



## **Edwards Hall Primary School**

### **EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

**Januray 2016**

**POLICY TO BE REVIEWED – January 2019**

#### **1. Introduction**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Edwards Hall Primary School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Edwards Hall Primary School.

In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

#### **2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the EYFS setting at Edwards Hall Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

### **3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from

the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a pupil's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to year 1. The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all 7 areas of learning and development. They represent processes rather than outcomes. The three characteristics are as follows:

**Playing and Exploring** – do they investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’?

**Learning Actively** – do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?

**Creating and Thinking Critically** – do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

At Edwards Hall Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education.

#### **4. Active Learning through Play**

At Edwards Hall Primary School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Edwards Hall Primary School practitioners provide opportunities for play inside and outside, through a ‘workshop’ style environment. These practical, first-hand experiences allow children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Practitioners within the setting are there to facilitate learning through their observations and interactions ensuring they enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

## **5. Planning**

Each area of learning and development is covered through a mix of whole class adult-led sessions and child-initiated activities. The environment at Edwards Hall Primary school is set up to ensure learning flows seamlessly between indoors and outdoors making the most efficient use of resources and building on interests and enthusiasms. The children have extended periods of time to play safely and freely while they learn to assess risk and develop the skills to manage new situations.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the setting.

## **6. Assessment Cycle**

Within 6 weeks of the child starting the reception year, they will undertake a government accredited 'baseline' assessment. These assessments will help indicate a child's 'baseline' abilities in very basic literacy, reasoning and cognition (how a child understands and acts in the world). Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts. The cycle of observation, assessment, planning, observation is carried out on a moment-by-moment basis. This 'in the moment' planning ensures practitioners engage in high quality interactions or conversations with pupils about their activities and current interests. Practitioners capture significant moments of children's learning and can immediately provide children with the next steps needed to move them forward. Observations are recorded in different formats, including a sheet for weekly focus children and 'Tapestry', an online learning journey. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2016 Handbook) and Development Matters. This is updated at least once each term to track individual progress.

At the end of the year we will assess the Reception children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are EMERGING, EXPECTING or EXCEEDING.

## **7. Parents as Partners**

At Edwards Hall Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through initial home visits, home activity sheets and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters and reading records. Creative and phonic homework gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a weekly basis.

Parents are invited to attend parent consultations during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent consultation takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include Learning Journeys, end of year reports and star of the day/week where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and shared reading, as well as the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops aimed to help parents to support their children's learning at home. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events for e.g. Father's Days and special curriculum themed days.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

## **8. Admissions and Induction**

Edwards Hall Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

In the Summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

In September, staff from the setting carry out home visits for all children joining the school. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and for parents to discuss their child's individual needs. Practitioners will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings and there are opportunities for the pre-schools to visit with groups of children. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Edwards Hall Primary School as smooth as possible.

Following the home visits children attend the setting. We have a staggered start, with groups of the children joining part-time. Once all children have been inducted into the school the children begin attending full-time. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

*See Admissions Policy for more information.*

## **9. Equal Opportunities**

All practitioners at Edwards Hall Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Edwards Hall Primary School.

*See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.*

## **10. Special Educational Needs**

*See Inclusion Policy for more information.*

### **Chair of Governing Body**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Headteacher**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_