



# Ellingham VC & Woodton Primary Federation

## WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR Early Years Foundation Stage

Date Reviewed:	Agreed by Governors:	Date for Next Review:
November 2024	November 2024	November 2026

*Our vision is to love our neighbour,  
enabling everyone to flourish and to  
reach their full potential.*

RESPECT

CHALLENGE

INSPIRE

RESILIENCE

NURTURE

ASPIRATION

## **Introduction**

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to 5 years. Entry into our primary schools is at the beginning of the school year in which the children turn 5, although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

## **Aims & Objectives**

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Ellingham and Woodton Primary Federation, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond, as well as enabling choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

## **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Ellingham VC and Woodton Primary Federation are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations matched to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;

- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are higher prior attainers, of children with disabilities and of children from all social and cultural backgrounds.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

### **Teaching & Learning**

Many of the features of effective teaching and learning that are evident across Key Stages One and Two are also reflected in our EYFS. These include:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

### **The Importance of Play in the EYFS**

Play in the EYFS is the opportunity for children to apply and practise the learning and experiences they have undertaken. It is of upmost importance, as is the opportunity for EYFS practitioners to observe and extend children's play. Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

### **The EYFS curriculum**

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the

end of EYFS. The seven areas in the EYFS curriculum are broken down into prime areas and specific areas. The 3 prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development,
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development.

These 3 prime areas are then strengthened and applied through the 4 specific areas, which are:

- Literacy,
- Mathematics,
- Understanding the World,
- Expressive Arts and Design

Our planning is based upon themes and topics, which are often adapted to follow on from children's interests. This ensures that learning is always meaningful and motivating. Reception classes have daily phonics sessions, following the guidance from 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' systematic synthetic phonic programme. Included in this programme, our Reception classes will also take part in reading practice sessions three times weekly. The children also undertake weekly adult led maths and writing tasks. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards National Curriculum levels.

### **Assessment**

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. In addition to this, each child will also undertake the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment, within six weeks of joining our Reception classes.

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for assessment and planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of future planning as well as informing assessments. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys. 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 teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

The teacher keeps progress records, online learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These learning journeys contain a wide range of evidence that parents have the opportunity to look at as and when they wish to. Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be working towards, working within, or working above age related expectations (ARE).

The Foundation Stage 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. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. We share this information with parents at consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that discusses the child's characteristics of effective learning and whether they are Emerging or Expected against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. It also highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

### **The Role of Parents**

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Visits by the teacher to all children in their childcare provision prior to their starting school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through our genuine 'open-door' policy;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Providing a handbook of information about starting in our Reception;
- Encouraging parents to stay if there are problems with settling in;
- Offering a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- Providing various activities that involve parents, including using an online learning journal, which parents can access, comment on, and add to at any time
- Offering transition afternoons prior to the children starting school

### **Resources**

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### **Intimate Care**

'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 or changing underwear following an accident. 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. For more details, please see out Intimate Care Policy.