

Ellwood Community Primary School

Believe, Achieve, Belong



Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] Policy

Date reviewed: September 2026

Next renew date: September 2027

Introduction

‘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 [DfE], 2021).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years’ providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life (Department for Education [DfE], 2021).

Purpose

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Ellwood Community Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We believe that the EYFS has an important role to play in preparing children for life as well as the next stage of their education. The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the ‘Reception’ year. At Ellwood Community Primary School children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Foundation Stage to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This document outlines the philosophy, intent and implementation

of early years teaching and learning in the EYFS (Reception year) at Ellwood Community Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Four Guiding Principles

In the EYFS our aims are underpinned by the four guiding principles set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, DfE, 2021)

These 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years’ provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Unique Child

At Ellwood Community Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At Ellwood Community Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be independent, confident learners by having secure relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

Furthermore, we believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observation we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning. We also plan and consider the learning environment and therefore, the EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. There is an outdoor classroom and we regularly engage in ‘Forest Adventures’ sessions both within the school grounds and also in the local forest.

Learning and Development

The EYFS curriculum is outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This clearly defines what is taught in the Reception Year at Ellwood Community Primary School.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected however, three areas (known as the prime areas) are seen as ‘particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive’ (DfE Statutory Framework for EYFS, 2021).

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – ‘Listening, Attention and Understanding’ and Speaking.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – ‘Self-Regulation’, ‘Managing Self’ and ‘Building Relationships’.
- Physical Development – ‘Gross Motor Skills’ and ‘Fine Motor Skills’.

There are four ‘specific’ areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied. The four specific areas are:

- Literacy – ‘Comprehension’, ‘Word Reading’ and ‘Writing’.
- Mathematics – ‘Number’ and ‘Numerical Patterns’.
- Understanding the World – ‘Past and Present’, ‘People, Culture and Communities’ and ‘The Natural World’.
- Expressive Arts and Design – ‘Creating with Materials’ and ‘Being Imaginative and Expressive’.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum promotes the three characteristics of effective learning. The three characteristics 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 link between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. These characteristics highlight the importance of a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. Activities and the learning environment are planned with these characteristics in mind and the EYFS practitioners reflect on the different ways children learn. Practitioners assess how each child engages with other people and the environment, what motivates them and how they think creatively and critically, in order to support each child to become an effective and motivated learner.

Intent

At Ellwood Community Primary School, we provide a high-quality EYFS education giving children a secure and confident start to their school life. We are committed to nurturing a lifelong love of learning alongside the aims of the EYFS statutory framework. We strive for high standards, consider the development of the whole child and seek to foster resilience and independence. We aim to provide the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success and to give children the best possible start to their early education. We provide inviting classroom environments indoors and outdoors to stimulate learners and engage them in developing the three ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ as set out within the EYFS. The EYFS curriculum encompasses our school motto... Believe, Achieve, Belong

We carefully plan our EYFS curriculum to meet the following aims:

- Foster a love of learning which inspires curiosity.
- Provide experiences of awe and wonder.
- Ensure all children have access to high quality learning opportunities.
- Provide parents/carers with the opportunity to develop their child’s learning at home.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the community and wider world.

Staffing & Organisation

At Ellwood Community Primary School, we have one Reception class which caters for 20 children.

EYFS class teacher and lead: Mrs King

Children come to our school from a range of local pre-school settings, childminders and nurseries including Ellwood Nursery which is located on our school premises.

Implementation

- Quality first teaching across all areas of the curriculum.
- Stimulating learning environments indoors and outdoors.
- Well planned and organised continuous provision which allows the children to learn through play.
- A carefully planned balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities.
- We promote a love of learning through real life experiences and opportunities to build on prior learning.
- Close links with local nurseries which support a smooth and settled transition into school.
- Strong parental partnerships which empower parents to support their child's learning at home.
- Systematic approaches to teaching reading to ensure all children learn to read. High quality phonics teaching is started as soon as children begin reception.
- Opportunities for children and families to develop a love of reading.
- Planned opportunities for outdoor learning through 'Forest Adventures' and in the outdoor classroom

Impact

- ✓ High levels of engagement and motivation demonstrated from children which supports them to become lifelong learners.
- ✓ Confident and capable readers who demonstrate a love of reading.
- ✓ Evidence of strong links with parents.
- ✓ Children demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- ✓ Children feel happy and safe and enjoy coming to school.
- ✓ All children access a balanced and challenging curriculum regardless of their background, needs or abilities.
- ✓ Children make strong progress from their starting points and are offered a broad curriculum which meets each child's unique needs.
- ✓ Children are supported by adults that are well trained and passionate about providing the best education for every child.
- ✓ The percentage of children achieving the GLD within the EYFSP is in line with, or above the national average.

Teaching Strategies

All seven areas of learning and development together with the characteristics of effective learning are important to ensure the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led, and child-initiated activities. The interaction between the adult and child is essential. The adult's response to the child helps to develop understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best when activities and experiences interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and

extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play and adult-led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult-led experiences for children in the form of structured adult-led teaching and adult-led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge, and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. These routines enable children to become independent learners. Following a timetable allows us to ensure all children have access to high quality phonics, literacy and maths lessons. These lessons help to develop vital habits of learning.

Reading

Reading and story/rhyme time is an important part of the day. We want to encourage our children to develop a love of reading and make sure they leave the EYFS as confident readers. We ensure we read stories regularly with the children and enable every child access to high quality texts within the 'reading area' in our classroom.

Reading Books and Phonics Support

Every child is given their own book bag and reading record book. Parents/carers are encouraged to listen to their child read or share a story together daily. At Ellwood Community Primary School, we expect children to read at least four times per week. Children are also given resources linked to their phonics skills to practise at home with their parents/carers.

We also operate a 'Sharing Library' for parents/carers to enable children to borrow high quality stories taken from our 'Brilliant Books to Read in Reception' list.

Planning

Effective planning is the key to making children's learning successful, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children and their interests as our projects and learning progress over time.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. A baseline assessment will be completed with every child within the first 2 weeks of starting school. This assessment will be used to inform teaching and learning opportunities for the Autumn Term. The statutory 'Reception Baseline Assessment' from the DfE is also completed within the first six weeks of starting school.

Assessments are completed and shared with parents four times within the year:

- Baseline Assessment (September)
- Autumn Term 2 (December)
- Spring Term 2 (March)
- EYFS Profile (June)

During the Reception year we make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the EYFS teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The EYFS team use Tapestry to record assessments for each child and track progress

Tapestry (please see separate Tapestry policy)

Each child is set up with an independent online learning journey. All staff within the Reception classroom are able to capture observations via Tapestry. Parents logging into the system are only able to see their child(ren)'s learning journal (see permission form). Before accessing the system, parents must sign to agree not to download and share any information on any other online platforms or social networking sites.

EYFS Profile

The EYFS Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. The EYFS Profile covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. It also includes the 'Characteristics of Learning'. In June we record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected and data is submitted to the Local Authority for analysis. Parents receive a copy of their child's Foundation Stage Profile judgements together with their EYFS school report at the end of the Reception year. The Year 1 teacher uses this information to inform planning for the next year. Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these reports in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

Observations

The EYFS practitioners use observations to make assessments and inform planning. They are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded on the child's online learning journey via Tapestry.

Role of EYFS Staff and Key Person

The class teacher is the named key person for each child in the Reception class. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the EYFS classroom actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences. There is a maximum intake of 20 Reception children although the Local Authority can admit more children as they see appropriate via the appeals system.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that effective parental partnerships are crucial to ensuring children succeed in their learning. We want parents/carers to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our school. As well as the Reception transition visit days we offer parents/carers the opportunity to host a home visit with the EYFS class

teacher and teaching assistant at the beginning of the academic year. Please see separate home visit policy for further details.

Ways in which we involve parents include...

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open afternoons and induction meetings.
- Providing a handbook and pack of information about commencing Reception at Ellwood Community Primary School.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Hosting home visits.
- Giving parents/carers and children the opportunity to visit the Reception Classroom during the 'New Parents' Induction Meeting before starting school. During this meeting we offer a crèche in the classroom, so the children can spend time in their new classroom whilst their parents are in the meeting.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if the EYFS class teacher has concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Weekly newsletters.
- Weekly insights into the class highlights of the week via the Class Dojo platform (Please see separate information regarding Class Dojo in the starter pack).
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading. Sharing the children's 'Digital Learning Journey' via Tapestry with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in reception.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with 'Forest Adventures'.
- Hosting a 'Stay and Play' session at the beginning of the term before the children start school.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult and exciting time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly Early Years Foundation Stage Policy – Ellwood Community Primary School and happily. The EYFS teacher aims to visit children in their pre-school settings during the Summer Term prior to starting school.

Starting in Reception

Parents of all children starting school in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teacher and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Give out the school handbook and information pack with admissions forms, permission slips etc...
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals/ free milk/ free fruit.
- Explain about holidays and absences.

- Inform parents of how to purchase uniform.
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to Reception.
- Arrange home visits which will be carried out at the beginning of the Autumn term (first week of the term).

New class transition sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend time in their new class alongside their peers. Parents can leave their child during this sessions. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

Buddying with Year 6 pupils – The new Reception children are paired with children who will be in Year 6 when they start school in September. They meet their buddies at the transition sessions in the Summer Term prior to starting school in September. Their buddies play with them or chat with them at playtime during these sessions. The Year 6 buddies make sure they look after their Reception buddies at playtime during the first few weeks of the Autumn term and the Reception children and Year 6 buddies meet up throughout the year to share books together.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies, the Christmas play and sports day as well as sharing playtimes with the key stage 1 and key stage 2 children. Children will have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend some time in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.' (EYFS, DfE, 2021).

At Ellwood Community Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021:

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why these exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Please see Ellwood Community Primary School's 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy' for full safeguarding information.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This is in line with Ellwood Community Primary School's Safeguarding procedures and Acceptable Use Agreement. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observations and assessments in

the EYFS. These photographs are used in the children's online learning journeys, in literacy and mathematics books, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used in school and on the school website, through the paperwork in their initial starter packs. All mobile phones and smart watches are kept stored away from the classrooms.

Healthy eating

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of having milk through the 'Cool Milk' scheme. They have access to water at all times. All children have the opportunity to receive 'free' school lunches up to the end of Year 2 (End of KS1).

Safety when eating

Children are required to sit down when they are eating and not to stand or move around until they have finished their mouthful of food. There will always be a paediatric first aider in the classroom and in the dinner hall, EYFS children will always be within sight and hearing of that first aider. We ask that any foods that pose as a choking hazard such as grapes and cherry tomatoes to be cut up before they are added to the child's lunchbox.

Safer sleeping

Children coming into Reception class should not need naps during the school day. However, if there is a medical reason for needing to nap. This will be discussed, and a health care plan created with the parents, based upon the needs and the reasonable adjustments that can be made in school. Should a child feel poorly and fall asleep whilst waiting to be collected by their grown up, a suitable area will be made for the child, so that they are able to be monitored by a paediatric first aider.

Screen time

Screen use is kept to a minimum and only used for educational purposes to enhance learning. The content in which is shown is age appropriate and carefully sought and planned to ensure the content matches the learning objective, encourage creativity and be interactive.

Oral Hygiene

As part of the NHS "Big Brush Programme" the children brush their teeth every day, in class, after lunchtime. It is well documented that oral hygiene in children is in decline, and we see it as part of our role, alongside home tooth brushing to reverse this trend. Further information and a consent form will be included in the information starter pack.

Sun Safety

We will not allow children to be exposed to strong sunlight for extended periods in the Summer. Children are encouraged to wear hats during outdoor activities. Parents/carers are asked to apply sun protection lotion before the child comes to school, but they may also send it in with the child if he/she is able to apply it themselves.

Intimate Care

We carry out any intimate care in line with the 'Ellwood Community Primary School Intimate Care Policy'. We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this or needing help with toilet training. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by washing and returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the toilet area near the EYFS classroom and are encouraged to help with this as much as possible. "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or

carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an 'accident'. In most cases, children will be encouraged and helped to carry out these actions themselves. There may be cases where more intimate care is needed and these cases will be looked at on an individual basis and an individual 'intimate care plan' may be needed. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Reception at Ellwood Community Primary School. Parents are informed when this care has been given.

Inclusion and equal opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. Individual education plans (My Plan, My Plan+ or Education, Health and Care Plans) identify targets in specific areas of learning/need for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

First Aid

All staff who work in the EYFS classroom have current paediatric first aid qualifications. Accidents are logged in the classroom first aid book and an accident slip is sent home. First aid kits are available in the EYFS classroom. All first aid procedures are outlined in a separate document. Children's asthma inhalers are kept in the classroom alongside their asthma care plan. If a child has an Epipen, this is kept on a high shelf in the classroom out of the reach of the children, but readily available for adults to access quickly in an emergency. We follow whole school procedures for medicine in school. (See separate policy).

Forest Adventures

In the EYFS we regularly engage in 'Forest Adventures' sessions both within the school grounds and also in the local forest at our school 'log circle'. Our 'Forest Adventure' policies and procedures are outlined in the 'Ellwood Community Primary School Forest Adventures Handbook'. There will always be a Paediatric first aider accompanying the children during Forest Adventures. Risk assessments are in place and the Ellwood Community Primary Forest Adventure Site risk assessment is reviewed regularly (see separate documents).

Off-site Visits

We follow whole school procedures for off-site visits (see separate policy). Fire Alarms Fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy.

Electrical Equipment

PAT testing of electrical equipment is carried out annually.

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Headteacher (Mrs Milford,) and EYFS Lead, (Mrs King) will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Governing Body will also be part of this process.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Review: September 2026	By: Mrs King	Signed: Mrs King
Due to be Reviewed: September 2027		