



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, included and emotionally secure. We seek to provide quality and consistency, a secure foundation, strong partnership with parents and carers and equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

The Four EYFS Principles

- **Every child is a unique child:** Children are constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise individual starting points, interests, strengths and areas for development.
- **Positive relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Staff develop warm, respectful relationships and work closely with parents and carers.
- **Enabling environments:** Children learn and develop well in environments where teaching and support respond to their individual interests and needs. Our provision is planned, safe, stimulating and adaptable.
- **Learning and development:** Children develop and learn at different rates. Staff understand developmental variation and adapt teaching, interactions and provision appropriately, including for children with SEND.

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 active learners** - 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.

Our teaching is a balance of child-initiated play, adult-guided learning, direct teaching, modelling, purposeful interactions and carefully planned experiences. Play is essential to children's development, but it is not viewed as separate from teaching and learning. Adults decide what children need to learn and use the most effective approach for each learning intention.

Curriculum – The Seven Areas of Learning

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;

Children experience a rich language environment and develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves and in listening and speaking. At Leamington, Nursery and Reception participate in daily Concept Cat sessions to explicitly teach and reinforce key concepts and vocabulary. Staff use the SHREC approach – Share Attention, Respond, Expand and Conversation – to promote high-quality back-and-forth interactions.

Physical development;

Children have frequent opportunities to be active and develop gross- and fine-motor control, coordination and confidence. Staff promote healthy lifestyles, independence and age-appropriate understanding of health, hygiene, food and physical activity.

Personal, social and emotional development;

Children develop a positive sense of themselves and others, form positive relationships, develop social skills, learn to manage feelings and develop confidence, self-regulation and understanding of behaviour within groups.

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.

Staff continually develop their expertise in early mathematics through professional development opportunities, including participation in the Nurturing Young Mathematicians project.

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 to talk about the 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.

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. Our immersive curriculum is used alongside, not instead of, the statutory EYFS curriculum. Staff ensure that experiences have clear learning purposes and contribute to the knowledge, skills and understanding children need for the next stage of their education.

Implementation – Provision, Teaching and Learning

Staff regularly review provision, teaching approaches and learning environments to ensure they respond to the needs of the current cohort. Adaptations are made to support all learners, including children with SEND.

- We provide a well-planned and organised play environment offering rich and stimulating experiences.
- Children have opportunities to explore, experiment, plan, make decisions and solve problems.
- Activities recognise and respond to children's differing interests, backgrounds, abilities and developmental needs.
- Adults use modelling, demonstration, questioning, explanation, repetition and sustained shared thinking to extend learning.
- Staff provide flexible styles of leadership and respond appropriately to children according to their ability, understanding and needs.
- Children have access to resources appropriate to their age, interests and developmental stage.
- Outdoor play and learning are available daily, subject to safety and weather conditions.
- Children are supervised appropriately and are within sight and/or hearing of staff in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Children are supported to develop independence and to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and personal needs.

Observation, Assessment and planning

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Staff use professional knowledge, observation, interaction and evidence from children's learning to understand what children know, understand and can do, and to identify appropriate next steps.

- Children are observed naturally during play, routines, adult-guided learning and interactions.
- Observations are used to inform planning and adaptations rather than to generate unnecessary paperwork.
- Learning journeys are maintained electronically on Seesaw and are accessible to parents and carers.
- Ongoing assessment and target-tracking information are used to identify gaps and areas for development for individuals and groups.
- Where children are making very small steps in progress, B-Squared is used where appropriate to identify achievements and support planning.
- Assessment information is used to evaluate the impact of teaching and provision and to inform transition.
- Assessment is not used to label or disadvantage children; staff consider developmental variation, SEND, English as an additional language and individual circumstances.

All Reception children undertake the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) during their first six weeks in school. The assessment is carried out through practical, age-appropriate activities and helps establish a starting point for measuring pupils' progress throughout their primary education. Parents can request a copy of their child's baseline report.

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.

Inclusion, SEND and Individual Needs

The EYFS applies to all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Leamington is committed to inclusive practice and to ensuring that children with SEND have access to the curriculum, environment and relationships they need to participate, learn and make progress. Staff work closely with parents and carers and, where appropriate, external professionals to identify needs, plan support, monitor progress and review provision.

Reasonable adjustments are made where required. These may include adaptations to the environment, adult interaction, communication methods, routines, resources, group sizes, sensory experiences, transitions and assessment arrangements. Provision is reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate and promotes inclusion and independence.

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.

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.

Health, Wellbeing and Safer Eating

The school promotes children's physical and emotional wellbeing and supports healthy habits. Children are given opportunities to be physically active, access outdoor learning, make healthy choices and develop independence in personal care.

Oral Health

We promote good oral health through age-appropriate conversations, stories, activities and everyday routines. Children are supported to understand the importance of brushing teeth and making healthy food and drink choices. Parents and carers are encouraged to reinforce these messages at home.

Food and Drink

Where the school provides food and drink, it will be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to children. Dietary requirements, preferences, allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs are obtained and shared appropriately with staff involved in food preparation and handling.

Safer eating

- Children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating.
- A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid qualification is present in the room while children are eating.
- Staff follow the school's procedures for allergies, dietary requirements and allergy action plans.
- Food is prepared in a way that reflects individual developmental needs and reduces the risk of choking.
- Children are seated safely and, where possible, eating takes place in a designated area where distractions are minimised.
- Staff remain alert to choking and unexpected allergic reactions.
- Any choking incident requiring intervention is recorded and parents/carers are informed.
- Staff receive appropriate paediatric first-aid training.

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:

- Children will be placed on their backs in their own sleep space on a firm, flat surface;
- 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 and their heads are not covered;
- 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.

Although Leamington's provision is Nursery and Reception based, the statutory safer-sleep requirements will be applied where relevant to any child in the provision.

Toileting, Intimate Care and Privacy

Children develop independence with toileting at different rates. Staff support children sensitively and respectfully, promoting independence while maintaining dignity, privacy and safety.

Where children require support with toileting, changing or other intimate care, this is undertaken in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy and safeguarding procedures. Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs. Suitable hygienic changing facilities, spare clothing and other necessary resources are provided.

Screen Use and Digital Technology

The school has regard to the Department for Education guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Digital technology is used purposefully and selectively where it enhances learning, communication, creativity or access to experiences.

Screen use does not replace active play, physical activity, outdoor learning, hands-on exploration, books, conversation, social interaction or sustained shared thinking. Staff consider the

developmental needs of individual children and ensure that screen use is age-appropriate, purposeful and balanced.

Any photographs, videos or digital records of children are managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding, mobile phone/camera, data protection and information-sharing procedures.

Safeguarding in Foundation Stage

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The Early Years team follows the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and all relevant statutory requirements.

- Staff know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy safeguarding leads are and how to report concerns.
- Safeguarding concerns are recorded factually and shared in accordance with school procedures.
- Staff receive safeguarding training and are supported to implement safeguarding procedures in daily practice.
- Children are appropriately supervised and are not left unsupervised.
- The school maintains safe collection and handover arrangements.
- Visitors are appropriately managed and unauthorised persons are prevented from accessing children.
- The school follows its procedures for attendance and unexplained absence where absence may raise a safeguarding concern.
- Any allegation of harm or abuse is managed in accordance with statutory requirements and the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The school does not permit banned dog breeds, including the XL Bully type, to be kept or present on the premises.

Attendance and Absence

Regular attendance is important in supporting children's learning, development, relationships and wellbeing. The school follows its Attendance Policy and safeguarding procedures to follow up absences in a timely manner. Parents and carers are expected to notify the school promptly if their child is unable to attend school and provide the reason for the absence. All absences are recorded in accordance with the school's attendance procedures.

Unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up promptly. Where appropriate, staff will contact parents/carers or emergency contacts to establish the reason for the child's absence. Patterns of absence will be monitored and concerns will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and attendance officer lead where necessary.

Particular attention will be given to persistent or unexplained absence, as absence may be an indicator of safeguarding or welfare concerns. The school will work sensitively with families to understand barriers to attendance and identify appropriate support.

Partnership with other Professionals and Transition

Where appropriate, the Early Years team works with health professionals, the SENCO, speech and language therapy, educational psychology, local authority services and other relevant professionals. Information is shared appropriately to support children's development, inclusion and wellbeing. Transition arrangements are planned to support children moving into Nursery, Reception and Year 1. Staff share relevant information about children's strengths, development, learning needs and effective strategies to support continuity.

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.