

Early Years: Intent, Implementation, Impact



'In our Early Years, every child is empowered to explore boldly and grow as a confident, independent learner.'

Intent

At Ellington Primary School, we know that a strong foundation and a love of learning begin in the Early Years. Our provision is built on the belief that every child can *Believe and Achieve* from the very first steps of their learning journey. We aim to create a remarkable foundation for champions to flourish, ensuring every child grows into a resilient, self-motivated, life-long learner.

Our six core values—**Honesty, Respect, Pride, Resilience, Teamwork and Happiness**—underpin everything we do and shape how children learn, play and interact. These values are brought to life through daily routines, high-quality interactions, stories and purposeful play, helping children understand what our core values mean. Alongside these values, our school drivers **Aspiration, Wider World and Independent Thinking** guide the design of our curriculum and the experiences we offer. Children are encouraged to aim high, explore beyond their immediate environment and develop the confidence to think and act independently.

Our curriculum is broad, balanced and bespoke to the needs and interests of our children. It is carefully sequenced so that knowledge and skills build progressively across Nursery and Reception, supporting children to become confident, independent thinkers who take pride in their achievements and show resilience when faced with challenge. Communication and language sit at the heart of our approach. Learning is mapped around high-quality core texts that enrich vocabulary, deepen understanding and open up the wider world, ensuring language development is woven through every area of learning.

Our learning environments are created with purpose. We ensure that the environment promotes independence, encourages teamwork and provides opportunities for perseverance to flourish. The environment allows the children to revisit core knowledge and skills to ensure progression. High-quality adult interactions further strengthen this, with adults modelling rich language, extending children's ideas and supporting them to express themselves with confidence and clarity.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1 with solid foundational skills and knowledge.

Implementation

Reading sits at the heart of our Early Years curriculum, and we aim to nurture a love of books from the very beginning. Communication and Language underpins all Literacy learning, ensuring children develop the vocabulary, attention and listening skills needed to become confident readers and writers. Learning across Nursery and Reception is built around a carefully chosen collection of core books. Each text is supported by a Language Plan that identifies key vocabulary and guides planning so children can understand and use new language by the end of each unit. In Reception, we follow a condensed version of *Ellington's Writing Journey* to ensure continuity with the rest of the school. Each book begins with an engaging 'wow moment' to spark curiosity, followed by exploration of key themes, idea gathering, high-quality modelling and opportunities for children to write independently.

Our phonics journey begins in Nursery, where the focus is on developing children's language through stories, songs and rhymes. Phonological awareness is woven throughout daily provision so children build the foundations needed for early reading. Over time, children begin to recognise some Set 1 sounds and orally blend simple words, preparing them for the Read Write Inc. programme in Reception. In Reception, Read Write Inc. is delivered with fidelity to ensure every child reaches their full reading potential.

Physical Development underpins all early writing. In Nursery, children build strength and control in both fine and gross motor skills through continuous provision, adult-led activities and weekly PE sessions. In Reception, this progresses into refining pencil control and developing an effective pencil grip, alongside improving their control of tools and whole-body movements with support from our PE coach.

To ensure consistency with the rest of the school, we follow adapted elements of the Big Maths scheme. These adaptations ensure high expectations, repeated practice and strong mathematical thinking. High-quality environments and meaningful adult interactions support children to reason, problem-solve and talk mathematically. Children learn through games, practical tasks and manipulatives, moving from concrete to pictorial representations before applying their understanding independently. Reception children have daily maths inputs to build fluency, revisit key concepts and address misconceptions. In Nursery, children develop a love of maths through songs, rhymes, games and hands-on exploration, with a strong focus on the counting principles of one-to-one correspondence, stable order and cardinality.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is woven throughout daily routines to support children's holistic development. In Nursery and Reception, we use the Zones of Regulation to help children understand and manage their emotions. In Reception, we develop their knowledge within PSED, using the whole school Kapow scheme.

Each half term, a new theme is introduced to inspire learning, supported by high-quality texts. Children experience a balance of adult-directed and child-initiated learning, with a carefully structured timetable that adapts across the year to meet children's changing needs. Where appropriate, whole-class teaching is followed by focused group work so teachers can check understanding, address misconceptions and provide immediate verbal feedback.

Children have ample time for exploration across a rich, well-planned indoor and outdoor environment. Our wider curriculum is delivered through the specific areas of Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design, with Expressive Arts taught through the whole-school Kapow approach.

EYFS staff have a strong understanding of how the Early Learning Goals connect to the National Curriculum, supported by robust planning and ongoing CPD. Staff across the school also understand the ELGs relevant to their subjects, ensuring clear progression from the Early Years onwards.

Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities build on children's natural curiosity. Subject-specific vocabulary is modelled consistently so children develop confidence using technical language in meaningful contexts. Visits, visitors and enrichment experiences are planned each term to provide first-hand learning opportunities that feed into children's play, talk and writing.

Our inclusive approach ensures all children learn together, with targeted interventions for those needing additional support or further challenge. These include sessions focused on speech and language, social skills, fine motor development, phonics and mathematics.

Regular monitoring by the senior leaders and the EYFS Lead ensures strong subject knowledge and high-quality practice. Staff receive Early Years-specific CPD, and the EYFS Lead works closely with the Headteacher to develop learning environments and ensure statutory guidance is met.

Impact

Our curriculum leads to children who are happy, confident and ready for the next stage of their education. High-quality interactions, carefully sequenced learning and a strong focus on vocabulary ensure that children make good progress from their individual starting points. Progress is monitored through ongoing formative assessment and termly summative assessment, rooted in practitioners' deep knowledge of each child and their learning journey. We aim for all children to achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of Reception, and outcomes remain broadly in line with national expectations regardless of starting points.

Children leave the EYFS as resilient, independent learners who demonstrate strong communication skills, secure early reading and maths foundations, and positive attitudes to learning. They show curiosity, perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively—qualities that reflect the intent of our curriculum and the values of our school.

A smooth transition into Year 1 is a key measure of our impact. Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together during the summer term to align curriculum expectations, share assessment information and plan for continuity. This ensures children feel secure, confident and well-prepared for the next stage of their learning.