

ECS Early Years Policy



The Inspire Multi Academy Trust (South West)

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Ernesettle Community School 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 highly skilled Room Leaders, Early Years Practitioners and Teaching and Learning Assistants. Children in Nursery attend for fifteen funded hours per week (either 5 mornings or 5 afternoons) and children in Pre-School attend for thirty funded hours per week during school terms. We also offer Parents/Carers the opportunity to purchase additional sessions if they wish to do so.

Pre-School children then make a seamless transition to the Reception classes, since they are already familiar with the staff, classrooms and outdoor learning area. The Reception Unit holds 75 children, which is split into three classes each with a Teacher and 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 are kept healthy and safe.” We aim to support children in their learning through teaching and learning that promotes children’s “school readiness” and provides them with a broad range of knowledge and skills that form the foundation for future progress through school and life.

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE).

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles which shape practice in early years settings:

- **A Unique Child:** Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships with adults and peers.
- **Enabling Environments:** 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.
- **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The EYFS framework supports the education and care of all children in early years provision, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and recognises the importance of the characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

In Ernesettle’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 understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and approaches to learning are influenced by the feedback they receive from others. We therefore use praise and encouragement, alongside celebration and sharing assemblies and a range of rewards, to promote positive attitudes towards learning. These include verbal praise, stickers, 'Special Message Home' postcards, and 'Learner of the Week' certificates.

We recognise the importance of celebrating children's achievements and supporting them to reflect on their progress throughout their early years journey. At Ernesettle Community School, we use Tapestry, an online learning journey platform, to record and track each child's learning and development. Practitioners use Tapestry to capture observations, photographs and examples of children's work, which are linked to the EYFS areas of learning. This enables staff to monitor individual progress, plan next steps in learning and ensure that each child is supported to reach their full potential. Parents and Carers are also able to access Tapestry, allowing them to share in their child's achievements and contribute to their learning journey. The information gathered through Tapestry supports practitioners in building a clear picture of each child's development and helps to ensure a smooth transition into Primary education.

Our Staff, Pupils, Parents and 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 outside
- 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 and Disabilities (SEND)

All children and families are valued at Tor Bridge Primary 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 consider contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential SEND is identified at the earliest opportunity. Early identification of SEND is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents and carers at an early stage. Please refer to our SEND Policy 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 about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with opportunities to make choices in order to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take appropriate risks, but they also 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:

- Room Leads, Teachers and TLAs 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 as time is planned in 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 observations which stimulate discussion into personalised learning for every child.

- We plan for all children to succeed; we use support all children to achieve the learning planned through scaffolding and modelling.
- We monitor children's progress and provide next steps to support them throughout the Early Years 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 and Carers

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

- An information evening in June where they receive the 'Welcome to Reception Information Pack' and the School Prospectus which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the Parents and Carers of the school's vision and aims.
- Asking Parents and Carers to complete admission forms, medical form, disability form, etc. (Please see Welcome to Reception Information Pack).
- Asking Parents and 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 Reception.
- As Parents and 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 Area of Study at the start of the Autumn Term.
- Encouraging Parents and Carers to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns prior to requesting meetings with Senior Leaders.
- Inviting Parents and Carers to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Early Reading, Maths and Phonics.
- Talking to Parents and Carers about their child before their child starts in our school, through planned conversations with Parents and Carers 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 and Carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Parents and Carers are invited into the classroom on a daily basis and can view and comment upon their child's Learning Journey (via Tapestry) whenever they would like to.
- Asking Parents and Carers to send in photographs to record any significant events and/or development in their child's learning through their Tapestry account.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and Parents and Carers: School trips, special lunches, Christmas Performances, Sports Day, etc.
- Parents and Carers are made aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through their child's online Learning Journey, via Tapestry.
- Early Morning Learning, which is a time whereby Parents and Carers 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
4 Teaching and Learning Assistants

Pre-School Classes

64 place Pre-School
2 Pre-school Room Leaders
5 Teaching and Learning Assistants

Reception Classes

75 place Reception intake
3 Teachers
3 Teaching and Learning Assistants

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 TLAs contribute to this.

Intimate Care

Developing independence in toileting is an important part of school readiness. We encourage Parents and Carers to begin toilet training before children start school where possible. Families may find the guidance from ERIC (The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity) helpful when supporting their child with this transition. ERIC provides practical advice for toilet training and continence support, which can be accessed here: <https://eric.org.uk>

However, we recognise that children develop at different rates and some children, depending on their age, stage, and development, may need additional support with toileting. In these cases, the child's Key Worker will support the child and work closely with Parents and Carers to ensure their needs are met appropriately. Please refer to the Intimate Care Policy for further information. Staff are also able to provide advice and guidance to parents and carers who would like support in helping their child transition out of nappies.

Staff Medication

Practitioners working in the Early Years setting, who are taking medication have agreed to inform the Executive Headteacher/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 appropriately challenged. Children have daily access to both indoor and outdoor spaces that are organised into clearly defined areas of learning with carefully planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is central to our approach, with children directing much of their own learning through opportunities planned by staff. Adults interact with children to support and extend learning where appropriate. The Early Years classroom and learning spaces are organised so children can explore and learn safely. There are areas for active play as well as quieter spaces for focused activities. Resources are accessible to encourage independence and choice across all areas of learning.

Reception children also benefit from a large, enclosed outdoor learning area. Outdoor learning supports children's development by providing opportunities to explore using their senses and be physically active. Activities and resources are planned to support gross motor development alongside learning across the curriculum.

Children are encouraged to develop independence during Independent Learning Times, while adults provide guidance and support where needed. Both indoor and outdoor areas remain available throughout the day. At planned times, children also work in small groups with a teacher, supported by a Teaching and Learning Assistant.

As part of their provision, children regularly take part in Forest School sessions, where they explore the natural environment, develop confidence, build resilience and strengthen their physical and social skills through outdoor experiences.

Children in Reception have continuous access to water and snack throughout the day.

Effective Learning

Effective learning builds on children's prior knowledge and interests. Planning is informed by observations to ensure learning reflects children's current interests, experiences, and next steps. These observations are recorded in children's Learning Journeys on Tapestry.

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.

Reception

Reception children arrive at 8:30am for 'Early Morning Learning' and doors close for registration at 8:50am. Lunch is between 11:45am and 12:45pm. The children are collected at 3:10pm through the Reception doors.

Resources

The Early Years setting 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. Enhancement resources are added to the continuous provision areas to engage, excite and develop children's learning through play.

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 always available.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Milk and fruit are available during the day.
- A first aider is always accessible, and a record of accidents and injuries is always kept.
- A fire/emergency evacuation procedure and policy are in place.
- 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's own personal use.
- Regular risk assessments are carried out on both resources and the environment (both immediate to the Early Years setting and in the wider school grounds) to ensure the safety of all children and adults.

Collecting Children

The registration form lists the Parents and Carers who will normally collect the children at the end of the session. If there is an emergency, the Parent or Carer must ring the school to inform them who will be collecting the child.

Medicines

At Ernesettle Community School, we follow a whole school 'Medicines and Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions' policy. This ensures that systems are in place to keep medicines and information about a child's medical needs 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 across the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning, as well as the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

The prime areas of learning are:

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

The specific areas of learning are:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Through careful observation and assessment, including information shared by Parents and Carers and previous settings, practitioners assess children's levels of development. As children grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas, the focus of learning becomes more balanced across all areas of the curriculum. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with Parents and Carers and agree how best to support the child.

Planning and adult-guided activities reflect the different ways children learn. At Tor Bridge Primary School, we support children to develop the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, keep trying when they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children 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 (Tapestry) for each child in their key worker group and each term, this will include observations, direct speech from the child, photographs of different activities and adult directed activities. In addition to this, each child’s online learning journey is contributed to and monitored by the child’s class teacher.

For all children turning three in Nursery, a Two-Year-Old Check document will be created that details what the child is able to do and the ways in which they learn against the Early Years Foundation Stage. This will be shared with the Pre-School team to ensure an effective transition as well as the Parents, who are also able to add their voice.

Reception

In Reception, the class teacher is responsible for maintaining each child’s online Learning Journey on Tapestry. Teaching and Learning Assistants, Parents and Carers and other professionals may also contribute. Learning Journeys include observations, children’s voice, photographs of activities, adult-led learning, contributions from home and key experiences such as school trips and whole class activities. These observations support ongoing assessment and help inform planning for each child’s next steps.

When children start Reception, they complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks. The RBA is a short, interactive assessment that focuses on early mathematics, literacy and communication and language. The purpose of the RBA is to provide a starting point for measuring the progress children make during primary school. Results are compared with Key Stage 2 outcomes at the end of Year 6 to form a school-level progress measure.

In the final term of Reception, Parents and Carers receive a written report summarising their child’s development across the prime and specific areas of learning, as well as the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. Parents and Carers can also download a PDF version of their child’s Learning Journey from Tapestry.

At the end of the Reception year, teachers complete the EYFS Profile. For each Early Learning Goal, teachers assess whether a child is ‘emerging’ or ‘expected’ in relation to the level of development expected by the end of Reception. The profile also includes a short commentary on the child’s Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. This information supports future curriculum planning and helps the Year 1 teacher understand each child’s strengths, needs and approach to learning.

Positive Behaviour Policy in the Early Years

Behaviour in the Early Years Foundation Stage follows the whole school behaviour vision and relational practice approach outlined in the TIMAT Positive Behaviour & Relational Practice Handbook. This approach is built on nurturing relationships, consistent routines and clear expectations so that children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

In Reception, staff explicitly teach and model the Inspire Expectations: We are ready to learn, we are respectful, we are kind and we are resilient. These expectations are reinforced through daily routines, positive role modelling and high-quality interactions with adults and peers.

Adults prioritise strong relationships and predictable routines to support children in learning how to behave and regulate their emotions. Behaviour is taught through clear modelling, praise for positive choices and restorative conversations where needed. This ensures children understand expectations and are supported to reflect and make positive choices.

In EYFS, these principles are implemented in an age-appropriate way. This supports children in developing the social, emotional and behavioural foundations needed to become confident and resilient learners.

[Transition from Reception to Year One](#)

In Term 6, the children's new teacher spends time in the Reception classroom so that they can become familiar with one another. Children will also have the opportunity to visit their new teacher in their new classroom. The Year 1 classrooms include familiar resources to help support a smooth transition into Key Stage One.

Staff recognise that this is another significant transition for children, as they move from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into primary education. Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to ensure that children's next steps in learning are clearly understood and supported, enabling them to continue making good progress in their educational journey.

The Year 1 teacher is provided with 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 Teaching and Learning. This information supports professional dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and helps inform the planning of learning opportunities in Year 1.