

George Eliot Primary School



George Eliot
Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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INTRODUCTION

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At George Eliot Primary School the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year and comprises of:

- Nursery - part time places are offered in the morning and afternoon and there is a maximum of 26 children per session with 2 adults (teacher and nursery nurse).
- Reception classes - where each Reception class has 30 children with a teacher and teaching assistant.

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At George Eliot the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes of "Every Child Matters."

Aims

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.

- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.

- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.

- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

- work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions to their child's learning and development.

- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Learning and Development

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007).

The seven areas of learning and development are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Literacy (L)
- Maths (M)
- Understanding the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

Play provides an opportunity for children to come to terms with themselves, their culture and language, other people and the world and make sense of real life situations. Play provides opportunities for exploration, investigation and problem solving for children to practise all their developing skills.

Play allows children to learn about making choices and decisions and puts children in charge of their own learning. It allows them to take risks without fear of failing. Through play, children develop their personal qualities and attitudes. Play also provides opportunities to represent their experiences and use what they have learned in different ways-through music, language, imaginative and creative activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice. It is always informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

This details how we aim to meet the criteria of the themes and commitments of the EYFS.

Our Long term planning is thematic to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered throughout the EYFS

Medium Term Planning

This addresses each aspect of the curriculum in more detail for each thematic unit, which usually lasts between 6-8 weeks. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for Computing. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities and possible activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. Learning themes are shared with parents and children at the beginning of each term. In doing this we assess prior knowledge and understanding and to enable the children to have an input into the direction of the topic.

Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

Staffing and Organisation

At George Eliot Primary School the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from the age of three to the end of the Reception year and comprises of the Nursery, where there are a maximum of 26 children in the morning and afternoon, with 2 adults (one teacher and one nursery nurse) and two Reception classes. Each reception class has 30 children with a teacher and nursery nurse.

We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:13 in nursery and 1:15 in reception.

The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the EYFS outdoor areas. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. Teaching staff liaise with the support staff regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues. We also have links with other pre-schools and nurseries to support the transition between settings.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. There are various different types of assessment taking place:

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. Each child has an individual Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Learning Journey in which this evidence is stored. Learning Journeys are made available to staff, children and parents.

Class teachers ensure that each child in turn is a focus for this type of formative assessment each term and ensure that a range of evidence to support the seven areas of learning is collected for each child.

Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile uses all of the formative assessment undertaken and summarises the child's achievements against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG). It is completed at the end of each term by the class teacher. The Reception and Nursery class teachers also undertake in-house and local cluster group moderation throughout each year.

Assessments of individual children and each cohort are collated and progress is tracked throughout their time in the foundation stage at George Eliot to ensure that progress is taking place and to enable teaching staff to implement support for children who may have additional needs.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Learning Environment

“A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience.

We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different core areas: role play, book corner, writing area, number area, exploration and investigation area, designing and making area, listening centre, computer, creative, malleable, sand, water, outside, construction and small world.

Children are free to choose which areas of the classroom, both in/outside they wish to use and are encouraged to become independent learners and take responsibility for initiating their own play.

At George Eliot we are fully committed to providing a safe, stimulating outdoor area in which children can play, explore and learn. The outdoor area provides opportunities for learning in all areas of development.

TRANSITION

Liaison with pre-school settings and induction to Nursery

At George Eliot we have developed close links with a number of local pre-schools and nurseries and whenever possible staff from George Eliot will receive information about children from their previous setting before they start our Nursery.

Upon enrolment, the parent or carer and child will have a home visit from the Nursery teacher and a nursery nurse to discuss the child's specific needs and discuss the Nursery routines and requirements. Parents are given the Nursery Handbook and have the opportunity to ask any questions.

Parents and carers are encouraged to stay with their children for a short time to familiarise themselves and their child with the setting and help the child settle. We advise parents and carers to leave their child at nursery for the rest of the session to begin the settling in period.

Induction to Reception

When children approach the end of their time in Nursery there is a structured programme of visits to their new Reception class near the end of term. This is supplemented by tours of the school and the opportunities to see unfamiliar parts of the school such as the playground, meet other staff they will encounter in the school, take photographs and contribute to a group book about what they have found out on their visits.

Nursery and Reception teachers meet to discuss assessment and the needs of individual children in the class.

Children new to the school in Reception come for a visit near the end of the term prior to their entry in the school. Entry of new children is staggered and each child and parent or carer will meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for their enrolment before being taken to their new classroom to stay for the rest of the school day.

The EYFS leader, and Reception teachers hold an induction meeting for parents near the start of their first term in Reception to introduce them to the school, Reception procedures and the curriculum. Further curriculum parent workshops will be on offer throughout the year.

Transfer records from preschool settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. A new transition policy will be put into place for 2016/2017.

At George Eliot:

- During the summer term 2, the Reception timetable will allow for direct teaching in small groups followed by an independent activity to prepare them for the change in teaching and learning in Year 1. This timetable will be mirrored at the start of Year 1 to enable children to make a smooth transition
- Reception children meet Year 1 teacher during assembly, playtime and other
- whole school activities during the Reception year.
- EYFS Learning Journeys will be passed on to Year 1 teachers.
- EYFS Profile end of year results will be passed on to Year 1 teachers and used when setting targets for Year 1.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers will meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for an hour session in July.
- The 'Letters and Sounds' national approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout Year 1 and 2.
- Local authority training days for Reception and Year 1 teachers are attended where possible.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining the EYFS curriculum to parents/carers during the new parents' meetings and home visits, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Curriculum newsletters are available on the website each term to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this.
- Organising new parents meetings early in the term for new reception parents
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and encouraging parents to comment on their child's Learning Journey.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the Reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits.

- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, to make use of and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- Discussing progress and next steps with parents/carers at open evenings
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers of reception children in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.
- Holding child/parent open days and workshops to enable parents to work alongside their children.

Welfare Requirements

“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.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At George Eliot Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Equal Opportunities

At George Eliot we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

For children identified as having a special educational need, the school will intervene with provision which is additional to or different from the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies (quality first teaching). Progress is monitored and reviewed every term.

The school's SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

Safeguarding

Please refer to the Child Protection Policy.

Cameras and Mobile Phones

No adults are permitted to use personal devices such as cameras or mobile phones to take photos in the school. Staff mobile phones are stored securely with personal belongings and are not used while children are present. Signs are clearly visible around school to indicate to parents that the use of cameras and mobile phones is not permitted and parents/carers will be challenged and reminded of this if they are seen to use phones and cameras. Photographs taken on school owned cameras are used for recording and assessment purposes. Staff will use these cameras for school purposes only. All parents are required to complete consent for use of digital images forms on enrolling in the school.

Health and Safety

Please refer to 'Health and Safety' Policy.

Additional reference should also be made to the EYFS Risk Assessment.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.