



The Edith Borthwick School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

Lead Governor	Stephanie Taylor
Date approved by Governing Body	29 January 2024
Next review date	Spring 2025

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

*- “Early Years Foundation Stage Profile”
Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012*

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child.** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and development.** The Early Years Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At The Edith Borthwick School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and carers, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic wellbeing. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At The Edith Borthwick School, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability make rapid development; socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.
- Give children security and confidence within an atmosphere of respect for all.
- Support and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding to assist them to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Ensure children feel included, secure and valued within the environment.
- Provide a curriculum using varied teaching methods to meet the needs of all our students.
- Develop opportunities that develop basic skills and independence through structured activities.
- Provide small-group activities that promote social interaction.
- Deliver whole-group sessions that aim to develop children's attention skills and participation within a group.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff that work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children’s interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, these may be altered in response to the needs of the children.

When a child joins us, we complete a baseline assessment in their first half term or during their first 6 to 7 weeks if they start midway through a term. This then gets updated in December, March and July through recorded observations of learning, summative assessments and monitoring of child’s work. This involves the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

We also use the government RBA assessment in the first six weeks if we feel it is appropriate for the learner.

We provide each child with an individual education one plan to ensure we are meeting their needs, as set out in their Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP); this is reviewed each term. Once a year we hold a joint planning meeting with parents and other professionals to review the targets set and to set new targets for the coming year.

We use Evidence for learning (EFL) and Dojo an online web application to share achievements, targets and progress.

Learning through Play

At The Edith Borthwick School, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Outdoor Education in the Early Years

At The Edith Borthwick School we recognise the importance of outdoor learning in children’s education. We ensure there is a good balance of planned and child-initiated opportunities outdoors. To ensure learning can take place all year round we ask for wellington boots and waterproofs to be provided.

We ensure our outdoor areas:

- provide children with the opportunities to explore, use their senses and to be active.

- provide opportunities to make marks such as using chalk, paintbrushes and rollers.
- have a quiet area with pop-up tents and cushions.
- provide opportunities for Mathematical development such as counting objects, going on shape hunts and comparing capacity and weight.
- give opportunities for large-scale construction and small world play.
- include a sensory/water play area.