

'From Acorns to Oaks: Learning and Growing Together.'

Early Years Policy

January 2024



At our school, we embrace creation in our rural setting,
striving to learn, contribute and achieve.

As #TEAMELHAM, we respect, support and inspire each other.

We are a community that holds each other to high standards,
helping everyone to be the best they can be, held safe in the
loving hands of God.

Our Narrative

New Living Translation John 6:5-14 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

5 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" **6** He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money^[a] to feed them!"

8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. **9** "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

10 "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) **11** Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterwards he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. **12** After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." **13** So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw him^[b] do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!"^[c]

Elham Church Of England Primary School

Elham Church of England Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School catering for children between the ages of 4 and 11 years. The school prides itself on being a church school with 3 specific values respect, support, inspire based on the fundamental beliefs in one God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Anglican tradition.

Rationale

At Elham CE Primary School we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life to fulfil their potential. We believe that a secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents throughout their school years and on into adulthood.

We believe that children learn through active, hands on, practical experiences, through interaction with others, opportunities to listen, experiment, observe and reflect. We provide rich, stimulating and appropriate experiences that present each child with opportunities to develop their competencies and their thinking to the best of their ability across all areas of learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a single quality framework for children from birth to the age of five and encompasses care, learning and development. It is mandatory for all Early Years providers (from September 2020). The EYFS curriculum sets a series of early learning goals for children to work towards by the time they reach the end of the reception year. By the end of the EYFS, some children will have exceeded the goals, many children will have reached expected levels, and a few children, depending on their specific individual needs will be working towards some or all of the goals.

Effective practice in the EYFS at Elham CE Primary School is built on the Seven key features of effective practice.

1. The best for every child

- All children deserve to have an equal chance of success.
- High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- When they start school, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 4 months¹ behind their peers. We need to do more to narrow that gap.
- Children who have lived through difficult experiences can begin to grow stronger when they experience high quality early education and care.
- High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning

2. High-quality care

- The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner.
- Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for.
- High-quality care is consistent. Every practitioner needs to enjoy spending time with young children.
- Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies. They notice when a baby looks towards them and gurgles and respond with pleasure.
- Practitioners understand that toddlers are learning to be independent, so they will sometimes get frustrated.
- Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children.

3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn

- The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.
- Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.
- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.
- Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.
- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

- Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help.
- Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.
- Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.
- Children in the early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning. • Older children need more of this guided learning.
- A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.

5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

- Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.
- Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.
- Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.
- Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.
- Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

6 Self-regulation and executive function

- Executive function includes the child's ability to: – hold information in mind – focus their attention – think flexibly – inhibit impulsive behaviour.
- These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate: – concentrate their thinking – plan what to do next – monitor what they are doing and adapt – regulate strong feelings – be patient for what they want – bounce back when things get difficult.
- Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans. Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.

7 Partnership with parents

- It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.
- This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children's progress. • The help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their learning.
- Some children get much less support for their learning at home than others. By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most.
- It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children

Areas of learning and development

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) September 2020 onwards is made up of 4 Specific Areas and 3 Prime Areas of learning and development known as Educational Programmes, within these areas are 17 individual Early Learning Goals for each child. All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are equally important. The characteristics of effective learning are also observed for each child. All the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Specific Areas of learning and development:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive art and design

Prime Areas of learning and development

- Personal Social and emotional development
- Physical Development
- Communication and language development

Characteristics of effective learning

- 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

Admission into Reception

For the first week of the academic year the children will stay until 12.00, the second week they will stay until 1.00 and have lunch. From then on the children will be in for the full day.

A gradual, well supported introduction to the various aspects of school life and its members is catered for. The children are introduced to the routine of school which require more conforming, socialising and directed learning situations than will have been experienced before.

Children with Additional Educational Needs

Our school welcomes children with special needs and we believe we nurture a sympathetic and caring environment in which all children can establish positive relationships with each other regardless of individual differences. Any child experiencing some difficulty is discussed with both the teacher and the parents and if necessary suggestions to help and support the child are made. In consultation and agreement with the parents the child may be included in the school's SEN register.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We observe children and respond appropriately to help them make progress towards the early learning goals. Assessments are taken from observations gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts, although the majority of assessment comes from child-initiated activities the rest is taken from teacher directed time and parent voice. Emphasis is given to teacher knowledge of the child's progress using significant moments as the basis of judgements.

At Elham CE Primary School we submit our end of year EYFS data to the local authority. We attend moderation meetings, where judgements are monitored to ensure consistency across settings. A written summary reporting the child's progress against the early learning goals is given to parents at the end of the year. There is opportunity to share information regarding the EYFS Profile with parents throughout the year at Parents Evenings and as parents come into class on an on-going basis. When a child moves to a new school we forward all information regarding EYFS assessments.

Transition into National Curriculum

During the second half of the summer term the Acorns Class teacher (Yr. R) liaises with the Hazel Class teacher (Yr. 1) to arrange opportunities for the Hazel Class teacher to meet the children. At the end of the summer term a transition afternoon is arranged for the children to spend a session in their new classroom with their new teacher.

Year 1 represents the beginning of Key Stage One and therefore follows the KS1 curriculum. It is consequently necessary for the Reception and Year 1 staff to work closely to prepare for a smooth transition. Time is given during the autumn term for the children to adjust to new routines and procedures and familiarise themselves with new activities and new adults.

Monitoring

Early Years Provision at Elham CE Primary School is continually monitored using a system of self-evaluation. The EYFS teacher regularly meets with other EYFS teachers within the hub of village schools we belong to, to share good practise and awareness of Early Years updates.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body on.....

Signed..... Date.....

(Chair of Governors)

Signed..... Date:.....

(Headteacher)

This policy will be reviewed by the Full Governing Body on an annual basis

Reviewed