

Early Years Policy



Together We Learn

...always striving to be outstanding, transforming the aspirations of a community.

Reviewed November 2017

Early Years Policy for Ernesettle Community School

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Aims

At Ernesettle Community School's Foundation Unit we aim to:

- Provide a caring, secure and safe environment, where each child is valued as an individual who is able to benefit from and contribute to life of the school regardless of background or ability.
- Encourage happy confident, independent, enquiring children, who are interested in life, enthusiastic about challenges they encounter and build on previous learning.
- Develop the partnership between all members of the school community to provide a supportive environment where all individuals are valued and the personal professional development needs of pupils and staff are met.
- Develop children's self-confidence, independence and understanding of themselves and others, so that as adults they can play a part in a constantly changing multicultural environment.
- Maintain strong and supportive links with parents/carers in order to provide the best possible education, appropriate to the stage of development of the children, at both home and school.
- Provide stimulating and exciting activities that continually evolve and inspire, as we believe that children learn best through purposeful and enjoyable learning and this is at the heart of our curriculum.

Principles

In the EYFS guidance it states that principles which guide the work of all early years practitioners are grouped into four themes;

A Unique Child- every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

Positive Relationships- children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling environments- the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children.

Learning and development- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning development are equally important and inter-connected.

In Ernesettle Community School's Early Years Foundation Unit these principles of education are practised.

Practitioners;

- have a thorough knowledge of child development and plan for individual children's next steps.
- ensure all children feel included, secure and valued and are treated equally.
- create a partnership with parents/carers to establish feelings of trust and respect and also to build the link between home and school.
- promote self confidence and a positive attitude to learning in all children whatever their gender, ethnicity, disability or ability.
- ensure the environment is stimulating, safe and engaging to promote development physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

- observe and respond appropriately to children, intervening wherever necessary to encourage their progress and levels of wellbeing and involvement.
- establish an ethos in which individual achievements are valued and celebrated.

Approaches to Planning, learning and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- Teachers and Nursery Practitioners plan opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- We provide a curriculum with a balanced approach between child initiated and teacher directed activities.
- We provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued and celebrated.
- We ensure that the outdoor learning environment provides challenge across all areas of learning.
- We use our Learning journey observations which stimulate discussion into personalised learning for every child.
- We plan for differentiation, including necessary support for children with SEND and ensuring that more able children are given tasks that will challenge and stimulate their thinking.
- We monitor children's progress and provide next steps to support them throughout their Foundation Stage.

Positive Relationships

At Ernesettle Community School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents/Carers

We recognise that Parents/Carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that Parents/Carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- An Information booklet and the School Prospectus which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the Parents/Carers of the schools vision and aims.
- Asking Parents/Carers to sign permission slips for visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school, prior to their children starting in Nursery or Reception.
- Encouraging Parents/Carers to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns prior to requesting meetings with Senior Leaders.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Early Reading, Maths and Phonics.
- Talking to Parents/Carers about their child before their child starts in our school, through conversations and visiting the children at home. This also ensures that children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Parents/Carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Parents/Carers are invited into the classroom on a daily basis and can view and comment upon their child's Learning Journey whenever they would like to.
- Asking Parents/Carers to complete 'WOW at Home' sheets to record any significant events and/or development in their child's learning at home.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and Parents/Carers: School trips, Special lunches, Christmas Performances, Sports Day etc.
- Written contact through Home Reading Records as well as the acknowledgement that Parents/Carers can ring school to contact staff or the Head of Nursery and Reception.

- Allowing free access to the children's Learning Journeys and classroom displays.
- In Reception, Parents/Carers are made aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through the 'Learning Together at Home' weekly sheet which explains what the children have done that week, what they are due to do the next week and also provides guidance on a task to complete with their families at home to consolidate their learning.
- Early Morning Learning, which is a time whereby parents are encouraged to come in and learn with their child each morning in the learning environment.

Staffing and Key Worker responsibilities

All staff working within the Foundation Unit aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively and taking time to listen to them.

ME2 Nursery

36 place Nursery (am and pm sessions)

1 Teacher

1 Teaching and Learning Assistant

3 Year Old Nursery

58 place Nursery (am and pm sessions)

1 Teacher

2 Teaching and Learning Assistants

Pre-school Nursery

58 place Nursery (am and pm sessions)

1 Teacher

2 Teaching and Learning Assistants

Reception Classes

60 place Reception intake

2 Teachers

3 Teaching and Learning Assistants

1 Higher Level Teaching and Learning Assistant

Key Workers

In order to meet the individual needs of all children, the Foundation Unit assigns a Key Worker to each child when they enter the setting.

A Key Worker will help each child to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it. They will meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour. The Key Worker will endeavour to make close links with the parents/carers of their key children to make sure that each child is being cared for appropriately and in line with the wishes of each family.

In Reception, the teachers act as 'Key Workers' to all children in the Reception Unit and our TLA's and HLTLA's contribute to this information.

Intimate Care

Some children in the setting depending on age, stage and development will need support toileting and the Key Worker will support the child and work closely with Parents. Please refer to Intimate Care Policy. Staff are able to provide advice and assistance to parents/carers wishing to support their child in their transition out of nappies.

Staff Medication

Practitioners working in the Early Years setting, who are taking medication have agreed to inform the Head of Nursery and Reception if it could affect their ability to care for children.

Organisation and Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where 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. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

The EYFS classrooms and learning spaces are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or complete tasks more quietly. The classrooms cover all learning areas, where children are able to find and access equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own large enclosed outdoor area which has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the ability to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop their gross motor skills in all areas of learning. In Reception, children are encouraged to learn independently during free flow times but are also guided by Independent Learning Wow tasks which ensure focus and engagement.

Throughout free choice sessions the outside and inside areas are always available and children have access to snack at all points during the day. Throughout the day at timetabled intervals children are taught in small groups with a Teacher or Key worker.

Reception

Reception children arrive at 8.30am for 'Early Morning Learning' and doors close for registration at 8.55am. Lunch is between 11.45 am and 12.45 pm. The children are collected at 3.10pm though the Reception doors open at 3.05pm to help parents collecting other children from around the school.

Nursery

Nursery sessions are split into two sessions: 8.30am - 11.30am and 12.30pm – 3.10pm. More details on funded and paid-for sessions can be found in the Nursery Welcome Pack.

Resources

The Foundation Unit has a wealth of resources which are rotated regularly to excite and motivate learners. The resources are safe and accessible to all children and are clearly labelled with words and pictures. Risk assessments are regularly carried out to ensure their suitability and safety.

Collecting Children

The registration form lists the parents/carers who will normally collect the children at the end of the session. If there is an emergency the parent/carer must ring the school and let them know who will be collecting the child. In the 2 Year old Nursery, a password will be provided if a different adult is collecting the child.

Health and Safety

At Ernesettle Community School there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Milk and fruit are available during the session.
- A first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept always.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- Regular risk assessments are carried out on both resources and the environment (both immediate to the Foundation Unit and in the wider school grounds) to ensure the safety of all children and adults.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three learning characteristics, set out below:

The prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

The specific areas of learning:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding of the world (UW)
- Expressive arts and design (EAD)

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by Parents/Carers and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's Parents/Carers and agree how to support the child further.

Planning and guided children's activities will reflect the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At Ernesettle Community School, we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active Learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Assessment Recording and Reporting

Nursery

Each Key worker is responsible for a Learning Journey for each child in their key worker group and each term this will include observations, direct speech from the child, photographs of different activities, adult directed activities and WOW comments from home.

Reception

In Reception, each teacher is responsible for the Learning Journeys in their class. However, teaching and learning assistants, parents and other agencies will contribute to these. Each term they will include observations, direct speech from the child, photographs of different activities, adult directed activities, WOW comments from home, WOW moments from event and school trips and learning from home.

In the final term of Nursery and Reception Foundation Stage a written report is sent to parents/carers reporting on the Prime and Specific areas of development and the effective characteristics of learning.

For each ELG, the class teacher must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding), or not yet reaching this level (emerging). The completed EYFS Profile must include a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This will support future curriculum planning and will provide the Year 1 teacher with important information about each child's approach to learning.

Transition to Year One

Children visit their new class teacher in their new classroom in Term 6. The classrooms in Year One are set out with similar areas to ensure a smooth transition into Key Stage One. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the EYFS Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Early Years Policies

Behaviour Policy

Child protection Policy

Intimate Care Policy

No smoking policy

SEN Policy (Whole School Policy)

Uncollected child policy

Working with Parents policy