



# Elstree School

Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years  
Foundation Stage

## Learning and Teaching Policy

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Elstree School is a Company Limited by Guarantee No 690450 (England)

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## 1. Introduction

We encourage all the children to make their best effort to reach a level they thought they could not reach. We hope they will achieve this through the honesty of their endeavor, the dedication and skill of the professional staff, the inspiring environment for learning and the excellence of the facilities. The children's talents will be underpinned by fostering an understanding that communities thrive and flourish through respect, courtesy, honesty, loyalty and fairness.

The aim of the [school](#) is to discover and then develop to the full, the natural ability that each child possesses, be it intellectual, cultural, athletic or social, thereby preparing them for their time at their next School and, of course, for later life.

At Elstree we believe that learning is a continuous process so that both adults and children should learn new things every day. Learning should be an interesting and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we try to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to begin to be able to make informed choices about important issues in their lives. We believe that successful teaching and appropriate learning not only helps children to lead happy and rewarding lives but allows them to take ownership of their learning. Thus, they will see that learning is a life-long journey which continues long after they have left school.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

We appreciate that people learn best in different ways. Therefore, we try to provide a varied and positive learning environment that allows children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and self-regulated learners;
- consolidate our commitment to our five core values – courtesy, respect, honesty, loyalty and fairness;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their school community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

## 3. Effective Learning

We acknowledge that people learn in many ways and recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them and offer opportunities for children to learn by using many different methods. These include:

- group; pair; individual and whole-class work;
- investigation and problem solving;
- research and independent enquiry;
- use of Digital Learning;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- using the library and audio-visual resources;

- discussions, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- moral / spiritual / mindfulness development;
- participation in physical activity.

We encourage children to share responsibility for their own learning and, as they grow older, to reflect on how they learn – taking responsibility for their learning using their Prep Diaries is important. We are ambitious for our pupils to finish their time at Elstree.

#### **4. Effective Teaching**

When teaching, we focus on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We use our curriculum policy and schemes of work to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school and what will be taught to each year group. Our attitude in responding to pupils' work is that positive feedback raises academic performance, so achievement is praised wherever possible to keep self-esteem high and to maintain positive learning.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment (AFL) and therefore try to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to their level of ability. Planning must consider the differing requirements of pupils, particularly those with identified special needs as well as the most able. Teachers give due regard to information on our progress sheets and targets contained in children's LDD Pupil Passports. Staff are expected to read all LDD summaries and external assessments. They also differentiate carefully to adequately provide extension for the more able. Extension exercises outside the classroom are also an important consideration, work that may encompass tasks not directly related to curriculum learning. Teachers are sensitive to the pace of their lessons so that all pupils feel challenged, and their motivation is not diminished. We have high expectations of all children, and we believe that their work should be of the highest standard of which they are capable.

We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. These are taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage, National Curriculum, RSE curriculum, National Literacy or Numeracy Strategies and, for senior pupils, from syllabi of the Common Entrance Board and individual school scholarships. Lesson plans focus on developing the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This is best achieved if the children are aware of the context of the work they are undertaking, see how it is building on work done previously and how it will prepare for work to come. The lesson objective is made clear from the outset. Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way we will assess the children's work. We reflect on our lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.

By involving pupils in their own learning and acknowledging different learning styles and abilities, we ensure that we use a variety of teaching methods and set written work regularly in a variety of formats – extended writing, shorter tasks and independent research.

In the Pre-Prep, teaching assistants, and in the Prep, gap year students, are used to support as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups. Teaching assistants also assist with the preparation and storage of classroom equipment.

We aim to make our classrooms attractive learning environments. Displays are changed every

term to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. We aim for all children to have their work displayed at some time during the term. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. Through our Professional Development Review Programme and our extensive INSET programme we aim to support all teachers in developing their skills, so that they improve their practice. Teachers at Elstree are expected to adhere to the National Teaching Standards as a guideline. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>) Our appraisal process involves a fluid dialogue about teaching and standards over the course of more than one lesson observation. It is a chance to reflect and improve practice rather than a one-off snapshot of teaching. This includes not undermining fundamental British values. Teachers also should not convince pupils of their political / religious views.

Children will learn best if they sense that their teacher has a real enthusiasm for the subject and the lessons are fun and interesting. Everyone has a positive attitude towards learning with high expectations of success and genuine progress.

## 5. The Parents' Role

We believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all we can to inform parents and carers about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding Parents' Evenings to explain our school strategies for teaching various subjects and, at the beginning of each academic year, the programme for relevant year groups;
- sending reports to parents and carers in which we explain the progress made by each child and indicate how the child can improve further;
- inviting parents and carers to come and look at the work their children produce;
- supporting parents and carers with information
- Sending weekly emails in the Pre-Prep to outline the lessons covered during the week, as well as suggesting additional activities to try at home.

Parents and carers can support the learning in school by:

- ensuring that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensuring that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- doing their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- informing school if there are matters outside school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school;
- promoting a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;

## 6. Monitoring and Review

Our culture of lesson observations has changed over time at Elstree. We encourage as many informal lesson observations by colleagues of each other as possible. We normally aim for each member of staff to complete at least two of these a year. The forms are submitted to the Director of Learning and Teaching who records this information. Heads of Department are also encouraged to do informal and formal lesson observations as they see fit. These are filed in their Departmental Folders and a copy is given to the Director of Learning and Teaching. Support and open discussion about pedagogy is very much encouraged. A teaching pedagogy library is also available in the Staff Common Room.

Formal observations occur through these approaches:

1. Biannual Formal Appraisal with Senior Deputy Head and Deputy Head (Academic). This is a fluid set of observations over a period of time, rather than a one-off snapshot.
2. Departmental Academic Reviews – Deputy Head (Academic).
3. Concerns raised by colleagues or parents.
4. As part of teaching progression / support. A combination of formal and informal lesson observations support this.
5. Lesson observation peer to peer programme.

This policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the Curriculum Policy and Able and Talented Policy.