



Leamington Community Primary School

Together we make a Difference

Early Years Policy



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Leamington Community Primary School: Early Years Policy

Intent:

Our Aims and Purposes

As stated in the EYFS document we believe that 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. Here at Leamington we aim to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

Care, Learning and Play

The programme of activities and the atmosphere of our Foundation Stage aims to encourage confidence, independence and enjoyment. We value all children as individuals and support them in developing their emotional, social, cognitive, interpersonal and physical skills, and their desire to explore, discover and be creative. Our children will be taught to develop the characteristics to become effective learners by;

- **playing and exploring** – children will investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **being an active learner** – children will concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- **creating and thinking critically** – children will have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

All our staff believe that 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance and our curriculum is broken into 7 areas of learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

Communication and language;

- This involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development;

- Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children will take part in activities that develop their gross and fine motor co-ordination. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, social and emotional development;

- PSED is about helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are: Literacy (including Phonics); Mathematics; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and Design.

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Phonics- Reading is really important to us here at Leamington and we want to give all children the best start on their journey to become a fluent reader. We use Read, Write Inc. to teach children how to sound out, read and write words. We introduce this in nursery. By doing so we immerse the children in vocabulary through role-play, discussion, building sentences and using productive questioning. We place a huge emphasis on developing children's love of reading through enticing story and poetry times. Read, Write Inc. will continue throughout Reception and Key Stage 1. Staff will meet with parents to discuss how they can support their children at home and share training materials. We differentiate our phonics so all children are challenged and can reach their full potential regardless of their starting point.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting; understanding and using numbers; calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. Children will develop a deep understanding of number to 10 and the composition of each number.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. Children will learn talk about past and present, people, culture and communities along with the natural world. We will provide children with as many "real life" opportunities as possible in order to immerse the children in what they are learning.

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities.

EYFS

Each area of learning and development is implemented through our planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. We know that play is essential for children's

development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others and therefore our teaching and learning is play-based.

Implementation:

What will we do?

Our Immersive curriculum

At Leamington we have developed our own immersive curriculum. We aim to emotionally connect the pupils to their curriculum to increase motivation, interest and attitude to learning. We want our children to love to learn and this journey starts in our early years. We do this by immersing the children into every aspect of our curriculum, we step into magic story world where anything is possible. We help solve mysteries, become superheroes, fairy tale characters and much more. We want all learners to exceed their potential academically, socially and emotionally thus gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes to be successful in the next stage of their learning. Children also use elements of Pie Corbett's model to add actions enabling them to orally re-tell stories and even compose their own versions.

We will provide a well-planned and organised play environment that offers children rich and stimulating experiences, alongside opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves. The programme of activities will recognise and take into account the differing interests, backgrounds and abilities of the children. Activities are carefully planned to allow children to build on their natural curiosity, advance their thinking, use their imagination and develop positive social relationships. At all times, we will recognise a child's individuality, effort and achievement. Wherever appropriate, children and parents will be involved in the process of planning activities so that the programme reflects their opinions, and so that children feel some ownership over the setting.

In our EYFS specialised provision our children have complex needs and are at very early levels of development. These children may have a diagnosed neurological condition which affects all aspects of their development, and others have medical conditions or are awaiting diagnosis. We still aspire to immerse these children and create a love of learning. We focus on developing the transferrable skills that equip children for the next stage in their education and life. We do not expect our children to adapt to our teaching, we adapt our teaching to meet the children's needs and interests. Our children are provided with opportunities to access rich learning experiences through a non-subject specific approach. We do this through a very personalised approach with a focus on early communication, social and emotional development along with developing cognitive skills and Sensory and Physical integration. All planning is done on an individual basis focusing on each child's specific needs, targets, strengths and areas for development.

- Staff will display flexible styles of leadership and respond appropriately to children according to their ability, understanding and needs;
- Staff will support, recognise and promote achievements by all children;
- We will provide children with a range of equipment and resources appropriate to their age and interests;
- Children will be offered access to outdoor play every day, subject to weather conditions;

- No child will ever be left unsupervised during activities. Children must be within sight and hearing of staff;
- We encourage children to play and explore, be an active learner and create and think critically about things during our play.

We adhere to the *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2021* and use Development Matters (2021) to support the delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements.

Impact:

Observation, Assessment and planning

We observe the children daily; from these observations we base our assessments which allow us to plan the next steps for the children. These observations and assessments are kept electronically on Seesaw. This will form the children's individual Learning Journeys. The children's Learning Journeys are available for parents/carers and children to look at as they wish. Parents/carers can download them at the end of Reception.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, staff will complete the EYFS Profile for each child. The Profile provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities; their progress against expected levels; and their readiness for Year 1.

Key Person

Each child will be allocated a key person. A key person has **special responsibilities** for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel **safe** and cared for and building relationships with their parents.

Why do we use the key person approach?

- A key person helps a child to become familiar with the setting and to feel confident and safe within it;
- A key person develops a genuine bond with children and offers a settled, close relationship;
- When children feel happy and secure in this way they are confident to explore and to try out new things;
- Even when children are older and can hold special people in mind for longer there is still a need for them to have a key person to depend on in the setting, such as their teacher or a Learning Support Officer (LSO);
- The key person helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs;
- The key person will aim to work with and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home.

Involving and Consulting Parents/Carers

We know that parents/carers know their child better than anyone else and therefore believe it is essential that we involve parents/carers in planning as much as possible, following the children's interests. On admission to Nursery we work closely with parents/carers to make accurate baseline assessments which help us get to know their child better. Throughout Early Years we encourage parents/carers to get involved and share achievements from home through our ClassDojo system. Parents/carers are invited to send videos and photographs from home which are stored and celebrated on Seesaw. This allows us to plan next steps for individual children. Any input from parents/carers will be greatly appreciated and we will always try to act on suggestions, when appropriate. Key people are always available to chat with parents/carers at the beginning and end of each session once the children have been safely dismissed. We plan 'stay and play sessions' and welcome all parents/carers to attend. Staff will send home books and games for parents to share with children.

We use our ongoing observations to accurately assess the children's progress. This is usually tracked through target tracker allowing the teachers to identify gaps and areas of development for individual and groups of children. This information is always used to adapt our teaching and environment to meet the needs of our children. In some rare cases the children may only be making very small steps in progress, in this instance we will use B-Squared to identify those achievements and support our future planning. We expect all children to make at least good progress regardless of their starting points. We value all children and adapt our teaching and learning environments to ensure they are all challenged and reach their potential.

Assessment in Reception

Baseline

As of September 2021 all Reception aged children will undergo a baseline assessment.

Baseline assessments are a suitable assessment to be taken by pupils during their first half term in reception (the academic year in which they turn 5). All pupils should be assessed within the first 6 weeks of joining reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously.

The purpose of the reception baseline assessment is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created. (*Assessment framework Reception Baseline Assessment February 2020*). Parents can request a copy of their child's baseline report.

Physical Environment

- We are committed to providing children with a stimulating and safe environment. We will do all we can to make our premises welcoming and friendly to children, their parents/carers and any other visitors;
- Our premises are safe, secure and adequately spacious. Our environment and atmosphere is welcoming to children and offers access to facilities for a broad and varied programme of activities;

- We are committed to taking every step to ensure that children have equal access to all facilities and play opportunities; including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities;
- Our premises comply with all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant regulations and guidance;
- Daily risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the facilities are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration;
- We will do all we can to maintain an open room layout, allowing children to choose from a variety of play opportunities. All children will have adequate space to play and interact freely. Staff will audit the environment regularly, making changes to suit the needs of the children.

Outdoor Provision

We are so lucky at Leamington Community Primary School to have amazing areas for outdoor learning in both Reception and Nursery. Children in our Foundation Stage will access the outdoor environment on a daily basis in all weathers- please ensure that children are dressed appropriately. We ask that children bring a coat to school in all weathers!

Why is being outside so important?

- Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development;
- Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors;
- It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world;
- Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.

Any outdoor provision will take place in safe, secure and well-supervised spaces. Before any outdoor activities commence, a thorough safety check of the area will take place.

Staff will make sure there is a supply of water available to children at all times, particularly in the hot weather. In hot weather, staff will ensure that children are protected from the sun when we are given permission from parents/carers to apply sun cream. We do ask parents to always apply sun cream before sending children to school in hot weather.

Sleeping children

School will not actively encourage children to sleep but we understand that children all develop at different rates and we must meet their needs throughout the day. Some children may need sleep and rest periods to help with their development. A full risk assessment has been carried out in order to ensure the safety of any sleeping children.

All sleeping children must be checked at 5-minute intervals. Staff who are working in the room are all responsible for checking the children. Checking a child while sleeping should involve:

- Placing a hand on their chest to check they are breathing or putting the back of their hand near to the child's mouth to feel for breath;

- Ensuring that each child is well;
- Ensuring that each child is not too hot or too cold;
- Ensuring that all sheets or blankets are not wrapped around the child;
- A sleep monitoring chart is used to record the checks and is signed by the member of staff carrying out the check. This is shared with parents/carers.

Safeguarding in Foundation Stage

Children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm. Please refer to our whole-school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for more information about our safeguarding procedures. This policy is available on our school website or at the office upon request.

Equality of Opportunity

All children will be treated as individuals and their needs will be supported. In Foundation Stage children are planned for individually in order to ensure that their needs are met emotionally, socially and academically.

For more information, please refer to our whole-school Equal Opportunities Policy and our SEND policy - available on our school website or at the office upon request.