



Early Years Policy

Introduction – Aims & Principles

At Elliott Park School we believe that the early years are a crucial time for a young child's cognitive, social and emotional development. We aim to lay the best possible foundation on which subsequent academic learning and personal development can be built.

In line with the general ethos of Elliott Park School, we encourage respect and consideration for one another at all times. A variety of backgrounds and cultures are represented in early years, as in the wider school community, and there may be children who are either bilingual or who speak English as an additional language. The school values this diversity and places a great importance on mutual respect within the context of its Christian ethos. Each child is valued and their strengths are recognised and developed.

Standards and expectations of behaviour and achievement are high, but realistic.

Within early years the children begin to grow and develop as individuals and become valuable members of the wider school community.

Organisation and Structure

The early years provision at Elliott Park School comprises of a nursery class and a reception class.

Little Sunbeams Nursery Class

The Little Sunbeams nursery class offers up to 10 places for each session. Children join the nursery class in the September following their third birthday and will move up to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

The nursery class is accessed through the gate entrance at the side of the main school house and has its own cloakroom including a toilet and washroom area.

The nursery week is divided into ten sessions each lasting three hours. Morning sessions begin at 8.30 a.m. and end at 11.30 am. Afternoon sessions begin at 12.30p.m. and end at 3.30p.m. Children are able to combine a morning and afternoon session, bringing a packed lunch and staying for the whole day. Parents are able to choose how many and which sessions they require their child to attend. We recommend that nursery children should be attending a minimum of four full days or eight sessions by the summer term in order to prepare them for the reception class at whichever school you choose.

The school receives government funding for nursery places. Funded places are for a maximum of 15 hours per week and children are entitled to funded sessions until the end of the term they turn five. Additional fees apply to any extra sessions and fee structures are available on request from the school office.

You are not obliged to choose Elliott Park School if attending the nursery but for those children who will be joining our school, a programme of transition activities are undertaken; where they visit the reception class and the reception teacher. This is designed to make the transition as smooth as possible for each child.

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The structure of each session varies slightly depending on the nature of the day's activities and the maturity of the children. All sessions however, provide opportunity for whole group, small group and free-flow activities and are planned following the Department for Education's 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', (DfE 2017).

Sunbeams Reception Class

Children enter the Sunbeams reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. Here children from the nursery class are joined by a number of other children, who may have attended pre-school provision elsewhere or remained at home throughout the early years. In line with school policy, class numbers are purposefully small with a maximum of 14 places available. The reception class is situated at the far end of the school playground in a purpose-built block. The classroom has its own toilet and hand washing facilities.

The reception children integrate fully in the life of the Elliott Park School and share the same daily structure. The day begins at 8.45 a.m. and children attend morning assemblies with the rest of the school. They also join the rest of the children from Key Stage One for their morning, lunchtime and afternoon playtimes. Their school day ends at 3.10 p.m. Children are able to sit together and eat a fruit snack in the morning and eat their packed lunch together as a class. Children also have access to drinking water throughout the day.

The Curriculum

Nursery and reception follow the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' curriculum which comprises of seven learning areas, of which there are three 'Prime Areas':

- Physical Development
- Personal, Social & Emotional Development
- Communication and Language

and four 'Specific Areas' that build on learning gained in the Prime Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Further details about each of these areas can be found in the non-statutory 'Early Years Outcomes' document, (DfE 2013).

There are interactive boards in the nursery and reception classrooms and both year groups make full use of ICT in their curriculum delivery. Children in the reception class also receive weekly music lessons from a specialist music teacher. Class teachers are responsible for planning the curriculum. The reception and nursery teachers meet weekly to ensure continuity of planning and teaching between the two classes.

Teaching early years at Elliott Park School is delivered through a combination of child-initiated play and adult-led group work. In the nursery class, teaching activities take place predominantly in small groups but all children learn to participate in whole group activities

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during circle and story times. In the reception class, the amount of whole-class teaching increases and becomes gradually more structured in order to prepare children for their move to Key Stage One.

In the reception and the nursery, the curriculum is given coherence by the use of learning themes. These may be changed or altered depending upon the needs and interests of the children.

Children have opportunities to learn both in and outdoors. The nursery class has direct access to an enclosed outdoor area. The reception children do not have a separate outdoor area but make use of the school playground to support and extend their learning.

Recording, Assessment & Reporting Procedures

Nursery Class

Formally recorded observations on each child help to identify development needs on entry. These are supplemented by informal jottings, everyday observations and evidence which together chart each child's achievements and needs. Children's responses in adult-initiated activities are also individually recorded and used to plan subsequent activities that are differentiated accordingly.

The class teacher uses all this information to assess each child's stage of development against the 'Early Years Outcomes' guidance document. This is recorded in a 'Nursery Profile' and used as the basis of the verbal reports given to parents at parent consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms and in the final written report at the end of the summer term. Nursery Profiles are passed to the child's next teacher.

Reception Class

Formal, informal observations and photographic evidence are similarly used in the reception class. Children's progress is assessed towards achieving the 'Early Learning Goals' throughout the year. At the end of the reception year, an 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile' must be completed by the class teacher for each child, with judgements made reported to the local education authority.

As in the nursery class, verbal reports on children's progress and achievements are provided to parents at parent consultation evenings in the autumn and spring term and in a written report at the end of the summer term.

Partnership with Parents

We acknowledge parents as the first educators of children and value the important contribution parents make to support their child's progress in school. A successful partnership with parents consists of a mutual respect and recognition of our equally important roles, alongside an understanding that working together is necessary for children to reach their full potential.

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We aim to achieve this by: being available for daily contact both before and after school, providing termly newsletters, responding appropriately to information shared by parents about each individual child, holding Parent Forum groups to discuss key topics suggested by parents, in addition to Parent Consultation evenings and annual reports in line with school policy.

Staff

All adults who work with the children whether paid staff or volunteer helpers have appropriate checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service and must be deemed suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role, as detailed in the Department for Education's Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2017).

Staff Development and Support

Regular staff appraisals are carried out for all practitioners working within the nursery and reception classes. These identify any training needs and targets are agreed for professional development. The early years practitioners participate in whole school training at the beginning of each academic year and from time to time additional inset training is arranged. The reception class teacher attends annual Profile Moderation sessions run by Kent County Council.

The school provides regular first aid courses which both teaching and support staff are encouraged to attend. Several members of the staff hold current Paediatric First Aid certificates.

Equipment and Resources

The early years co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that the nursery and reception class each have the necessary resources available. It is the responsibility of practitioners in each class to ensure that resources and equipment are kept clean and well-maintained. Regular risk assessments of all items with which children come into contact are conducted to identify faulty, dirty or damaged equipment. Possible hazards are noted at the weekly staff meeting.

At present, all nursery resources and equipment are purchased from a designated nursery budget, whereas resources for the reception class are purchased from the Elliott Park School subject budgets. Additional items are also provided from time to time through PTA fundraising.

Links with other School Policies

Please refer to the Elliott Park School website for other policies that are relevant to the early years, including:

- Health and Safety
- Emergency Procedures
- Complaints Procedures
- Additional Needs
- Equal Opportunities
- Behaviour and Discipline