



Edisford Primary School

*Confidence. Persistence. Getting Along. Organisation. Resilience.*

### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

At Edisford we aim to:

- Provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning.
- We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent.
- We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings and use [Development Matters](#) as our guide for age-related expectations:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

#### Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.

- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and including a plethora of first-hand experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

### Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

### Prime Areas

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime areas**:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

These areas lay vital foundations in the early years.

### Specific Areas

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the World**

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. These feed into our five key personal characteristics: resilience, confidence, getting along, organisation and persistence.

### Subject Leadership

For each EYFS theme, links are made to curriculum subjects to enable subject leaders to plot the starting points for their subjects, linking EYFS learning to the National Curriculum. A logical sequence of learning is planned within each theme/subject.

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### The Importance of Play.

Play is the child's world. It is not symbolism. Children who are engaged in a formal education, before foundation skills are secure, may become disaffected.

Play is about using our senses. It is a natural process. It enables them, through practical problem solving, to learn how to learn.

### Characteristics of Play

- Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support, and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing well-planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which practitioners support young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, children behave in different ways: sometimes their play will be responsive or boisterous, sometimes they may describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.
- The EYFS requires providers to ensure a balance of child-initiated and adult-led play-based activities.
- Providers should use their judgement and their knowledge of the children in their care in deciding what the balance should be. When a child engages in a self-chosen pursuit, this is child initiated activity.

**The role of the teacher is crucial in:**

- leading imaginative play (i.e. modelling),
- four-turn conversation (back and forth conversation to encourage an elaborated code),
- model using the right word to describe, e.g. Please bring me the blue coat on the hook,
- planning first-hand experiences (experiential play),
- reflecting and assessing on teaching and learning,
- key assessment collections (baseline, mid-point, end-point),
- record keeping for each child,
- changing reading books and following their reading journey,
- imparting knowledge, such as phonics, early maths,
- promoting a passion for how we learn, fostering curiosity and modelling an inquisitive mind (asking questions as well as answering them),
- giving energy and time to develop young minds and people,
- facilitate imaginary play,
- rehearsing rules and routines, teaching social cues.
- modelling phonic sounds
- sharing the writing process and modelling how to write
- reading with expression and sounding out using phonics

### EYFS Areas of Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate the learning opportunities on the seven areas of learning (3 Prime and 4 Specific) which are;

1. Personal Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development
4. Mathematics
5. Literacy
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

### How children learn in the Foundation Stage

Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first-hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### Characteristics for Learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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

### Risk taking

Young children think systematically, but are different from adults because they lack experience. Errors are a vital part of the learning process and this is why we think it is important for children to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

### Assessment

We use development matters to support Assessment.

- **Formative assessment** is the type of assessment based on observations, things children have made or drawn and information from parents. It informs or guides everyday planning.

- *Summative assessment is a summary of all the formative assessment done over a long period and makes statements about the child's achievements. The EY Profile is the summative assessment completed by practitioners to show the journey through EY. It summarises children's progress towards the early learning goals. Summative assessment is shared with the Year 1 teachers.*

### Assessment Cycle

- *Baseline*
- *Mid-point*
- *End-point (against ELGs)*

*Although we no longer report those exceeding to the LA, we do note those children that show that they are particularly able across the EYFS curriculum, so that we can adapt their learning accordingly in Year 1 and also track their progress to Year 2 (through the Key Stage).*

### Observation and Assessment

*As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. All practitioners contribute and discussions take place regularly throughout the school day and week.*

*Significant observations of children's achievements are used to inform our work and planning. Some examples are collated for moderation purposes and to share with parents. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents' evening and reports are written twice a year.*

### Key Person

*Each child in a group setting must be assigned a key person.*

- *A key person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents.*
- *A key person depends on in the setting, such as their teacher or a Nursery Nurse/teaching assistant.*

## Planning

As a team, we write long term plans. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

We review the activities regularly adding extra challenge to promote further development opportunities.

The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Edisford and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily, systematic, synthetic phonics lesson using Phonics Finch. The morning also allows for a focus, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

## Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Child Protection, Food and Drink; Illness and Injury, and safeguarding such as use of mobile phones..

## Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Edisford, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and many exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling

us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

### Parental Communication

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome parental participation and actively encourage parents to be involved in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

### WhatsApp Communication

From September 2025, we are introducing a new communication tool to celebrate children's learning, WOW moments and important messages in the Foundation Stage. We will use the WhatsApp platform to share pictures and information. Parents will sign to give consent for their child's image to be shared with other parents in the class, e.g. on group photos. We will also ask parents to confirm that these images will not be shared on other social media platforms. This method of communication will only be used for children in their Reception year.

### Photographs and Videos

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed/videoed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual record books, on the school website and Instagram page.

We encourage parents to engage with school in a variety of ways:

- School breakfasts – eating breakfast at one of our lovely morning events to show the importance of interacting with children and eating healthily.

- Parents' afternoons – to feed back to parents about attainment, progress, behaviour and engagement, overall happiness at school and talents and personal characteristics.
- Phonics workshops – this takes place in the Autumn term and gives parents a good understanding of synthetic phonics and how to support their child in their reading journey.
- School events – such as Sports' Day, school fayres, shows and performances.
- Weekly newsflash – we inform parents about school events and dates for their diaries in a weekly Newsflash. We publish the first names of those that have received an award
- Half termly newsletter – a celebratory round-up of all events and achievements happening in and out of school.

### Assessment and Feedback to Parents

#### Parents' Evening/Open Evening – Autumn Term

In the 2025–26 academic year, our school will combine the autumn term parental feedback meeting with an Open Evening for prospective families.

This joint event will offer current parents the chance to speak informally with class teachers and browse children's workbooks. Prospective parents will be able to hear the headteacher speak about the school's values and vision, while enjoying classroom showcases and examples of learning in action.

#### Parents' Afternoon – Spring Term

Following the mid-year assessments, parents will be able to meet with the class teacher and hear how their child is progressing. This is a more formal meeting with the class teacher.

#### Reports – Summer Term

At the end of the summer term, written reports are sent to parents showing the attainment and progress each child has made at our school.

## New Reception Intake

### Prospective Children

We have regular Open Mornings throughout the Autumn term, where parents of incumbent Reception children are shown around the school by the headteacher.

### Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

### New Reception Visit Mornings

These take place for new Reception children once their place has been confirmed. Children then do a few half day sessions in the first week, then moving to full-time thereafter.

### Induction Morning

An induction morning, led by the headteacher and Reception team, is organised in the summer term.

### Reading at Home

We place great importance on parents reading with and to children at home. Reading books are changed regularly and children are given both a decodable reading book and a reading for pleasure book. Children are given a reading record for parents to track reading and sign when children have read. A book list is given to parents in the reading record, to allow them and their child to see their progress.

### Open Door Policy

Having an 'open door' policy to encourage parents to talk to the teacher if they have any minor concerns/queries. The class teacher will do their best to respond to minor mishaps to enable the child to deal effectively with these.

### Star Jars

We reward children for anything we see that is noteworthy, such as behaviour, work or enjoyment. These rewards feed into our five characteristics for success (resilience, persistence, confidence, getting along and organisation). Rewards are immediate and visual, so that children can celebrate their own achievements.

### House Assemblies

Children who have exemplified our Marvellous Manners chosen by our ambassadors each week are celebrated in a weekly House Assembly. These are mentioned on our weekly Newsflash to parents.

### End of Year Awards Assembly

At the end of every year, we hold an awards ceremony for all key stages, to reward children for their particular strengths and achievements. All children will receive an award.

### Safeguarding children

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. See our Child Protection Policy.

### Equalities and Disabilities

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. The curriculum is adapted to suit all levels of ability. We have a full equality policy available at school.

### Special Educational Needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Foundation age onwards. If children are not making measurable levels of progress, the school will act to ascertain what the barrier(s) may be. Equally, parents can share their thoughts and any concerns with school in a reciprocal partnership.

Where necessary, small group and individual help is provided within the school. We have links with various agencies and when necessary their involvement may be required to support certain children. Parents/carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. We have a full Special Educational Needs Policy online.

### Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Foundation Stage staff have had paediatric first aid training. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before after school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. A full Health and Safety Policy is available in School.

### Allergies

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept in the kitchen area and all adults involved are informed.

### Medical Needs

We keep a note of any medical needs, allergies, children who need insulin, inhalers, Piriton, epi-pens in the nursery kitchen and in the class 1 area so everyone is aware of the individual needs. All EYFS staff are trained in paediatric first aid and diabetic and epi-pen trained. See medicines policy.

Policy updated: July 2025

Next review: July 2026

## Appendix

### Areas of Learning

#### Personal, social and emotional development

The school fosters and develops relationships between home and school in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

#### Physical development

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoor and outdoor and by working with a wide range of resources.

#### Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on by feeding in new or specific vocabulary. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together. Four-turn conversation led by adults fosters higher quality back and forth interactions.

#### Literacy

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The opportunities given in continuous provision foster early writing, encouraging correct pencil control, left/right orientation and cursive letter

formation. Children rehearse sentences aloud, recording them piece by piece in their heads, then repeat them, then write them. Shared writing is used to model writing for children. Teachers utilise strategies in shared writing such as deliberate mistakes and vocalising sounding out for children. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given many opportunities to listen to stories told by the staff.

### Mathematics

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. We use the Red Rose pilot for maths mastery, which teaches concrete first, then pictorial, then abstract. Children use manipulatives to represent number and number patterns in a concrete way. Pre-number work is covered through nursery rhymes and number activities. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

### Understanding the World

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

### Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching. Through various times during the year children are given the opportunity to participate in school productions and assemblies.

## Monitoring Provision in EYFS

1. How well pupils are helped to learn and develop
2. How effectively is welfare promoted
3. How well adults support learning and development
4. Quality of learning environment indoors
5. Quality of learning environment outdoors
6. How well info from observation/assessment is used
7. Quality of planning for individuals—challenging experiences
8. How well additional learning needs are identified and provided for
9. Purposeful play and exploration (in and outdoors) - balance adult led and child led—to foster active learning
10. How well adults teach keeping safe/good health/ good habits of behaviour
11. Provision for ill children/medication/missing child
12. Suitability of equipment--safety