarily based on practitioners' observations of children during a range of learning experiences, including both adult-led activities and child-initiated play. All members of the EYFS team contribute to the assessment process. Observations help practitioners to develop a deeper understanding of each child's abilities, interests, learning characteristics and developmental needs. This information is then used to identify learning priorities and plan meaningful experiences that support progress and achievement.

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment judgements, EYFS staff participate in regular moderation activities throughout the year. Moderation takes place within year groups, across the EYFS team and with colleagues from local cluster schools.

Observations are gathered daily and may be both planned and spontaneous in order to capture significant moments in children's learning and development. Evidence may include:

- Observation notes and learning records.
- Pupil voice.
- Photographs.
- Annotated examples of children's work.
- Narrative observations, including measures of children's wellbeing and involvement using the Leuven Scales.
- Learning Journeys, which provide a record of children's progress and achievements across the academic year.
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High-quality interactions form a key part of our assessment practice. Practitioners work alongside children, engaging in meaningful conversations and sustained shared thinking to support and extend learning. These interactions enable staff to assess understanding in the moment, identify opportunities for challenge or additional support and promote the development of communication, language and vocabulary. Information gained through these interactions helps practitioners to adapt provision and plan effective next steps in learning.

At the end of the Reception year, practitioners complete the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which provides a summary of each child's attainment and progress across the EYFS curriculum. Outcomes are shared with parents and carers and are used to support a smooth transition into Year 1.

Photographs and Record Keeping

At the beginning of the academic year, parents and carers are asked to provide consent for photographs of their child to be taken during their time at school. Photographs may be used within classrooms, on displays, within children's Learning Journeys and, where permission has been granted, on the school website.

All photographs are taken using school-approved devices, including school cameras and iPads. The use of personal mobile phones or personal devices for photographing children is strictly prohibited and is managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

PLANNING

Planning within the EYFS is based on our progressive curriculum, which has been carefully designed using the educational programmes of the EYFS Framework, alongside guidance from *Development Matters* and *Birth to 5 Matters*. Our curriculum is sequenced to ensure that children build upon their prior knowledge, experiences and learning, enabling them to make meaningful connections and develop a deeper understanding over time.

Learning is planned progressively, with knowledge, skills and vocabulary carefully identified and revisited to support retention and mastery. This enables children to build upon previous learning and apply their developing skills with increasing confidence and independence. Planning is ambitious and designed to ensure that all children make progress from their individual starting points.

Medium-term plans provide a clear structure for learning and identify the key knowledge, skills, vocabulary and experiences that children will encounter. These plans are supported by weekly planning, which remains flexible and responsive to children's interests, needs and achievements. Practitioners use ongoing assessment and observations

to adapt planning where necessary, ensuring that learning opportunities remain relevant, engaging and appropriately challenging.

By valuing children's interests and incorporating them into the learning environment, practitioners foster high levels of engagement, motivation and curiosity. This responsive approach enables children to take an active role in their learning while ensuring that curriculum progression remains central to planning.

Continuous provision is carefully planned to support all areas of learning and is available throughout the day. Resources are organised to encourage exploration, independence and the application of previously taught skills. In addition, enhancements are regularly introduced in response to assessment information, curriculum objectives, current learning and children's interests. These enhancements are designed to deepen understanding, provide opportunities for practice and consolidation, and support children in achieving their next steps in learning.

PARENTS/CARERS AS PARTNERS

At Eastfield Infant and Nursery School, we recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We value the important contribution they make to their child's learning, development and wellbeing, both before they start school and throughout their time in education. We believe that strong, positive relationships between home and school are essential in ensuring that children feel secure, valued and supported, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

We are committed to building effective partnerships with parents and carers through open communication, mutual respect and a shared commitment to each child's learning and development. By working collaboratively, we gain a deeper understanding of each child's interests, strengths, experiences and individual needs, enabling us to provide the most effective support and learning opportunities.

We foster these relationships through:

- Talking with parents and carers about their child before they start at our school.
- Conducting home visits prior to children joining Eastfield Infant and Nursery School.
- Inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school, where we share information about our provision and how we aim to support their child's learning and development.
- Providing parent and carer information sessions throughout the year on different areas of the curriculum.
- Inviting parents and carers to attend *Stay and Learn* sessions, where they can participate in high-quality learning activities alongside their child. These sessions help families develop their understanding of the Early Years curriculum and provide practical ideas for supporting learning at home.
- Providing half-termly parent and carer briefings.
- Sending weekly learning overview emails, which highlight key vocabulary, learning experiences and phonics content covered during the week.
- Encouraging parents and carers to speak with their child's teacher whenever they have questions, concerns or information they wish to share.
- Holding formal parent evening meetings twice a year to discuss children's progress and next steps in learning.
- Providing parents and carers with an annual written report outlining their child's attainment and progress.
- Encouraging parents and carers to contribute to their child's Learning Journey, helping to create a holistic picture of their development.
- Completing shared interests letters to help practitioners learn more about children's interests and experiences.

- Inviting families to class assemblies, performances, sports days and other school events that celebrate children's achievements and learning.
- Hosting open evenings for parents and carers.
- Welcoming parent helpers to support learning experiences within the school.

Through these opportunities, we aim to create a strong partnership between home and school, ensuring that children experience consistent support, encouragement and high expectations throughout their Early Years journey. We recognise that children make the greatest progress when parents, carers and practitioners work together to support their learning, development and wellbeing.

ADMISSIONS, INDUCTIONS AND TRANSITION

At Eastfield Infant and Nursery School, we recognise that successful transitions play a vital role in supporting children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and readiness to learn. We understand that moving into a new learning environment can be a significant milestone for children and their families. Therefore, we place great importance on ensuring that every transition is carefully planned, supportive and individualised to meet the needs of each child.

We work closely with children, parents and carers, previous settings and staff to ensure that information is shared effectively and that children feel safe, secure and well-prepared for the next stage of their educational journey.

Separate induction and transition programmes are planned for children joining Nursery, starting Reception and moving from Reception into Year 1.

Welcome Information

Children joining either Nursery or Reception receive a welcome pack prior to starting at Eastfield Infant and Nursery School. The pack includes:

- A welcome letter.
- A social story introducing their new learning environment.
- An *All About Me* form, allowing parents and carers to share information about their child's interests, strengths and any worries they may have.
- A class animal activity that enables children to contribute something personal to their new classroom before they begin.

This information helps practitioners develop an early understanding of each child and supports a positive and personalised transition into school.

Transition into Nursery

Eastfield Infant and Nursery School provides 15- and 30-hour Nursery places for children aged three and above. Additional hours may be available, subject to availability and additional costs.

Prior to starting Nursery, parents and carers are invited to attend an information evening where they can meet staff, visit the setting and learn about the Nursery curriculum, routines and induction arrangements. Families are encouraged to ask questions and discuss any individual needs their child may have.

Children and their parents or carers are also invited to attend a *Stay and Play* session. These sessions provide an opportunity for children to explore the Nursery environment, become familiar with resources and begin to build relationships with staff while supported by a trusted adult.

Home visits are carried out before children begin Nursery. These visits enable practitioners to get to know children within the security of their home environment and provide valuable opportunities to gather information about children's interests, routines, strengths and needs. Home visits also allow parents and carers to share important information, including medical, dietary or developmental needs, helping to ensure a smooth start to Nursery.

Children are then invited to attend a settling-in session before their official start date. This provides opportunities for children to experience being in the setting independently for a short period of time, helping to build confidence and familiarity.

To meet the needs of families throughout the year, Nursery admissions take place during the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms, subject to availability.

Transition into Reception

Transition into Reception begins during the Summer Term before children start school.

Parents and carers are invited to attend an induction meeting where they meet Reception staff and receive information about starting school, daily routines, expectations and the induction process. Families also have the opportunity to meet representatives from the Governing Body and the Eastfield School Association (ESA), as well as sample food from the school lunch menu.

Children and their families are invited to attend *Stay and Play* sessions before the summer holidays. These visits help children become familiar with their new learning environment, meet staff and begin forming relationships with their peers.

Practitioners visit children who have not attended our Nursery provision in their home environment before they start school. These visits help establish positive relationships with families, provide opportunities to gather important information and support children in becoming familiar with their new teachers before joining Reception.

To support a successful start to school, Reception children begin the year through a carefully planned staggered induction process. During the first full week of term, children gradually increase the amount of time they spend in school before attending full time. This ensures that children have the opportunity to settle confidently into school routines and build positive relationships with staff and peers.

Throughout this period, practitioners work hard to create a calm, welcoming and nurturing environment where children feel safe, secure and valued. Consistent routines, high-quality interactions and a strong focus on emotional wellbeing support children in developing positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Transition into Year 1

The transition from Reception to Year 1 is planned carefully to ensure continuity in learning and development while supporting children's confidence as they move into the next stage of their education.

Transition activities form an important part of the final term in Reception. Children have regular opportunities to visit their new classroom, meet their future teachers and become familiar with Year 1 routines and expectations.

Additional transition opportunities include:

- Writing and receiving letters to and from Year 1 teachers and pupils.
- Visits to the Year 1 learning environment.
- Photographs of staff and classrooms displayed within Reception provision.
- Opportunities to discuss and explore their thoughts and feelings about moving into Year 1.

Parents and carers are invited to attend a *Welcome to Year 1* meeting, where they can meet staff, learn about the Year 1 curriculum and expectations, and ask any questions they may have.

Children also receive a transition pack containing summer learning challenges and a social story to support their move into Year 1.

Throughout the transition process, Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to share information about children's attainment, progress, learning characteristics and individual needs. The progressive nature of our EYFS curriculum ensures that children are well prepared for the increased expectations of Key Stage 1 and are ready to continue their learning journey with confidence, independence and enthusiasm.

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 www.eastfieldschool.co.uk

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. An adequate amount 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 www.eastfieldschool.co.uk, including our 'Safer Eating' Policy.

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 www.eastfieldschool.co.uk

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 www.eastfieldschool.co.uk

