



Early Years
Foundation Stage Policy
St Lawrence Primary School and Nursery

2019/20

This policy sets out the vision for the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Lawrence Primary School and Nursery, the way in which the vision is put into practice; the implementation and how the school measures the impact on children's learning.

Our Nursery and Primary School is located at the heart of the community in Church Stretton and provides children in their early years with opportunities to grow and learn within a safe and nurturing environment.

We work in close partnership with parents, educators and health specialists to ensure that every child who attends our Nursery and Reception Classes can achieve and learn with confidence, expressing themselves through their painted pictures, movements, words, art, craft and design.

We aim to build a culture of respect both for the environment and for each other. Whenever possible, we use natural, recycled and open-ended materials which encourage children's play and exploration, active learning and creative thinking.

Our dedicated team of teaching staff are all trained in early years education and in special education so that we can support each child's age and stage of development through sensitive interactions, observation and careful questioning.

Children are given opportunities to pursue their own interests and follow their own lines of enquiry across enabling indoor/outdoor environments. Experiences are enhanced through the use of community resources, local visits and intergenerational projects.

Parents, grandparents and carers are encouraged to join us in celebrating each small step in their child's learning journey through regular open information events and by logging into our online learning journals.

As a team, we are committed to continuous professional development providing a base for training and sharing of excellent practice with colleagues locally, nationally and internationally.

Our Values

Our inclusive, community School and Nursery builds on broad Christian Foundations. We welcome people of different faiths and those who have none. Our children have designed the four posters of the St Lawrence Way to provide a set of common values which unite us as a school and as a diverse community.

In Nursery and Reception we promote and teach these values through everyday interactions with each other. We celebrate each child's unique interests and fascinations, we support and meet their individual needs and we encourage a culture of openness, honesty and respect for each other.

Children learn to listen, to share ideas and cooperate with each other every single day. We aim to build a strong and vibrant learning community that encourages children to find their true potential and 'fly'.

The EYFS Curriculum Framework

There are seven areas of learning which are incorporated into every zone of the Nursery and Reception Classes, both inside and out.

These are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All our resources and activities are carefully planned to extend children's interests; building on what each child knows and can do. New experiences are provided each day, building on what has happened before. Children are observed and next steps in learning are identified.

Each child's characteristics for effective learning;

- playing and exploring,
- active learning, creativity
- making links

are recognised, nurtured and extended; providing all our children with a strong foundation for learning in the future.

Curiosity

Children are naturally curious about the world around them and this helps them to learn. When children are given resources and experiences that inspire them to play and explore, they learn to look closely, to listen attentively and ask questions. They become inquisitive learners who want to find out more.

The enabling environment in the EYFS is set up to encourage children's curiosity. Light tables, water play and 'Muddy Mondays' encourage children to explore the world around them, stimulating their interest, encouraging them to ask questions and carry out their own scientific enquiry.

Focus

Attention, listening, focus and concentration are important learning behaviours that can be taught when children are encouraged to follow their own interests and lines of enquiry. Exploration at Forest School, a bug hunt in the Nursery gardens or an investigation of how water flows along a channel are all playful ways in which children can learn important skills.

The reading areas in each classroom have been set up to teach children how to listen and focus; an enclosed area with minimal distractions. Children learn to listen to stories, playing with language as they sing rhymes and songs.

Risky Play

Taking risks is an important aspect of learning in the early years. When we allow children to learn and explore independently they may get messy - or covered in mud! Children need to take risks as they play

because that is how they gain understanding on how to manage risks and change their behaviour. Making mistakes is all part of the process, children are taught to 'fail wisely' - learning from mistakes and building resilience for the future.

Taking advantage of the opportunities in Cardingmill Valley and at Forest School, children at St Lawrence's benefit from many outdoor experiences. When children are challenged to climb a hill, walk upstream or roll down a slope they engage in risky play, building important learning behaviours and resilience for the future.

Making Links

Building blocks, crates, pipes and guttering are all used to help children understand the importance of property, form and structure. Making connections between the different parts helps children to understand the relationships between materials, they experiment with balance and design developing mathematical vocabulary along the way. Increasingly complex models are created, changed and improved by a child who is making important neural links and connections.

Forest School

In addition to an extensive outdoor investigation and story garden, children in our Nursery regularly make use of our beautiful forest school site. We have waterproof suits for every child in our Nursery and Reception Classes so that we can make use of all the learning opportunities outdoors, whatever the weather. We also have a trained Forest School Leader on the team and can access the site in small groups or as a whole class. Children learn to respect, value and enjoy the beautiful natural environment that surrounds them building their knowledge and skills for the future.

Independence

All our children are encouraged to be independent in Nursery. They take responsibility for their own belongings, pour their own drinks and learn to eat independently using a knife and fork. If there is a spillage, children learn how to clear it up themselves, it is not a problem just another opportunity to learn.

Through playing games with each other children learn to take turns, to negotiate and manage their emotions independently. We help them to grow in confidence so that they can support and help each other.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We offer a safe, nurturing environment which supports young children to develop their resilience through risky and adventurous play. We encourage children to embrace new opportunities to learn, we give them the confidence to try and try again ... and to support each other with empathy and compassion.

Moving into school is supported as a natural progression from the Nursery, which every child can look forward to with excitement and confidence. Every new challenge is embraced as a new opportunity to learn.

Intergenerational Projects

In 2019 we are taking part in an exciting new research project to bring together children from our Nursery and adults in a nearby sheltered residential home. One afternoon session a week will be held at the residential centre with children and adults engaging in play-based activities alongside each other.

Children in EYFS also participate in shared singing and musical activities at the Health and Wellbeing Centre and at St Laurence's Parish Church. In this way children are given opportunities to build positive relationships with people of all ages. They gain an understanding of similarities and differences and an awareness of the wider community in which they are living.

Language Development

Children at St Lawrence Nursery are given lots of rich opportunities to practise their communication skills through playing with language. Rhymes and songs, letters and sounds are used to help children articulate vocal sounds and learn new vocabulary. As each child builds attention and focus they are encouraged to engage in learning conversations - asking and answering questions, sharing ideas and responding to experiences.

Children learn to tell stories alongside their pictures, they re-enact experiences through their role play and build new narratives in small world play. As children play, they learn to express themselves creatively through their art, drama and storytelling. Learning to read and write develops naturally when young children become confident, competent communicators.

Readers, Writers and Mathematicians

Through play, children learn the basic skills which will enable them to read, write, use and apply numbers and problem solve in the future. We encourage young children in EYFS to engage in sustained shared thinking alongside their play so that they gain an understanding of key vocabulary in real contexts.

Every child has the opportunity to develop expertise as they use their creativity and critical thinking skills to make their own picture books, design structures and buildings or create complex models. Adults act as 'Research Partners' asking questions, challenging ideas and providing the resources needed to make and change a model.

Our Policies

Key Person

Every child, and their family in Nursery have been allocated a named key person. In Reception the class teacher is the key person, all members of the EYFS team have a role in communicating with parents through home/school books, or at the beginning or end of each day. This person will support the child to settle at the beginning of the day, they can answer any questions parents may have and can give advice about learning and development. The Key Person provides parents and carers with information about a child's 'starting points' (On Entry Report), the two-year old health and development check, as well as assessing progress and attainment at the end of each academic year.

The Reception Teacher completes the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child at the end of the Reception Year using information and evidence collected throughout the EYFS. This is reported to parents in writing with a follow up consultation meeting.

Special Needs

We are an inclusive EYFS and all our staff are trained to support each child's additional needs. We work closely with parents and specialist health and family support services to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made, and all children are given an opportunity to learn and make progress.

We monitor wellbeing, involvement, learning behaviours and all of the EYFS areas of learning using a birth to five tracker – a system that shows very small steps of progress. In this way we can track the progress and attainment for every child whatever their starting point. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and intervention programmes and specialist support can be put in place during a period of rapid brain development.

Staff are trained in ELKLAN Speech and Language Support for Under Fives, EarlyBird Support for children on the Autistic Spectrum, Mental Health, the Sensory Curriculum, Makaton and attachment. The Nursery is recognised by the Local Authority as a 'Preferred Provider' for children with Special Educational Needs.

The School SENCO provides administrative support when a child needs specialist assessment and referral to outside services. The Key Person is responsible for setting targets and updating Personal Support Plans.

Emotional Health and Challenging Behaviour

We recognise the importance of understanding behaviours in young children as a form of communication. Staff are trained to observe and identify underlying triggers for behaviour and can sensitively offer emotional support to both the child and family. Through a consistent and calm approach, children develop effective coping mechanisms to help manage their own mental health and build resilience.

All children in the EYFS are monitored in terms of their wellbeing, involvement and mental health competencies. This ensures that concerns are identified early on and family support is put in place.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

All our Nursery and Reception staff are trained in safeguarding, they know how to keep children safe and can recognise signs of physical and emotional abuse. Every member of staff has been DBS checked and has a clear understanding of who to contact (designated safeguard Lead) and how to communicate, document and record any incident.

We link closely with the Family Support Team so that support can be put in place if needed. The importance of establishing positive relationships with parents in the EYFS is recognised by all members of staff as this sets the tone as the child moves through the school. Information is shared using CPOMS and concerns are shared and acted on quickly to mitigate risk.

Off Site Visits and Visitors

When planning outside visits a risk- benefit analysis is carried out by staff to assess the risks. A written risk assessment is completed prior to the visit and agreed with the Headteacher. In a similar way, visitors and volunteers are invited into Nursery and they are required to sign in electronically and wear visitor identification throughout their time on site.

Visitors are reminded that no mobile phones must be used on site.

Online Communications and Social Media

We often make use of electronic forms of communication with parents and carers using 'Parentmail', the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker (EExAT) or through the School Facebook Page. Signed permission to share information is given prior to admission with an agreement that no data (photographs/videos) will be shared through social media sites. We respect each person's wishes regarding data sharing and data protection in line with GDPR Act 2018.

We have a mobile phone policy in school. All Nursery and Reception staff are required to store mobile phones in a central place in the office so that they are accessible in an emergency or on school trips but not used in areas where there are children.