

# Eleanor Palmer Teaching and Learning Policy



**Our core purpose is to create lifelong learners who can achieve excellence and progress well from their starting points in all aspects of literacy and maths, and across a broad curriculum (see [EP curriculum](#)). We will be more successful if we share the approach to teaching and learning set out in this policy.**

We have the highest expectations of staff commitment, professionalism, classroom organisation, display, and fundamentally, teaching practice. Equally, we have high expectations of all our learners: we expect effort, engagement and ambition. As a staff, we are highly reflective about our teaching, learning environment and expectations of behaviour and we go above and beyond to overcome children's barriers to learning. Our school community must have a culture of equity in which diverse thought and experience is valued: a learning community.

This policy begins **with a one page snapshot of our aims for teaching and learning at Eleanor Palmer**, linking to what this looks like in practice, below. We have outlined how we work together as a school in pursuit of our aims, rooting our approach in research and experience, and being mindful of our pupils, community and context. For our teaching team, this policy links to a Padlet full of the research, examples and articles which have informed our approach.

Love learning	Achieve excellence	Create and innovate	Engage with your world	Belong at EP
<p>Topics that create awe, wonder and depth of understanding</p> <p>Interested and interesting; enthusiasm and joy</p> <p>Ready, respectful and safe – positive behaviour</p> <p>Success and struggle: growth mindset</p> <p>Wellbeing and positive mental health for all</p> <p>Play and playfulness</p>	<p>Designing the learning journey</p> <p>Linking thinking</p> <p>Clarity</p> <p>Assessment as close as possible to the 'teachable moment'</p> <p>Questioning, quizzing and memory</p> <p>All children are challenged</p> <p>Oracy</p> <p>Celebrating progress and success</p>	<p>An enriched creative curriculum for all</p> <p>Honing the learning journey</p> <p>High quality process; high quality outcomes</p> <p>Opportunities to take risks and make choices</p> <p>Learning that is child-initiated and adult-developed and vice versa</p>	<p>First hand, practical experiences – artefacts, people and places</p> <p>Knowledge of the world and empowerment to be changemakers</p> <p>Diversity of curriculum; diverse cultural capital</p>	<p>Everyone included, engaged and valued</p> <p>A learning community in partnership with parents, carers and families</p> <p>Groupings are flexible and 'ability' is not set</p> <p>Making friendships and collaborative relationships</p>

## Learning Environment

Everything in a classroom - including displays - should work hard for learning and have purpose, whether it is to inspire, enable, celebrate, prompt memory, make links, show work in progress or models. Classrooms must be tidy, well-organised, arranged to foster independence, and they should allow flexibility depending on the learning planned.

## Love learning

### Topics that create awe, wonder and depth of understanding

At Eleanor Palmer, we have developed termly subject-led topics (half-termly in EYFS), which are rigorous in meeting national requirements, unique to our school, and which make teaching and learning enjoyable for our teaching teams and our children. Topics are either history-, geography- or science-led (see our [curriculum map](#) in appendix 1). These subjects are also taught throughout the year, but each one having a term-long focus allows for depth of understanding and authentic cross-curricular, 'horizontal' links to be made. We have designed [subject verticals](#) to show how each subject progresses and is sequenced through the entire school, from EYFS to Year 6.

Topics drive and inspire learning. From the start of term, whole school introductions to topics, ensure that the whole school knows about each topic and children build understanding of how they link to prior learning. For example, in Year 6, our geography-led 'From Farm to Fork' topic makes links with the history of farming and settlement in England, life-cycles in science, and carefully designed writing and art opportunities stemming from a week-long farm residential trip. Opportunities are planned for each class to share their learning through class assemblies and plays.

### Interested and interesting; enthusiasm and joy

If teachers are motivated and enthusiastic about lessons, then the children will be too. Part of the core job of our teaching teams is to be interested and interesting, informed role-models of life-long learning and curiosity. All our leaders are rooted in the classroom and our Co-headteachers are just that - *headteachers* who teach weekly lessons as well as assemblies.

Although we have non-negotiables to our pedagogy (the way we teach) at Eleanor Palmer, such as most maths lessons beginning with 'Keepy-Uppy' to revise knowledge, there must be variety throughout each day, with lessons shaped so they are fit for purpose, and classroom layout arranged and re-arranged to suit a task. This is part of engaging children in what they are learning, making the learning irresistible. It is why our attendance is so high: children (and adults) want to be at our school.

Teachers share a common understanding achieved through discussion, consideration of practice, the sharing of information and whole school planning of important issues. As a school, we are thoughtful, extremely reflective and always looking to improve. Between 2013 and 2021 we were a National Teaching School leading a partnership of over 30 schools. This partnership work continues with our work with the Institute of Education, and Camden Learning, for example, training teachers in the Schools Direct programme, and leading the Camden Maths Hub. Our professional development cycle is well established for all staff and attendance of CPD opportunities and further study is positively encouraged and supported. For example, staff members have been supported to pursue additional study such as studying for GCSE maths, completing their ME or a degree. We are a team of life-long learners, never complacent, and taking joy in our profession.

### **Ready, respectful and safe – positive behaviour**

Our three rules at Eleanor Palmer are that everyone - adults and children - is ready, respectful and safe. As outlined in our [behaviour policy](#) this supports the children giving their learning full attention, focus and positive attitude. This behaviour of and for learning enables everyone to feel secure and enjoy lessons so they can succeed.

### **Success and struggle: growth mindset**

To have a growth mindset is to understand that qualities like intelligence and talent are not fixed, but developed by *effort* and *opportunity*. Everyone in our school community can improve from their starting points, given these two crucial factors. When children realise they are capable of getting better at things they are more likely to embrace challenges, to use feedback constructively, to persevere when the learning is tough, and to see effort as the path to success. We are therefore committed to developing a growth mindset in ourselves and in our children by choosing our words extremely carefully, avoiding phrases like 'natural talent', being very specific with feedback and praising effort and resilience. We have a 'culture of error' at Eleanor Palmer, in which teachers and children feel safe and positive about discussing and '*debugging*' what we call '*good mistakes*'. Children reflect on their learning and how they can improve - for example writing reflective messages at the end of their maths lessons from Year 2 up - is routine. We also explicitly teach children about the brain, memory and the impact of practice on neurological development.

### **Wellbeing and positive mental health for all**

Developing self-regulation and emotional literacy is vitally important for all our children and we see this as proactive, pre-emptive work. For this reason, we teach a Wellbeing Curriculum which sequences this learning across the school in short lessons, complementing our other PSHCE lessons. We have a second wave of mental health and wellbeing provision which includes our ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), PE coach mentor, and our school counsellor. Our entire staff know the important role they play in modelling and teaching, explicitly and implicitly, emotional literacy, how to care for our own mental and physical health and how to safeguard that of others.

Teaching teams also re-actively respond to difficulties which are very much present in children's minds as they come in from the playground. We identify teachable moments and while we are mindful not to let one child's issue dominate a lesson, we understand that explicitly teaching children how to solve problems at play-times, as well as reinforcing our school rules and explicitly teaching the children about body ownership, anti-bullying and kindness, is a good use of time.

### **Play and playfulness**

Play has an important role at Eleanor Palmer, and it is not something which begins and ends when the bell rings at break-time. Children's playfulness and enthusiasm for games is harnessed by our teachers, whether it be playing a word game to generate effective vocabulary for writing, or playing a maths game to build fluency. There are few other contexts other than games, that prompt as many smiles and as much willingness to repeat in the face of failure; resilience, lateral thinking, collaboration, turn-taking and valuing each other are just some of the results of play. We want our children to play with numbers, play with words, play with ideas... asking what if? Teachers, in turn, are playful, good-humoured but no less focused, while teaching. It is amazing how many games have been invented by teachers at Eleanor Palmer!

## Achieve excellence

### Designing the learning journey

At Eleanor Palmer we consider each child's learning journey through our school and beyond. We strive to have excellent subject knowledge so that we can plan vertical and horizontal links within and between subjects and we know what learning steps come before and will come later. We break complex learning into small steps - which are the easiest for everyone to take - and we probe more deeply to challenge pupils in each lesson.

Teachers plan each term's learning using our [subject verticals](#) to ensure they know the learning journey, and coupling these with Knowledge Organisers which outline key knowledge and the links made with units of work across the school. Our topic-based approach is deep-rooted, developing over several decades, however, we always strive to improve, and our curriculum sequence for each subject has been designed and refined by teachers and leaders. This means that newer teachers and experienced teachers who are new to a year group have detailed, well-thought through termly plans for each subject, including everything from lists of problems and games to teach in maths, through to class stories to end the day with. However, teachers need ownership of these plans. They need to design their lessons to meet the needs of the children in their class as well as the content of the curriculum. An opportunity may also mean adapting plans, for example, a new book published by an author who visited our Year 5 class recently was added to our core texts, and the bi-annual Camden Music Festival at the Royal Albert Hall, alters the singing strand of the music curriculum in a festival year. Therefore, it is very important that each term teachers hone and add to their termly plans, creating a planning matrix which plots an overview of how the term is structured, how trips and visitors are placed for maximum impact, how subjects link together and which, if any, subjects are to be 'blocked'.

Beyond termly plans, there is then no requirement to write weekly plans. It is expected however, that each teacher plans and shares their weekly timetable with their class team, and that they design their lessons and activities based on their longer term plans, their subject knowledge, collaborative insights from colleagues, and fundamentally, their assessment of children's learning.

This well-structured, thoughtfully designed learning journey coexists happily with the fact that if it suddenly snows, we may decide to go and play and learn outside, exploring the world around us; if a frog hops into the playground, we observe and talk about it. Poems, drawings - all sorts of snow and frog-related learning might occur on such a day. They are small unexpected things that are a huge part of creating a treasury of primary school memories.

### Linking thinking

Teachers prompt children to make links across subjects, between ideas and with the wider world. We call this Linking Thinking.

### Clarity

Lessons at Eleanor Palmer should be clear. Children should be able to listen, look, think, question, and take part in lessons in every way we can think of without distraction or overwhelming information. These are some of the ways we manage 'cognitive load' in our lessons at EP, so that children's working memories are not overloaded and their attention is drawn to the main teaching point:

- We identify and teach pre-requisite skills which should be 'known by heart' to unlock more complex learning. E.g. knowing addition facts to enable the more complex calculations and problem solving, or knowing phonics so that reading focuses on comprehension and enjoyment!

- We keep words to a minimum on the board and remove redundant information. If the font is below 30, there is too much text! We mirror this in our speech; there is a time and a place for rich conversation and modelled speech but when a concept is new or instructions are given, we pare it down.
- When the teacher is talking, there should only be images and models on the board. If there are words on the board, these will be read together or in silence.
- We use examples, non-examples and worked examples. Non-examples help pupils to see what a concept is 'not', to better get to the heart of the concept. Sometimes non-examples are what we call 'good mistakes' - answers which are wrong but which are common misconceptions which are useful in shedding light on the intended learning e.g.  $3 \times 3 = 6$ .
- We use worked/modelled examples when something is new, then move to partially completed examples, independent practice then 'debugging' deliberate mistakes.
- Models move from concrete, to pictorial, to abstract and general. For example, a story might first be acted out and chorused, then a story map could make this structure iconic, then a generalised version could be used for children to innovate their own story of the same genre. Similarly, concrete manipulatives can be used to represent mathematical structures, then pictorial representations, then abstract representations. Moving from concrete, to pictorial to abstract might happen in one lesson, across a lesson sequence, or across years of learning depending on the concept and the child. The goal is always clarity of teaching for clarity of understanding.

#### **Assessment as close as possible to the 'teachable moment'**

Our teaching teams are constantly assessing, as they ask questions, observe and listen because assessment is a motor to improve learning. We place great store by this style of formative assessment for learning during lessons, as well as summative assessments of learning, where the children are assessed against national standards. Being as close as possible to the 'teachable moment' - in space and time - is fundamental to the way we assess and how we plan next steps in learning. Teachers throughout the school use the practice so commonly found in Nursery and Reception - OWLing: observe, wait and listen. They 'live mark' as much as possible, working the room and finding teachable moments. This instant feedback has far greater impact on the children than marking piles of books at the end of the day, although assessing through marking is still important.

For marking books to be an impactful means of assessment, teachers mark daily - particularly maths books. As elaborated in our maths and English policies, marking recognises and celebrates success for the child, assesses misconceptions which need to be individually addressed in the next lesson, and helps teachers to draw together points which can be addressed as whole class feedback. At Eleanor Palmer, we do not write lengthy comments or use unnecessarily complex deep marking. Instead, marking must inform the next lesson and recognise children's effort, progress and achievements.

Teachers make meaningful, purposeful 'RAG' assessments of children's attainment in reading, writing and maths each term to assess whether children are working at, towards or at greater depth within age-related expectations. Their assessments are informed by the children's daily work, end of unit mini-assessments known as 'Show What You Know', and end of term tests and tasks. In maths, teachers use White Rose termly assessment tests in reasoning and arithmetic as well as factual fluency quizzes created by our maths leader; in reading, teachers use NFER reading comprehension tests; and each term, the whole school writes a Big Write without scaffolding or modelling so that we can see what children can write independently. These assessments are always conducted in a safe, 'low stakes' manner, and teachers talk with the classes about their purpose - to help us to see how much they have learnt and to help us improve the way we teach. At Eleanor Palmer we take a 'so what?' approach to assessment - if we do a quiz or test, there must be a reason and a result, with the outcomes analysed so that we can reflect on past lessons, improving them in the future, and planning subsequent steps which are right for our children.

There are some, statutory, national assessments which help us to see how effective our teaching is, how much the children know and remember, and inform future teaching. Within the first half term of children joining of Reception, we carry out the statutory Baseline Assessment, for which we assess each child's starting points with us. This is done as part of the teacher's normal work with the class. Towards the end of Year 1, we carry out the Phonics Check and again, this is a quick one to one assessment that most children find fun, if they note it at all! In the summer term of Year 2 we formally record teacher assessments for maths, reading and writing. We use Key Stage 1 SATs - tests in maths and reading (not writing) - to inform these assessments. They are our 'special quizzes' and children take them in their stride confidently and comfortably because of the manner in which we prepare and conduct them. In Year 4, the children do the national MTC tests (Multiplication Tables Check) which is an online test of times table facts. By this stage, most children are more aware of this test and we prepare for this as a class with lots of quizzes, games, using Times Tables Rockstars online at home, and of course, really good teaching which teaches the relationships between these facts as well as practising them by rote. In May of Year 6, children sit the end of Key Stage 2 SATs in maths, reading, spelling and punctuation and grammar (SPAG). Our preparation in the few weeks before still adheres to the principles laid out in this policy and elements of purposeful 'revision' are done within an enthusiastic, positive and collaborative atmosphere - most children find them fun and even miss them when they're over!

### **Questioning, quizzing and memory**

Lessons should be spaces of discovery in which children ask as well as answer questions. Inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity throughout our school community are expected and celebrated, and we place great importance on the skill of asking questions. We know that we can get to the heart of learning, create ownership, engagement and agency by promoting shared thinking and discussion in our classrooms and in our work as a staff.

We start lesson sequences by finding out what children already know (including misconceptions which need to be dispelled) and what they would like to find out. In maths this takes the form of a 'Give it a Go!' assessment, and in history this would look more like a mind map of existing knowledge and questions. Teachers' questions need to be well planned to prompt retrieval and connections ('What is the name of...' 'What do we already know about...') and probe deeper thinking ('What if...' 'What do you notice about...'). Variation within tasks is also expected, whether teachers draw from high quality text-books or online sources which subject leaders have agreed, or whether they create their own. Variation means carefully varying what each question or element of an activity draws the children's attention to, in order to secure understanding, introduce a different perspective or context, or increase difficulty.

Plenaries (literally meaning 'coming together') are seen as a vital parts of the lesson, which need not come at the end. They are used to draw attention to the main teaching point, to share questions about difficult aspects of the learning or 'good mistakes', to celebrate and build on success, to further extend collective thinking, and to test possibilities for next steps.

Thinking time, paired and group talk are very important after asking a good question (if the answer is too ready, the question didn't provoke much thought!) so we ask children to 'turn and learn', reporting back on what their partners said. We use a range of questioning techniques which mean that any child could be called upon and we create a safe environment in which to do so. We often ask for no hands up when a question is posed, unless a child has a question, subtle thumbs up indicate that a child is ready to be called upon, and when anyone is speaking in the class, we encourage others to put hands down, look at them and listen carefully. Giving a wrong answer frequently provokes the most learning as the class work towards understanding and if a child doesn't know how to answer, teachers may ask them if they can choose from several possibilities, or summarise what a classmate says.

Our research into memory has led us to develop a system of low-stakes quizzing across all subjects in which children aim to beat their personal-best or a class-best. For example, teachers use Knowledge Organisers to quiz children on their history, geography or science knowledge, and they use maths factual fluency quizzes several times a week. We also ensure we build in questions, games and activities that 'interrupt forgetting' throughout the school day, asking children to recall and become fluent with facts,

freeing up their working memory for deeper reasoning, across all subjects. We strive for lessons to have desirable difficulty, meaning that the struggle to remember, recall and use knowledge is what secures it, and spaced retrieval practice will ensure that knowledge is retained.

### **All children are challenged**

Teachers plan questions and activities which prompt and provoke deep thought and all children are expected to reason, whatever their starting points. The wonderful children we have at our school deserve to be challenged. This means we have very high expectations of teachers' knowledge of each child, of their subject knowledge to know what constitutes working at greater depth at each stage, and that they are ambitious for every child. No child should experience repeated failure or endless, effortless success; they should be working in what educational psychologist, Vygotsky, called their zone of proximal development.

### **Oracy**

We have a culture of talking and listening at Eleanor Palmer and there should be an industrious buzz in lessons. Children are asked to 'turn and learn', talking and listening to each other, and sharing what their partner said, and we use a variety of activities and structures to explicitly teach and improve oracy. Debating, learning songs, poems and stories with actions are all embedded and vital parts of our curriculum.

### **Celebrating progress and success**

We recognise and value high achievement and create opportunities for those children who excel, where relevant, to take part in activities beyond the school. We belong to the Camden Sports Association and take part in many borough competitions such as the swimming gala, football tournament, inclusive sports events, cross country and athletics tournaments, celebrating the many medals and trophies we win. We enter the United Kingdom Maths Trust Challenge and the Mathematics Association Primary Challenge (and do well!). Our young engineers achieve recognition each year, winning distinctions in the National Engineering Awards. Just as important, though, is our culture of celebrating progress. For example, the children have personal best scores in times table quizzes just as they do in their '3 Lap Challenge' in PE. Teachers meet with parents individually to discuss progress, mid-Autumn term; in the Spring term when teachers write reports about each child's progress so that next steps can be planned together; and then at the end of each school year, when outcomes are reported. These more formal opportunities to discuss progress sit within a very open approach where we are available to talk to parents and carers at the beginning and end of the day, we make regular phone calls and write notes home to keep parents and carers informed, and we set extra meetings where there are any concerns. Nothing in parents' meetings should come as a surprise because we work together throughout the year.

## Create and innovate

### **An enriched creative curriculum for all**

It is vitally important at Eleanor Palmer that every child experiences a broad, rich curriculum - never narrowed. Performing arts, sports clubs, an art specialist, music, trips and residentials - these are all non-negotiable opportunities for all children at Eleanor Palmer. The ingenuity, time and generosity of our teachers and leaders, the school community and PTA makes this possible; we call this 'Keep it EP'.

We subscribe to the Islington Artefacts Loan Service and each class may order a box a term, including costumes and artefacts to be used by teachers and children in lessons. Children are encouraged to bring in resources to support class work and we place great importance in this involvement - 'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn,' Benjamin Franklin.

Our policy of a minimum of three trips or visitors per class per term ensures that there are meaningful and memorable experiences planned into each term to prompt and enrich learning. For example, in Year 5, the children visit the Thames foreshore as part of their geography focus on rivers. This leads to further geographic learning, report-writing in English and adds to their existing knowledge (begun in Year 1) about London and its history - they come back with artefacts gathered while mudlarking! We have a fund within our delegated budget to subsidise visits and visitors and our unique music scheme means that every child can learn a stringed instrument for four years, fully funded by the school.

### **Innovating the learning journey**

Our termly planning matrix allows teachers to plan work in blocks and to design links. Within our horizontal and vertical curriculum framework, teachers are free to make new, authentic connections between subjects, find new authors, trips and experiences which would enrich our curriculum in a highly collaborative and collegiate environment. For example the recent partnership with Central St Martin's created a fantastic way to learn elements of the DT curriculum. . Children's enquiry, interests, independence of thought and responses are also valued, helping to shape learning. For example our year 4 class have worked alongside computing programmers and then created their own movable bots bringing their independent designs to life. These innovations are discussed as a team during termly CPD time which focuses on planning. Improvements and additions are then recorded in our long-term plans, meeting our rigorous and discerning criteria of all elements in our curriculum leaving nothing to chance, being in line with the ethos in this policy, and helping children to know and remember more.

### **High quality process; high quality outcomes**

We focus on purpose and audience, strive for authentic outcomes, and give children time to achieve something of quality across the curriculum. Our priority is to balance high quality outcomes with placing importance on the process of trying, improving, planning and designing and experimenting. For example, children use sketch-books and writing journals for this purpose and DT is organised in blocks to allow for depth of process rather than superficial coverage. A specific fund supports work with arts groups and artists, as well as a specialist artist in residence who works with every child across the whole school.

### **Opportunities to take risks and make choices**

We encourage children to make choices, work independently and take risks so that they are open to new ideas, have self-confidence, know that making mistakes is part of the learning process, and are often motivated to work beyond lesson time, pursuing their interests. In practice, this might mean asking the class to share different methods to solve a problem, then finding the most efficient or elegant one, or deciding which character's view-point from which to write.

### **Learning that is child-initiated and adult-developed and vice versa**

A balance between child-initiated and adult-developed learning, and adult-initiated and child-developed learning is struck in EYFS and forms the foundation of learning upon which all else is built. It is the teacher who is the decisive factor in whether learning will take place, and so our teachers think creatively and deeply about setting up learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom which will provoke thought and sustained shared thinking. A high level of mental agility is expected of the teaching team, listening and observing children's interests and developing these with the curriculum embedded in their questioning. Higher up the school, this expectation of creative thought in the teacher to bring out the best in all children and to generate enthusiasm, is sustained.

## Engage with your world

### **First hand, practical experiences – artefacts, people and places**

Wherever we can, we plan learning based on first hand and practical experiences, carefully selecting resources such as objects, artefacts, people, and places as hooks and prompts for learning. Teachers ensure that all these experiences - whether going to a Victorian school for a day, pond-dipping on Hampstead Heath, working alongside a scientist at the Crick or listening to a story-teller weave a Greek Myth - are feeding directly into lessons, outcomes and serving as prompts for children to make connections, ask and answer questions, and build deeper knowledge and understanding. We take full advantage of our position in London, ensuring that all our children visit theatres, museums, green spaces and even the Houses of Parliament. We know that this dramatically impacts their learning outcomes, creates meaningful memories and sparks interests which are taken on into adulthood.

### **Knowledge of world and empowerment to be changemakers**

Just as there should be awe, wonder and magic in primary schools, there should be authentic engagement with the world. From our school site and community in London, to planet Earth, our children must know lots about their world, have empathy for others, care about human impact and see themselves as changemakers. Engagement with the world is proactively embedded in our subject-led topics and focused on through assemblies as a whole school. We are also reactive and responsive to topical events in a way which emphasises how adults are helping, and how children can have an impact as changemakers. Recent examples are children deciding to picket an ice-cream van, illegally idling outside school with its engine on, litter-picking on site to protect our wildlife, and holding a Q and A session with our local MP about diversity and the curriculum. Visiting changemakers and inspiring experts are regularly invited to give real-world perspective to our learning. Recent examples include explorers, engineers, fashion designers, chefs, politicians and poets.

### **Diversity of curriculum; diverse cultural capital**

This is a long-term, joyful work: ensuring there is diversity in our book-shelves, story-times, assemblies, visitors, lessons in every subject, and our teaching team. We firmly believe that children should see and hear from a fully diverse range of people. This helps them to learn, to aspire, and to belong.

## Belong at EP

### **Everyone included, engaged and valued**

Eleanor Palmer is an inclusive school and we want everyone to feel they belong at Eleanor Palmer. The achievements, attitudes and wellbeing of every person in the school matters and we all have a voice, and agency in our learning. When we create whole school art around a theme each year, for example, we ensure every child's art work is displayed. Similarly, there are no selective choirs - when we sing, everyone sings!

One of the many benefits of being a small school is that we can know each child really well. We have an experienced team of senior leaders, support teachers and learning support assistants who work closely with class teachers to offer additional support. We think in terms of Team 5 or Team 1. Drawing on expert advice, these class teams strive for excellent SEND provision which places the child at the centre.

Our team goes above and beyond to overcome children's barriers to learning. For example we may use our sports coach or school ELSA (emotional literacy support assistant) to provide additional 1:1 mentor sessions to build confidence and resilience in lessons or teach parents how to support their child at home. Recognising and celebrating all types of success through praise in the classroom, notes and calls home, Golden Book assemblies, displays and performances is very important at Eleanor Palmer.

### **A learning community in partnership with parents, carers and families**

We believe that a school teaches in 3 ways: what it teaches, how it teaches and by the kind of place it is. We aim for Eleanor Palmer to be at the heart of a learning community; that learning is not divided up into hourly slots, and it doesn't stop at 3:30pm. There is a common purpose and shared responsibility amongst children, parents, staff and governors. All are actively committed to the life, growth and development of this school. There is an intellectual challenge for everyone and a culture of learning and questioning practice.

As a small school, relationships between adults and children are vital - we are very aware of being role models for our pupils. We also value the role of families in learning, and expect open communication with parents, listening sensitively and responding thoughtfully to their queries and concerns.

Involving parents, carers and families in our learning is crucial; we have regular Shed Talks in our adult learning space, where we host sessions on topics such as the importance of sleep, online safety, growth mindset and phonics. We have a weekly whole school newsletter which lets parents know what they could ask their children about e.g. signs of spring in nature to spot, or what they have learnt about Black History. We also have a monthly Stay and Play session in which parents and carers join a maths lesson and play a game with their children. Many of our parents and carers, past and present, are one to one reading volunteers, and we are inundated with requests from former pupils who would like to do work experience at Eleanor Palmer.

Just like a family, we value special events and traditions and the importance these have for our school's community. Equally, parents organise celebrations and representations of our community. For example, the creation of festive cards, or organising Eid parties each year. Teachers readily become involved with events such as the Summer Fair or Bingo evening - they know they are part of something special too. Our children really enjoy their time at this school, and this is communicated to our many visitors. Year 6 pupils have roles and responsibilities in the school, such as setting up assembly, providing school tours for prospective parents, being buddies to our youngest pupils and developing as sports leaders.

### **Groupings are flexible and 'ability' is not set**

We foster a collaborative culture and growth mindset in each class and this means we do not have set groupings. Teachers assess and plan, lesson by lesson, differentiating questions and tasks to meet different needs, while giving all children the opportunity to work on the same learning point. When children are practising slightly different aspects of a learning point or they are working at different pace from one another, they might be grouped or paired *flexibly*. This approach is reliant on teachers' incisive formative assessment on a daily basis so that the next day's learning is pitched correctly. Children should excel - together - without being limited or labelled.

### **Making friendships and collaborative relationships**

Eleanor Palmer is a place where children make good friends and where they *learn* to learn collaboratively. Teachers organise the classroom so that children work independently, in pairs or in groups throughout the day, ensuring that they are ready to learn and work with different classmates at different times. There will be set places relevant to context and need at some times in the day, but there are opportunities at other times for children to choose where to sit and with whom to work. Developing social skills and collaborative learning skills is very important and teaching teams facilitate this with thought and care.

There are times in the week when children work with others in different classes, such as Year 5 children reading with their 'buddies' in Year 1, and Year 6 children eating lunch and playing with their reception buddies. On Mix Up Mondays, children are allowed to play in any part of the playground, again fostering these cross-phase and cross-class relationships. Instead of a School Council, at Eleanor Palmer, we want everyone to have the opportunity to be heard so we invented Big School Meeting. This is held once a fortnight and everyone in the school, from Reception to Year 6, regroups in a vertically mixed class to debate decisions, raise concerns and discuss things that impact our school community.

Working with children who are not necessarily one's best friend, developing tolerance of and respect for other children and valuing them, as well as forging friendships which remain strong beyond Year 6, are aims we want for all our children.

Agreed by Curriculum Committee 12 09 22

Appendix 1

	Autumn	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
N	All About Me	Nursery Rhymes	Traditional Tales	Dinosaurs	Growing	Colour Light and Pattern
R	Super Me	Food and Festivals	Traditional Tales	Kings and Queens	Down in the Deep	Up in the Air
Year 1	We Love London <i>A geography-led topic</i>		Changemakers through time <i>A history-led topic</i>		Am I An Animal? <i>A science-led topic</i> <i>(Significant individual - David Attenborough)</i>	
Year 2	Around the World <i>A geography-led topic</i> <i>(Significant individual - Shackleton)</i>		The Victorians <i>A history-led topic</i> <i>Seaside trip</i>		Incredible Invertebrates <i>A science-led topic</i>	
Year 3	The Victorians <i>A history-led topic</i> <i>To be replaced with Ancient Greece 2023/4</i>		Natural Disasters <i>A geography-led topic</i>		How Does Your Garden Grow? <i>A science-led topic</i> <i>The Mill residential from 2023/4</i>	
Year 4	The Romans <i>A history-led topic</i>		Inventions <i>A science-led topic</i>		Survival <i>A geography-led topic</i>	
Year 5	Traders and Invaders: Anglo Saxons and Vikings <i>A history-led topic</i>		Amazing Amazon <i>A geography-led topic</i>		The Human Body <i>A science-led topic</i>	
Year 6	Human Planet <i>A geography-led topic</i>		World War Two <i>A history-led topic</i>		Evolution <i>A science-led topic</i>	