



St Leonard's

C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy was written in:	September 2024
To be reviewed:	September 2025
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'A new commandment I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'

John 13:34

With God's help, we will be inclusive, independent, inquiring and inspirational.

- We will be inclusive by loving all and embracing differences so that all are treated with dignity and respect.
- We will be independent by persevering and encouraging everyone to be the best they can be, working together as a nurturing, Christian family.
- We will be inquiring by asking questions so that we grow in mind, body and spirit, learning about God's wondrous, diverse world.
- We will be inspirational by following Jesus' example, making a positive difference in the lives of others through love.

Introduction

At St Leonard's CE Primary School we strive to provide a broad, balanced, exciting Early Years curriculum. We want our children to enjoy learning and therefore we aim to make our curriculum engaging and exciting. We offer our children an excellent education in a safe, calm, creative, inclusive and stimulating environment. Every child is valued as an individual; we aim to nurture well rounded, respectful and confident children who will develop skills for life-long learning. We nurture our children on their journey and encourage them to be creative, unique, open-minded and independent individuals, respectful of themselves and of others in our school family, our local community and the wider world. We take our responsibility to prepare children for life in modern Britain very seriously and ensure that the fundamental British Values are introduced, discussed and lived out through the ethos and work of our school.

Our Early Years curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our school family.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a balanced and broad curriculum that gives children the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- That the school complies with national statutory requirements.

What this looks like in practice:

- Practitioners at St Leonard's ensure that all children feel included, secure, and valued.
- We provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children guide or initiate themselves. Practitioners consider the individual needs and interests of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking, listening and communication skills.
- Practitioners create safe learning environments that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.

Intent statement

At St Leonard's Primary School, every child in our EYFS is recognised as a unique individual. We acknowledge and promote children's interests to provide them with the opportunities to follow their imagination and creativity. In Reception, we invest time in helping children to self-regulate and understand their emotions, as we believe that children who are resilient and independent learners are more likely to succeed on their school journey and throughout their lives. We want the children to have the confidence and skills to make decisions, self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners. Opportunities are provided throughout the Reception year, through indoor and outdoor provision and wider curriculum enrichment experiences. Throughout their time in EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to our school family by building strong relationships that help them to feel safe and happy. We celebrate diversity through units of work and stories we tell about a variety of faiths and cultures from around the world. We create a stimulating, welcoming environment where speaking and listening skills are prioritised and vocabulary and communication are paramount.

'The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.'

Maria Montessori

Implementation

Each term, the children are introduced to a new theme to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching during the day. This means that the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning. Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the indoor and outdoor provision. The curriculum is planned for inside and outside learning opportunities and equal importance is given to learning in both areas.

Induction into Reception

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

We have a tried and tested induction programme which includes:

- An induction meeting is held to introduce parents/carers to the school. Reception procedures, curriculum and routines are shared with parents at this meeting. Parents/carers are given a school prospectus which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.
- The Reception teacher will visit and meet key worker's from the children's Nursery.
- Several stay and play sessions are arranged for all the children during the Summer Term. By the end of the summer term, new children will have attended sessions with their parents, stayed for a session on their own and eaten lunch with their parent and Year 6 buddy in the hall.
- The children receive a special bag on their last 'Stay and Play' session which includes a St Leonard's teddy, activities to complete of the summer and a letter from their buddy.
- When school starts in September, children start in smaller groups and attend for two half day sessions before starting school full time.
- Messages between home and school can be sent easily via the Class Dojo communication system which is set up prior to the children starting school.
- On starting school in Reception, each child will have a Year 6 buddy who they will meet regularly each term.

EYFS Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from 4th September 2023.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework is made up of four overriding principles which our early year's education is based upon:

Unique Child – Every child is unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

Learning and Development – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

English

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to encourage a love of reading right from the start. In EYFS we have books each half term that link to our themes and we teach this texts using 'Talk for Writing' techniques. We expose children to a range of books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop their oracy, vocabulary and comprehension. These books are embedded in our provision through activities, story sessions and on display for children to access independently. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories. With the acquisition of this language, children begin to write independently using the phonic sounds that they have been taught.

Phonics

We follow the 'Read, Write Inc' programme to ensure consistency across the school. In Reception, Set 1 sounds and Set 2 sounds are introduced throughout the year, with a strong focus on segmenting and blending skills to decode words for reading a spelling. **Children are expected to read at home each night and are listened to regularly in school.** They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers.

Mathematics

High quality learning environments and meaningful interactions with adults, support children in developing mathematical thinking and discussion. Pupils learn through tasks using concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations which are then rehearsed applied and recorded within their own child-led exploration. Children develop a love of maths through this

process. There is a focus on the following counting principles; one to one correspondence, stable order and cardinal principle. Children's fine manipulative skills are a focus to develop 1-1 correspondence so children count each object only once.

Wider Curriculum

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' Subject leaders are aware of the ELG's that link to each foundation subject and the corresponding progression into Year 1. Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are planned to build on children's natural curiosity. For example, building a boat for their favourite toy enables them to think like a 'scientist' and 'engineer' as they explore a range of materials and test out their own ideas. Building further on our oracy focus, children will be encouraged to employ subject specific language and terminology in foundation subjects and such vocabulary will be modelled.

Inclusion

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, but we have a range of additional interventions and support for children who may not be reaching age related expectations, or for those who are showing a greater depth of understanding and need further challenge. This includes, sessions for developing speech and language, social skills, fine motor skills, phonics, and mathematics. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator takes place.

Assessment

Assessment in EYFS starts with careful observations and meaningful interactions with children which are then used to inform planning. Learning and teaching are effective when children feel a sense of belonging, curiosity and competence showing resilience and tenacity. EYFS staff attend external meetings and training to ensure that they moderate judgements accurately. By using monitoring assessment procedures regularly, we can effectively demonstrate what learning is taking place and how each child is progressing in all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum. In addition, EYFS staff make summative judgments using a 'checkpoint tracker' on a termly basis and this is reported on the Lancashire Pupil Tracker. The data is analysed by the EYFS team, subject leaders and senior leaders. EYFS practitioners utilise the information to make strategic choices about next steps in learning.

Due to the nature of EYFS, formative assessment is the most significant method which practitioners use. Using Development Matters and Birth to Five guidance, teachers make judgements about the learners' progress through targeted questioning, quality interaction and through discussions about learning with the whole team. During the first term, the teacher forms judgements of each child using a mixture of teacher baselines and observations. The statutory government baseline (Reception Baseline Assessment) is also administered.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of children's progress enables us to continually adjust our provision in response to any areas of underachievement that may be identified, or if further challenge is needed. Assessment is a fundamental part of the planning process. To help us decide what to provide we observe children in their play in a range of situations. "On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice." (Revised Development Matters in the EYFS 2021) Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher, teaching assistants, parents, and children, as appropriate.

We record each child's level of development throughout the year in Reception, and record whether each child is on track or not on track to meet a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the Reception. Children in Reception will be judged at either an emerging level or an expected level in each early learning goal. The exceeding judgement no longer applies. This information is also shared

with the child's next teacher who uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parent consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers detailed comments on each child's holistic progress across all areas of learning. It highlights the child's strengths, next steps and gives details of the child's progress during their time in the EYFS. These are sent to parents in July each year.

The Learning Environment

At St Leonard's C of E Primary School, we create a learning environment which fosters supportive relationships to enhance and invite a child's curiosity, confidence, and individual competency; allowing them to flourish and soar as individuals regardless of background, circumstance or need. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a lifelong love of learning.

We aim to create an attractive, enabling and stimulating learning environment which encourages children to explore, investigate, develop skills, and learn through first hand experiences. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence skills. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation through play.

Pedagogy

'Our brains work best when information comes in more than one format – mix it up to make learning stick.'

(Mark Enser)

Our aim is to make children's learning 'stick'. Leaders and teachers keep up to date with educational developments and the theory behind powerful learning and this is disseminated to all staff in training sessions. (See Teaching and Learning policy)

In the Early Years at St Leonard's, we provide learning opportunities in a variety of ways because we know that children need these opportunities for learning to 'stick'. "Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching." (Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Principles into Practice 2020, Julian Grenier, P44)

The roles of the EYFS Leader

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT and the EYFS leader, ensures staff develop good subject knowledge. The EYFS leader ensures staff receive CPD specific to Early Years to develop their practice. This includes how to collect effective observations, in order to understand where pupils are and their next steps for learning. The EYFS leader and Senior Leader Team roles are to support and challenge strategically as managers in order to secure the highest quality education to the children.

The role of the EYFS leader is to:

- provide strategic lead and direction
- support and offer advice to colleagues
- support staff development and improve the quality of teaching and learning over time
- monitor pupil progress by working alongside colleagues, book looks, pupil interviews, lesson observations and planning scrutiny
- monitor and evaluate teachers' planning and teaching
- keep self and other staff up to date with developments by relevant reading, INSET and policy development and update

- liaise with appropriate bodies e.g. other schools, governors, the LEA etc about matters relating to the EYFS
- work with all subject leaders to ensure there is progression starting from Reception.

The EYFS leader has responsibility for the day-to-day organisation of the Early Years curriculum. They monitor provision, ensuring that all children are taught the full requirements of the curriculum.

Involving parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership involves open communication between home and school. We are proud of our parental partnership at St Leonards, we promote this in a number of ways:

- In the Autumn term, there will be meet the team meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- When children have settled into school life Reception class parents are invited to stay and play sessions.
 - The school's website informs parents what has been happening in the wider curriculum via class and subject pages.
 - Class Dojo stories inform parents specifically on the day-to-day lessons and experiences that have taken place in Reception.
 - The school's social media platforms informs parents of whole school or enhanced activities which are taking place.
 - Teachers can be contacted via email to communicate with parents. School communication will be sent out via Parent Pay/Class Dojo providing details of specific events or inviting parents into school.

Home Learning

Home learning is given in line with our Homework policy. **Children are expected to read at home each night and are listened to regularly in school.** Wider curriculum work is set if a clear purpose and need is identified. All home learning is given to the children in electronic and paper format and some is accessible online. Parents are clearly signposted to this by the class teacher.

Additional opportunities/cultural capital

We aim to enrich our pupils' lives by offering a variety of non-statutory extra-curricular experiences (clubs, visits, visiting speakers, sporting events etc). By giving our children these opportunities, we are equipping them with life skills and ambition in order to pursue and achieve possibilities.

Resources

We aim to provide and maintain appropriate resources to support the delivery and development of our Early Years curriculum. All resources are organised and stored to ensure ease of location and accessibility to staff and pupils. Resources are regularly audited and checked. Requests for new resources are passed to the EYFS leader and SLT and budgets are spent with these in mind to ensure a high-quality delivery of our curriculum.

Accountability and responsibility

Our governing body, is responsible for monitoring the way the school EYFS curriculum is implemented. They review EYFS development via the Headteacher's report, reports from the EYFS

leader, school visits and pupil interviews. We have a named EYFS governor who liaises with the EYFS leader to monitor this area of school.