

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

LEYBOURNE Ss PETER & PAUL C of E PRIMARY ACADEMY



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Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”
Department for Education April 2017

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of ‘The Early Years Foundation Stage’.

What is Early Years?

For the purpose of this policy ‘Early Years’ refers to children in their first year at school (Reception Year).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”
Department for Education April 2017

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 we 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 and strong partnerships between practitioners and parents/or carers, we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning indoors and outdoors throughout the school day.

- **Learning and development** - The Early Years Foundation Stage 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. There are learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We understand that children progress and develop at different rates, therefore the education and care of all children in EYFS includes children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Leybourne Ss Peter & Paul Primary Academy 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 guardians and the Early Years 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 well-being. 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 Leybourne Ss Peter & Paul Primary Academy we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 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 and guardians and value their contributions irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- 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.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

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 through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is dependent on the different ways in which children learn. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

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

"The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment- playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically- underpin learning and development in all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner." (Development Matters in EYFS, 2012)

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. The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests and topics. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

The Reception class currently organise the curriculum through agreed termly themes over the period of the academic year. The themes are then broken into smaller areas that are familiar and of interest to young children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The long term planning reflects a balance of the seven areas of learning and development from the EYFS. We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. Short term planning is recorded in the Day Book and the day plan is informed in two ways. Firstly, through ongoing observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this,

learning objectives for the next short term plan are identified. It is informed secondly by referring to the medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences in the half/termly topic.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations using the '2Build a Profile' programme using I-Pads and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are used to inform the Senior Leadership Team and parents of the children's progress. The parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage Teacher in Term 2 and Term 4 and they are provided with a report of their children's progress. At the end of the year we provide a written summary to parents and carers in relation to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning, as well as reporting on the children's early learning goals.

The EYFS Profile is completed at the end of the Reception year; data is sent to County and practitioners report whether children are meeting expected levels of development or if they are exceeding expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). Children who do not achieve all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year continue to work towards them in Year 1. All attainment data is passed to the Year 1 teacher for continuity at this time of transition.

Learning through Play

At Leybourne Ss Peter & Paul Primary Academy, learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and to relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is led or guided by adults. At Leybourne, we respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. 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.

As the children grow older throughout the year, the balance of child-led and adult-led activities gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible, but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills.
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Role of the adult

- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activity.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play. Children are able to access equipment and resources independently and there are areas where children can be active or be quiet.

The Induction Process

During the Summer Term, prior to starting school the following September, the following visits are conducted:

- Early Years Foundation Stage staff visit pre-school settings from which September's intake will be taken.
- Where possible, Early Years Foundation Stage staff visit each child in their home environment.
- Each child and their key workers at pre-school is invited to spend some time at Leybourne Ss Peter & Paul Primary Academy in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the school environment.

When children join the school in September the following procedures apply, in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first two weeks, children attend a morning or afternoon session only.
- During the first two weeks, children have separate play times to KS1.
- During the third week and thereafter, children attend for the full school day unless EYFS staff and parents or guardians agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child.

Home and School Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the schools and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation Stage. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- We share a topic web with parents and carers detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term or half-term.

- We operate an “open door” policy that allows parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if EYFS staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We hold phonics evenings for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school.
- There are opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on different occasions ie, phonics and stay and play sessions, class acts of worship, mother’s day presentations etc
- Home/School Links sheets and Celebration Leaves are completed at regular intervals throughout the year, in order to share achievements and interests at home.

Transition to Year 1

Close partnership between the EYFS teacher and Year 1 teacher helps:

- To ensure that pupils experience a smooth transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage One.
- To ensure that the quality and pace of learning are maintained and that pupils continue to make good progress.
- To ensure that pupils follow the appropriate curriculum as their needs define.
- To ensure that all staff see transition as a process rather than event.
- To inform parents and pupils about the transition process.

The Early Years Leader has overall responsibility to ensure that the process of transition is a smooth, effective and happy process. She/he reports to the Senior Leadership Team on the effectiveness of the transition, any changes made and/or new national initiatives on the process of transition.

Transition to Year 1 builds upon and extends the experiences pupils have had in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From Term 3, Reception children have joint child-initiated activities with Year 1, where all pupils in both classes can free flow between the Reception classroom and outdoor area and the Year 1 classroom. This allows Reception children to familiarise themselves with Year 1 staff and the Year 1 environment.

During the Summer Term Reception pupils visit the Year 1 classroom and take part in an afternoon activity with their new teacher and the Year 1 teacher visits their classroom for short periods to play with and observe the pupils. The Year 1 teacher also has regular story time sessions with the Reception pupils in Term 6. She is also included in the end of year baseline assessment. Throughout the first half of the Autumn Term, the Year 1 teacher continues to use the EYFS document and ensures that they adopt similar routines, expectations and activities as in the Early Years Foundation Stage class, enabling the pupils who have not achieved their early learning goals to continue to do so. Importantly, there continues to be opportunities for active child initiated independent learning through planned play. The amount of time that pupils in Year 1 spend sitting still and listening is gradually increased so that the pupils remain motivated, enthused and eager learners.

As part of the transition process to KS1, the EYFS Profile Reports, together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning, are passed to the Year 1 teacher. A meeting between the EYFS teacher and Year 1 teacher takes place in Term 6 to discuss each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs are supported as appropriate, to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Health Care Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The school's SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

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Signed:

Date: