

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

**POLICY**

**September 2024**

**VERSION HISTORY**

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**Our Position Statement**

We believe that every child has the **right to the highest quality early childhood education and care**. We are a vibrant, happy, welcoming school and provide a stimulating and inclusive environment for learning. We respect and respond to the children’s backgrounds and individual circumstances. We have a wonderful Early Years environment, with well-developed areas to maximize the children's opportunities to play and learn, both indoors and outside.

We demonstrate high expectations for each unique child by providing a balance between child-initiated and adult directed activities, with emphasis placed on developing a broad range of skills, underpinned by The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (new September 2021).  We take pride in responding to the children's interests and ensure that activities are challenging, fun and purposeful.   We develop their characteristics of effective learning through opportunities to play and explore, be active in their learning, make decisions, share ideas, be creative and think critically. We celebrate all children’s efforts and achievements.

Through early, accurate Baseline Assessment we record each child’s starting points then identify and plan for their next steps for learning. Their progress towards the Age Related Expectations (AREs) is closely tracked throughout the year and regularly shared with parents to support the children’s development both in school and at home. We recognise the crucial role of parental involvement in a child's education and provide regular communication regarding children's progress.

**Aims**

For our children to feel happy, settled and secure at school.

To provide a safe, stimulating environment in which they can develop a love of learning and a freedom of expression.

That they have the confidence to be independent and resilient learners who set their own goals, problem solve and challenge themselves in their learning.

To provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually.

For each and every child to be sufficiently supported and challenged to ensure that they make excellent progress from their starting points and reach their maximum potential

Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of individual children including those with additional needs

For all children to be ready for the next stage in their learning.

Develop excellent relationships with parents to ensure a strong partnership to support children.

**Etchells EYFS and Environment**

Our EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) consists of nursery children aged 3-4 and reception children aged 4-5 years. We have one intake in September.

At Etchells we have a purpose built EYFS building consisting of 2 classrooms, a large shared bay area, a small staff/group/1:1 room, cloakrooms, toilets and an outside classroom. We also have our EYFS Hub with a large classroom, small group/story room, cloakroom, toilets and newly refurbish outdoor area.

Our EYFS children also have access to a large outdoor playground with climbing frame, soft surface, grassed area, garden and bike track.

**Induction, Transition & Home Visits,**

We believe successful transition is crucial to ensure children’s sense of well-being at school and their ‘school readiness’ for their next stage of learning. Our aim is a seamless transition from a child’s home and, if attended their previous setting to Etchells. We aim to obtain a complete understanding of where they are in their learning and progress, ensuring that any needs are identified and that no learning is lost.

**Parent Partnerships**

Strong relationships between school and a child’s parents or carers are crucial to a child’s development. We therefore offer several opportunities for parents to familiarise themselves with our school, staff and school procedures before their child starts school and throughout the year and keep them up to date regarding their child’s progress. These are; a detailed induction programme for new pupils and parents/carers including home visits, private parent consultations at the beginning and mid-way through the year, celebration open evening at the end of the year, mid-year and end of year report to parents, parents’ curriculum information meetings, parent workshops, termly Early Years newsletters and a detailed website with school information and individual class pages. (See Appendix 2 for a yearly overview of how we involve parents in their child’s learning and progress).

**Observations and Assessment**

Baseline Assessments, including the new from September 2021 statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), are carried out through observations and interactions with the children during their first few weeks in school. This aims to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil’s attainment to be used as a starting point.

Continuing observations of children’s learning, development of skills and progress are carried out during child initiated learning and adult directed activities. Observations are recorded in various ways. Information gathered during observations informs on-going, formative assessment of each child against Pathways in Learning and towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) for the end of reception. Observations and assessments inform staff of each individual child’s ‘next steps’ for learning, areas for development and areas of strength, to be challenged and extended further.

Children’s ‘next steps for learning’ are updated by teachers (or TAs after discussion with class teacher) and should be clearly displayed in each EYFS classroom to ensure that they can be accessed by all teachers, teaching assistants and support staff prior to them working with the children.

**Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum & Planning**

Information is gathered through observations of children and their identified next steps for learning to inform our planning. There are 2 Focus Objectives each week. These aim to address specific learning issues which have been identified alongside the teaching and learning across all areas of development within the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings.

**The three Prime Areas are**:

* Personal, Social and Emotional Development
* Communication and Language
* Physical Development

**The four Specific Areas are**:

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding the world
* Expressive arts and design

**Characteristics of Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

* **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
* **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
* **Creating and thinking critically** – Children are encouraged and supported to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for approaching and completing tasks in the learning environment and continuous provision.

**Live Planning/Learning Displays**

In order to engage and motivate ALL children we take account of each child’s individual interests. Therefore, we do not plan specific termly themes or topics in advance but allow the children to choose the direction of their learning. Themes may then emerge from their interests.

Our learning journey is displayed in the classrooms on a live planning/learning board for each term. They show termly planning overviews for the seven areas of learning, key questions, the children’s interests, the directions that the learning takes and how it evolves. It also includes examples of all the activities covered throughout each term. These should then be referred to with the children to remind them of prior learning and to make links to current or future learning.

These boards are photographed at the end of each term to be included in the EYFS Curriculum file which will accompany the children as they progress through school, informing their next teachers of the learning covered. Previous displays have been kept in scrap books to refer back to and for subject leaders to look at.

**Marking**

EYFS teachers are not expected to write long, detailed notes of observations or to make written comments on all pieces of work. In order to keep feedback manageable and meaningful, the marking guidelines in ‘The Etchells Way’ should be followed. In brief, marking should be done in green pen and be used to inform firstly teachers but also SLT, subject co-ordinators, parents and anyone else looking at the work of pertinent information relating to the child’s attainment and progress.

We use specific symbols within a circle:

I is work carried out independently

S shows that they had support

C - copied

M - modelled

HH - ‘hand held’ when we guide the child’s hand (particularly with letter formation)

CI - child-initiated work

Ch - extra challenge

NS - next steps

* incorrect, needs revisiting

Re – revisit

C – correction

SC - self-corrected

**Child Initiated Learning/Adult-led activities**

A progressive, skill-based approach is taken where next steps for learning are identified. The interests of the children are used to plan activities in order to scaffold the next steps in skill development and knowledge acquisition.

A balance should be struck between adult-led activities and uninterrupted opportunities for children to choose their own tasks, resources and purpose. The role of the teacher and teaching assistant is to skilfully support, enhance and develop learning during child-initiated play, without it becoming adult-directed. Therefore, each day, the timetable consists of three whole class or group focussed intervention teaching times for writing, phonics and maths, alongside sessions for ‘child initiated play and learning’ (CIPL) and ‘free-flow’.

**‘Free-flow’**

During timetabled child-initiated learning time, the children are able to choose whether to play and learn indoors or outside in the outdoor classroom (weather and staff permitting). They may ‘free-flow’ throughout all areas of the environment: This includes the classrooms, the bay area and the outside areas. This gives greater access to resources, all staff, different role-play and provision areas, therefore maximising learning opportunities.

**Outdoor Learning**

The children have access the outdoor classrooms (weather and staff permitting). The outdoor environment reflects the uniqueness of outdoor learning opportunities using natural resources – conkers, sticks, logs, a mud kitchen, planting, environmental art with leaves, shells, stones etc. Our aim is to address all seven areas of learning from the Foundation Stage Curriculum, both indoors and out.

A large, outdoor area with a climbing frame, slide, bike track, log cabin and grassed area is used to address the development of gross motor skills. This is used during the lunchtime period and during planned sessions.

**Continuous Provision**

Activities and resources for the continuous provision areas are carefully planned to address the children’s identified next steps and target specific skills and knowledge for individuals or groups of children. Identified next steps also inform the challenges for the areas of continuous provision, aimed at extending or deepening the learning of higher attaining children. Classrooms are organised so that resources are independently accessible to the children.

**Inclusion - Disadvantaged Pupils/Vulnerable groups/Most Able and Interventions**

We use assessment information to monitor the progress of significant groups of children; Boys/Girls, SEN, EAL/Ethnicity, FSM/Pupil Premium, More able, Summer born. Individual or groups of children who are not progressing as expected are identified to receive intervention support in whichever area of development needed.

**Equal Opportunities**

We closely monitor the delivery and coverage of our curriculum to ensure that all children have equal access. We acknowledge and address differences positively. Our belief in individualised, differentiated teaching pays regard to gender, culture, ethnicity, children who speak additional languages and those who are differently able. Resources are chosen and monitored regularly with due regard to the nine protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

**Positive Relationships Policy**

Our aim is to foster courtesy and respect for others in a supporting and purposeful environment and to create friendly and caring surroundings, where control is firm, consistent and fair to all. We introduce the school bee rules, with certificates awarded at our Early Years assembly on Fridays, and reinforce our high expectations for behaviour through our class recognition board. Etchells Core Values are also introduced and certificates awarded to children demonstrating them. If any child displays unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour, they are made aware through positive reinforcement, good role modelling and a firm, but quiet and reasoning approach. The relevant ladder of consequences is made clear to all children (See Etchells Positive Relationships policy).

**Safeguarding & Child Protection**

At Etchells Primary School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We strongly believe that all children have the right to feel safe and to be protected from physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. All members of staff, volunteers and governors are trained in safeguarding and child protection issues as part of their induction process and continued professional development. All members of staff have read and understood part 1 of the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance – ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’. Any member of staff with any concerns regarding the welfare of a child must follow the procedures endorsed by Stockport Safeguarding Children Board, which are described in the flow-chart that is displayed around school.

(See school’s full Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies for further safeguarding policy & procedures)

**Health & Care**

Good health and hygiene, including oral health, is actively promoted and encouraged. Children are provided with a healthy snack from a range of fruit and vegetables. The daily snack and water is available to the children throughout the day. In order to enable continuity in learning, a dedicated ‘snack time’ does not take place.

We encourage children to tend to their own personal needs and hygiene wherever possible. However, depending on a child’s stage of development, they may at times need help from an adult. Permission to wash and provide intimate care if required is obtained in writing from all parents when their child starts school.

To try to reduce the spread of germs and infection children are reminded to wash their hands /use antibacterial gel on entering school and when returning from PE sessions and lunchtime as well as after using the toilet and before eating.

**Risk Assessments**

Risk assessments have been carried out for all Early Years indoor and outdoor environments to ensure the safety and welfare of our children. Any potential hazards have been identified and clear measures and controls put in place to minimise and manage any risk. The risk assessments are displayed in each specific area and are reviewed yearly by all EYFS staff.

**First Aid**

All staff receive basic first aid training. In addition to this, several members of staff who work within the EYFS have attended specific paediatric first aid training. At least one paediatric first aid member of staff is based in each of the EYFS areas. A trained paediatric first aid member of staff is present on local visits and trips along with a suitable first aid kit. First aid kits are available in clearly labelled cupboards in the EYFS building staff room and in the EYFS Hub. A defibrillator is located in the medical room and a list of trained staff can be found alongside it. Any first aid or medicine that is administered to any child must be recorded in the dedicated EYFS First Aid file. A medicine form must be completed by the parent or carer prior to medicine being administered. Any medicine administered must be witnessed. For the protection of children and staff, two members of staff are required to be present for treatment to injuries that are not visible outside of clothing. Any injury to the head or face requires the completion of a pink parent/carer letter which provides details of the injury and advice regarding further monitoring/action. Injuries to other parts of the body may result in a blue parent/carer letter providing details of the injury, particularly if the injury is not visible. This is most important when a child may not be being collected by their main parent or carer but may be going to after school club, child-minder or friends house. The legislation in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024 has been taken into account regarding the paediatric first aid training.

**Consistency and Communication**

Consistency and communication is key to maintaining an outstanding EYFS provision.

In order to uphold these standards, the following guidelines are followed:

* EYWL teachers (currently job share 2 days/3days), maintain regular communications by a ‘hand-over’ email and further phone calls/group chats when needed.
* Termly pupil progress meetings are held to discuss the children’s welfare, attainment and progress and to plan for the next term.
* All teachers and teaching assistants meet regularly to discuss planning. Teachers use medium term plans to inform weekly learning challenges and skill focuses for each half term.
* Our teaching assistants enable continuity and communication for all by checking that messages have been passed on and that all members of staff are aware of any issues or concerns that may have arisen during the week.
* EYFS teachers meet on a Thursday morning to be kept updated with any current whole school matters or updates. These meetings begin promptly at 8.15am to allow necessary time and to ensure we are ready to open doors to the children on time. Any pertinent messages should be relayed to TAs and RSIAs where appropriate. Any staff who will be late or unable to attend should inform the EYFS leader, Sally Revill, before 8.15am.

**This EYFS policy should be read in conjunction with all main school policies.**

**Staff should sign when the policy has been read, understood and agreed each September or whenever the policy has been reviewed.**

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1**

**Induction & Transition**

We believe successful transition is crucial to ensure children’s sense of well-being at school and their ‘school readiness’ for their next stage of learning.

Our aim is a seamless transition from a child’s previous setting to Etchells. We aim to obtain a complete understanding of where they are in their learning and progress, ensuring that any needs are identified and that no learning is lost.

**Induction and transition to Etchells EYFS from a previous setting.**

At Etchells we:

Invite our Nursery and Reception parents to an early parents evening which gives clear details of how we will induct their child into school, induction visit arrangements and what to expect during the first few weeks at school.

It provides information about our expectations of ‘school readiness’ and how they can help their child at home to prepare for school.

It includes a tour of school and the early years classrooms where parents are encouraged to take photographs of the various learning areas so that they can talk about them with their child prior to their induction visits.

We liaise with children’s pre-school settings/teachers and where possible visit the children prior to their induction visits so that we are already familiar to them. We discuss each child’s individual interests, personalities, needs, home circumstances and their progress towards age related expectations. We share assessments and records to obtain an accurate overview of the child’s starting points and identify next steps for learning.

The children who are due to start Nursery and Reception attend several induction visits/Stay and Plays during the term before they start to introduce them to their new environment, teachers and teaching assistants.

The teachers visit the new nursery children in their home environment and the parents and children are invited to an induction meeting. Parents and children are asked to complete an ‘All About Me’ fact file detailing the children’s likes/dislikes, family, favourite foods, interests and anything else that they would like us to know.

Information is also gathered regarding any dietary requirements or preferences, allergies, health and any safeguarding needs etc to ensure that we know everything necessary about each child in our care.

Our ‘Open Evening’ at the end of July provides another opportunity for children and their families to come into school, look around all areas of the school and meet the staff from all year groups.

**Transition from Reception to Year 1.**

The children visit their new classroom and meet their new teacher at transition sessions in July.

Their new teacher makes several visits to see their new class in their reception classroom to see their current level of learning and learning styles.

Our ‘Open Evening’ at the end of July provides another opportunity for children and their families to come into school, look around the year 1 classrooms and meet the staff.

We allocate time in July and arrange pupil progress/transition meetings with SLT and the children’s next teacher to discuss each individual child in depth.

We discuss their interests, personalities, needs, home circumstances and their progress towards age related expectations (AREs).

We share assessments and records to obtain an accurate overview of the child’s starting points and identify next steps for learning.

We share records regarding involvement of outside agencies such as speech and language therapy or bilingual support and pay particular attention to any child with special educational needs and their statements/IEPs etc.

We give details of any gaps or barriers to learning and information regarding any interventions.

We discuss more able children and how they were challenged in their learning.

We discuss any pupils receiving pupil premium funding, their progress and how the funding was allocated.

We look at and discuss the children’s work with particular emphasis on progress in mathematics, writing, reading and phonics.

Information is passed on regarding each child’s current stage of learning in each subject and their next steps for learning to enable their new teacher to accurately plan lessons at the right level and group the children where appropriate.

Reading records are passed up with each child, with their next reading book, to enable smooth continuity of reading progress alongside HFW and phonic records.

Each child’s end of year report details the children’s characteristics of effective learning and shows whether they have achieved, exceeded or are continuing to work towards the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception.

**Appendix 2**

**Parent partnerships – Termly Overview**

Prior to their child starting school:

Detailed induction programme for new pupils and parents/carers (see Appendix 1).

**Autumn Term:**

First 2 days in September set aside for children and their parents to come into school in very small groups. This allows the children to visit with their parents again after the summer break to familiarise themselves with the environment and staff before being left at school. It also enables parents to ask any questions that may have arisen, for us to refresh information regarding the part time induction sessions and what is to be expected as their child starts school.

An opportunity for a private meeting with their child’s teacher is offered at this time should there be a need to discuss anything confidential.

Early parents evening giving information regarding Early Years Curriculum, outlining Age Related Expectations (AREs), current level of where there child is at and how parents can help their child at home.

Curriculum meeting end of September – This meeting gives vital information regarding the AREs and ELGs for literacy, early reading and our approach to teaching reading and phonics. Parents are given a demonstration of reading and phonics activities and are shown all the resources which will be sent home with their child for them to support their reading development at home. They are also informed about our school cursive handwriting scheme.

**Spring Term:**

Parent workshops – parents are invited into school to join in with their children’s learning, see demonstration lessons and activities and given ideas for activities they could do at home to support their child’s development.

Mid-year report to parents showing their child’s personal, social and emotional development, their progress towards the AREs in all areas of learning and detailing areas of strength and achievements, areas of development and next steps for learning.

Mid-year parents’ evening to discuss report, child’s progress and next steps for learning.

**Summer Term:**

End of year report detailing their child’s characteristics of effective learning and showing whether they have achieved, exceeded or are continuing to work towards the Age related Expectations for Nursery or Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception.

‘Open Evening’ at the end of July to celebrate all their achievements and share their Learning Journeys with their parents.

**On-going throughout the year:**

Termly Early Years newsletter with information regarding activities, exciting events and important dates.

Detailed website with school information and individual class pages. Class pages have links for parent information regarding curriculum, termly planning, phonics, handwriting and other ‘how to help at home’ pages. There are also regular Blogs to contribute to.

Parents kept up to date via Class Dojo. Class stories are shared when relevant to inform parents of what has been happening at school.

Regular information is displayed on the classroom/cloakroom window or outside doors regarding letter of the week, items to bring in, reminders of upcoming events etc.

There is also a parent text reminder service for notifications or urgent messages.