

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through play and talk.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':

'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.'

The EYFS aims:

- To provide the highest quality care and education for all our children
- To ensure a safe and motivating environment enabling children to learn
- To value the individual child and work alongside parents to help every child reach their full potential.
- To provide a strong foundation for future learning.

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven Areas of Learning, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on the Educational Programmes set out in the EYFS and our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. This enables children to develop the knowledge and skills to be prepared for KS1.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The prime areas are fundamental to a broad and balanced base of learning for children and are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

The **prime** areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

PLANNING IN THE EYFS

We create medium term plans based on a series of topics/themes, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning.

At the beginning of each topic/theme the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences with us which we record. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas to focus on.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'. The children take part in daily phonics sessions.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways and everyone in class is encouraged to contribute. Observations of some of the children's achievements are collated in their own personal, Learning Journal.

Parents/carers are invited to explore these learning journals with their child during 'Stay and Play' sessions, where parents are invited into school and during parent/teacher consultations. They are also invited to contribute to them through the use of 'WOW' observations made at home and shared with the school. Throughout their time in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

These ongoing observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile. The children's progress is reviewed continually.

RECEPTION BASELINE ASSESSMENT (RBA)

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. It assesses children in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. This data will be compared to key stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measure for a school. The data collected and produced from the assessment is stored in the National Pupil Database (NPD), including numerical scores, it is not shared with external bodies, including schools, teachers, pupils or parents/carers.

EYFS PROFILE

In the final term of the Reception year (no later than 30th June), the EYFS profile is completed for each child. This provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded summary of every child's development and learning achievements and readiness for Year 1, it also includes whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses practitioners' knowledge and professional judgement of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement.

The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each area of the EYFS curriculum:

- 1 = Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected levels
- 2 = Expected ELG – meeting the expected levels of development

Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report, enabling a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 which will assist in the planning of learning in the next academic year.

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements. This data is also collected by HET.

SAFETY

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and the following of set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

INCLUSION

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need. In doing so, we work closely with parents and outside agencies.

SAFETY INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Lytchett Matravers Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for WOW and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

Lytchett Matravers Primary School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

There is always a member of staff on school site and based in the EYFS that holds a Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Lytchett Matravers Primary School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team which includes a Designated Safeguarding Lead and a core team of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. Staff have access to the 'My Concern' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

RATIOS

The School will ensure that staff levels within the Early Years setting comply with statutory guidance and can meet the needs of the children, provide suitable levels of supervision and keep them safe. Children will be kept within sight and hearing at all times. The EYFS Leader will oversee all EYFS Provision.

For Reception classes:

- Class sizes will be limited to 30 pupils.
- Classes will be led by a qualified teacher, supported by suitably qualified support staff.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding an information evening before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and at our 1:1 sessions carried out each July and September;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys through the use of WOW moments;
- Inviting parents into school half termly for our 'Stay and Play' sessions;
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing EYFS newsletters each half term, which include a curriculum planning overview for each topic, highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Inviting parents into school for Early Reading information sessions, to demonstrate how we teach reading/phonics and help them support their child;
- Inviting parents into school for an 'early maths' session, to demonstrate how we teach early maths skills and help them support their child;
- Welcoming parents as volunteers into our school;
- Providing parents with an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile;
- We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions with their parents/carers in both Honeybee and Ladybird Class to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners. Our Reception staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools in return, to familiarise themselves with the children.

Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer of 1:1 session in school with their child, in the class their child is in before beginning school in September. This is a valuable time for the children to become confident in their setting and with the adults who will work with them. It allows the parents to talk 1:1 with staff and get answers for any concerns/queries they may have.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 teachers to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data, reading files and Learning Journals are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a number of sessions towards

the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

MONITORING THE EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Senior Leadership Team, Assessment Leader and Reception team, as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The EYFS Leader in conjunction with the Head Teacher is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

All Staff are responsible for implementing procedures outlined in this policy.

DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

The policy will be given to all members of staff and copies will be available for parents, including via the school website.

Appendices:

- All about me - starting School questionnaire
- Transition Plan
- Link to the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage:
- Link to Development Matters/Birth to Five Matters
- Link to Early Years Foundation Stage Profile:
- Assessment and Monitoring Policy:
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy