

Early Years Policy



Together We Learn

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

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Early Years Policy for Ernesettle Community School

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Ernesettle Community School the Nursery is the first stage of the Early Years Unit, which offers 24 places for 2-year-old children. The next phase of the Early Years Unit is the Pre-school, which is divided into two classes, offering 64 places for 3 and 4-year-old children. Both the Nursery and Pre-school provide tailored and professional education to children by Qualified Teachers, Early Years Practitioners and Teaching and Learning Assistants. Children attend for fifteen funded hours per week (either 5 mornings or 5 afternoons) during school terms. We also offer Parents/Carers the opportunity to purchase additional sessions if they wish to do so. In addition, Pre-school children may be eligible for 30 hours funding. Pre-school children then make a seamless transition to the Reception classes, since they are already familiar with the staff, classroom and outdoor learning area. The Reception Unit holds 75 children; which are split into three classes each with a teacher and two Teaching and Learning Assistants who work across the unit, providing a high-quality education for every child. In partnerships with Parents and Carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

In the EYFS, we endeavour to ensure that children *“learn and develop well and kept healthy and safe.”* We aim to support children in their learning through *“teaching and experiences that 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.”* (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2017)

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **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 Unit these principles of education are practised.

Our Aims, Values and Vision

In all parts of our Early Years provision we will promote that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

A Unique Child

At Ernesettle Community 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/sharing assemblies and rewards (prizes, stickers and golden tickets) to encourage children to develop a positive attitude towards learning.

Our Staff, Pupils, Parents/Carers, Governors and Community Partners share the belief that all children and families have the right to:

- Feel valued as an individual
- Be happy, healthy, enthusiastic and confident with high self-esteem and self-worth
- Be independent, curious, creative and resilient learners
- Be courageous and take risks, challenging themselves and each other
- Know they have a voice, feel heard and that they can make a difference
- Be able to identify and communicate their own needs and feelings
- Be empowered to meet their own needs
- Respect themselves, each other, their communities and environment
- Feel safe and secure and have a sense of belonging
- Establish effective and supportive relationships and be able to work collaboratively
- Be lifelong learners with a love of learning
- Have high aspirations, build on their previous best and excel in whatever they choose to do

To enable this our Early Years Provision offers:

- Seamless education, support and care provision which puts children and families at the heart
- A stimulating, safe, secure and welcoming environment, inside and outdoors
- Appropriate, responsive, differentiated, open ended and challenging learning opportunities
- Experiences that value, reflect, celebrate and build on our diverse community
- Effective working partnerships to ensure the needs of all are represented and heard
- Respectful, trusting and effective relationships which display emotional warmth
- Supportive induction procedures and routines
- Effective systems of communication
- A proactive learning community with a belief that learning is learnable
- A highly skilled, motivated and committed staff

We will demonstrate our commitment to this by:

- Establishing and maintaining a dynamic and inclusive ethos which ensures there are consistently high expectations for all
- Maintaining professional integrity, high standards and being effective role models
- Being inspirational leaders and learners – ready to support and challenge others in their learning
- Valuing and respecting all, celebrating individuality and diversity
- Listening, reflecting and continuously improving

- Working within all agreed policies, procedures and working practices, ensuring they are brought alive
- Supporting innovation, being flexible and playful
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Ensuring all staff have access to high quality on-going professional development opportunities
- Challenging discrimination and stereotyping, breaking down barriers to inclusion
- Ensuring all systems of communication are open and transparent
- Making the best of all the resources we have available to us
- Respecting and responding to the voice of our stakeholders and partners, leading the way in multi-agency delivery of services
- Becoming co-constructors in learning, watching and learning alongside our learners
- Sharing and learning from best practice, locally and nationally

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and families are valued at Ernesettle Community School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential SEN is identified at the earliest opportunity. Early identification of SEN is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with Parents/Carers at an early stage. Please see our SEN policy or SEN information report for further information.

Welfare

It is important to ensure that all children in our school are safe. In the EYFS, we aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choice to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all our children.

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 use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- 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, this is significant in our Plan, Do, Review time where the children have the opportunity to discuss what they would like to learn next.
- 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 evening in June where they receive the Reception information booklet and the School Prospectus which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the Parents/Carers of the school's vision and aims.
- Asking Parents/Carers to complete admission forms, medical form, disability form etc (please see induction pack).
- 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, Pre-school or Reception.
- As Parents/Carers to complete an 'All About Me' activity with their child over the Summer, where they will write a synopsis about their child including their likes and dislikes. This will form a display and the basis for our topic learning at the start of the Autumn Term.
- 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.
- In Reception, family members are invited to spend a morning each week at school with their children during the first term at the school through our 'Bring your own...' events.
- Talking to Parents/Carers about their child before their child starts in our school, through conversations and visiting the children in the current Nursery settings. 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' learning observations to record any significant events and/or development in their child's learning at home, which are sent into us using our online learning journey, Tapestry.
- Asking Parents/Carers to engage in Class Dojo, where they are able to upload learning, communicate with their child's teacher and access more learning via the online platform.
- 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 Pre-school/Reception Leader.
- Allowing free access to the children's Online Learning Journeys and classroom displays.
- 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.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Staffing and Key Worker Responsibilities

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

Nursery

24 place Nursery
1 Nursery Room Leader
3 Teaching and Learning Assistants

Pre-school Classes

64 place Pre-school
2 Teachers
3 Teaching and Learning Assistants

Reception Classes

75 place Reception intake
3 Teachers
2 Teaching and Learning Assistants
1 Early Years Schools Direct Student

Key Workers

In order to meet the individual needs of all children, the Early Years Unit assigns a Key Worker to each child when they enter the setting in Nursery and Pre-school.

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/Carers. 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 Headteacher and Human Resources if it could affect their ability to care for children.

Organisation and Learning Environment

Enabling Environments

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. 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 independent learning time, the outside and inside areas are always available. Throughout the day, at timetabled intervals, children are taught in small groups with a Teacher or Key worker. In Pre-school and Reception children have access to snack and water at all points during the day. In the Nursery, snack is modelled and supported by a Key Worker.

Effective Learning

Effective Learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys.

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 and Pre-school

Nursery and Pre-school sessions are split into two sessions: 8.30am - 11.30am and 12.15pm – 3.15pm. More details on funded and paid sessions can be found in the Early Years 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.

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. A risk assessment for the provision is available on request.

- 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 Early Years Unit and in the wider school grounds) to ensure the safety of all children and adults.

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 Nursery and Pre-school, a password will be provided if a different adult is collecting the child.

Medicines

At Ernesettle Community School we undertake a whole school 'Medicines and Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions' policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the system for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. For further information, please see our Medicines and Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions policy.

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.

At Ernesettle Community School *“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”* (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017).

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 and Pre-school

Each Key Worker is responsible for an Online 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, WOW moments from events and WOW moments from home. In addition to this, each child’s online learning journey is contributed to and monitored by the child’s class teacher. In addition to your child’s online learning journey, all Parents/Carers are given a log in to access your child’s Class Dojo account. This is where teachers will share learning opportunities and extend learning further with simple activities and challenges that can be carried out at home.

Reception

In Reception, each teacher is responsible for the Online Learning Journeys in their class. However, Teaching and Learning Assistants, Parents/Carers 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 addition to your child’s online learning journey, all Parents/Carers are given a log in to access your child’s Class Dojo account. This is where teachers will share learning opportunities and extend learning further with simple activities and challenges that can be carried out at home.

In the final term of Nursery, Pre-school and Reception a written report is sent to Parents/Carers reporting on the Prime and Specific areas of development and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

For each Early Learning Goal, 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.

During the first Autumn term, Year 1 teachers carefully plan continuous provision into their school day so that children quickly assimilate their learning and become ready for their next step of education.

Early Years & Whole School Policies

Acceptable Use Policy

Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy

Child protection and Safeguarding Policy

CCTV policy

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Drugs, Alcohol and Incidence Policy

Equality Information Objectives Policy

Food and Drink Policy

Freedom of Information Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Lost or Missing Children Policy

Medicines and Supporting children with Medical Conditions Policy

No Smoking Policy

Online Safety Policy

Outdoor Education Visits and Offsite Activities Policy

Packed Lunch Policy

Prevent Policy

Safer Recruitment Policy

SEN Policy

Sick Child Policy

Uncollected child policy

Whistleblowing policy

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Headteacher every 2 years and shared with the governing board.