



St Lawrence Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

2023 - 2024

**Review date:
November 2023**

“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. 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.” (DfE, 2021)

At St Lawrence CE Primary School and Nursery, we strive to give children a strong foundation to grow, explore and achieve as learners and we want children to feel happy, safe, and secure, in an enabling environment where everyone is included, valued and respected.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS (updated in 2021) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

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 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 aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with children and their families.
- We develop strong, positive relationships with parents and carers by sharing each child’s learning experiences using an electronic home-school app (‘SeeSaw’) and ongoing regular consultations.
- Parents and Carers are welcomed into the nursery to help settle children, ask questions or share information establishing strong positive relationships from the start.

Enabling environments:

- We focus on classroom layouts that support high-quality interactions. Enquiry-based learning with teaching and support from adults who respond to individual interests and needs and help children build their learning over time.
- We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations, we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning

Learning and development:

- The learning environment 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.
- The classroom/nursery is set up in learning areas where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently.
- We acknowledge that children develop and learn at different rates.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Lawrence CE Primary School lays secure foundations for future learning and development. The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. Currently, our EYFS consists of a nursery and one reception class; numbers fluctuate from year to year, and we are seeing a much greater need for nursery places for younger children (24-48 months) so we have to maintain flexibility so that more children can be accommodated when needed.

All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in the EYFS to take on the opportunity of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and all school staff work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up in a safe, healthy, enjoyable and achieving environment making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. Our main aim is to give children the best possible start to their learning journey and inspire a passion for life-long learning. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

To meet our aims, we:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child.
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- provide opportunities for children to learn inside and outside through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- The outdoor environment is set up for investigation and enquiry and we provide Forest School and visits to Carding Mill Valley as well as other stimulating and engaging outdoor experiences.
- 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/Carers and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging, inclusive and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding that young children should have acquired by the end of the reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” document (DfE, 2021).

At St Lawrence CE Primary School and Nursery, we plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of the children’s needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve their early learning goals.

We strive to have a balance between structured and child-initiated learning, alongside high-quality adult-child interactions. All adults contribute to observational assessments which are then used to determine what a child knows, what they can do and what their next steps in learning need to be.

The seven areas of learning and development are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation Managing self-building relationships
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills Fine Motor Skills
Communication and Language	Listening Attention and understanding Speaking
Literacy	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
Mathematics	Number Numerical Patterns
Understanding of the World	Past and Present People, Culture and Communities The Natural World
Expressive Art and Design	Being Imaginative and Expressive Creating with Materials

We believe all seven areas are of equal importance and are interconnected. Children have a whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for daily phonics sessions, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, as well as following an open-ended planned line of enquiry. In planning and guiding children’s activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Three characteristics of effective learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.

- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.

- **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 firsthand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside, we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Observation and Assessment in EYFS

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. (DFE, 2021) As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to shape teaching and learning experiences and inform practitioners' knowledge of children's levels of achievements and interests. We record our observations in a variety of different ways e.g., short observations, photographs and video.

Each child has an online learning record using 'Seesaw' (a secure online learning journal) where observations are collected and shared with parents/carers. Parents are encouraged to contribute their own observations to Seesaw.

We use the Development Matters, non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS to support our delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements as well as our own tailor designed progressive learning and development grids.

- **Reception Baseline Assessment**

From Sept 2021 all children starting reception will be participating in the government statutory reception baseline assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of starting reception. The purpose of the assessment is to provide the starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between reception and year 6 / the end of key stage. The RBA is a short, interactive and practical assessment of a child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school, using materials that most children will be familiar with. The RBA is not about judging or labelling a child or putting them under any pressure. Children cannot 'pass' or 'fail' the assessment. Its main purpose is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. More information for parents regarding RBA can be found on the government website [Information for parents' reception baseline assessment](#)

Observations of children's learning both at school and at home as well as teacher-led assessments are used to build a picture of strengths, and interests and identify any gaps. A gap-strength analysis is undertaken to monitor children's individual progress and to identify the cohort's areas of strengths and weaknesses. We also use this information to track the progress of particular groups e.g., gender, SEN, EAL, LAC and Pupil Premium. This information is used to plan effectively for children's next steps in learning and ensure gaps in learning and development are closed.

- **Progress Check (2 years)**

In nursery when a child is aged between two and three a progress check is made by practitioners. The progress check identifies the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant concerns or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners will develop a targeted response plan to support the child's future learning and development involving Parents/Carers and other professionals as appropriate. Where possible the progress check and the Healthy Child Programme health and development review at age two (when Health Visitors gather information on a child's health and development) should inform each other and support integrated working. This will allow health and education professionals to identify strengths as well as any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child/family might benefit. Providers must have the consent of Parents and/or Carers to share information directly with other relevant professionals. (DFE, 2021)

- **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**

Within the final term of reception when a child turns five, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is completed for each child. Teachers use observations, assessments, professional judgements and contributions from Parents/Carers as well as any other adults who can offer a useful contribution. We provide the parents with a report based on the child's progress in the profile. In addition to this, we also comment on the child's characteristics of learning. The profile provides Parents/Carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their expected attainment against expected levels and their readiness for year 1 (DFE, 2021)

Phonics

In the Nursery, we recognise the developmental importance of teaching phonological and phonemic awareness before a child moves onto structured phonics learning. This involves young children learning to listen, tuning into environmental and instrumental sounds, distinguishing between sounds and making connections between sounds, words and pictures. Children are encouraged to play with language, experimenting with rhyme, alliteration and repetition using familiar high-quality texts. Every child is given the secure foundations they need to participate in the systematic phonics programme (Bug Phonics) used in Reception and KS1.

This process is underpinned by the modelling and teaching of good listening skills, combined with frequent opportunities to improve children's visual and auditory memory and their ability to sequence. Skills are developed in our nursery, as well as at the beginning of reception, through the teaching of activities to promote phonological and phonemic awareness in young children before they embark upon a systematic phonics programme.

We are also aware that the knowledge children acquire to support their development of early reading is equally as relevant for their development as a writer, with the need for high quality phonics and early literacy. Parents are invited to a workshop to observe phonics sessions in reception and a nursery song, sign and rhyme session so they can support with reading and writing at home. A love of reading is promoted through the offer of a high-quality book library for adults/parents to share with their children. We have close links with the local library service in Church Stretton and Bookstart.

At our school, we believe that working in partnership with parents/carers is paramount to children achieving and feeling safe and secure both at home and at school. We use PP and EYPP funding to support additional resources such as the games and core book library.

Funding is also used to provide interventions such as Talk Boost, ELKLAN training and speech and language teacher support. All these initiatives contribute towards our efforts to close the achievement gap for our most vulnerable children.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Lawrence CE Primary and Nursery School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child.

Within EYFS we have level 3 and level 6 practitioners who are qualified with ELKLAN, and in the Early Years Professional Development Programme (EYPD).

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

We have a full-time SENCO who works alongside the team in the nursery and Reception classes to support early identification, early intervention and applications for specialist support and funding. The nursery is supported by the Under-fives SEN team at Shropshire Council who regularly offer advice, funding and access to specialist training when required.

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents/carers to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways; an open-door policy across the whole EYFS to ensure concerns are addressed quickly and with sensitivity.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for, and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Before children start nursery and pre-school, families are invited to visit and attend a special open event in the School Hall/Forest School. The purpose of these visits is to get to know children in a safe and comfortable environment and gain knowledge of each child's needs and development from parents and carers.

Although the majority of our reception cohort have attended our nursery, we do receive many children from other early years settings. Before starting reception, we ensure that we visit these children in their settings to establish a positive relationship with both the child and parent/carer in a safe and comfortable environment. We encourage their previous nursery to discuss the child's progress and attainment as well as ensuring we are aware of and able to address any safeguarding/child protection concerns. Early years settings complete and send a transfer document to us documenting the information mentioned above.

If a child has identified special educational needs and will be in receipt of additional funding the parent/carer, professionals involved and school staff (including SENCO, LSA, class teacher) meet to discuss a more detailed and individualised transition into reception. The children may be invited to stay and play sessions with their parents/carers to become familiar with the classroom and practitioners.

There is also another whole school move up morning when all new children to reception are invited to school to spend the morning with their future class and teachers (without their

parents/carers). A reception parents meeting is also held to share information about the forthcoming year and welcome parents/carers.

In nursery and pre-school, all children begin through a phased induction programme and we ensure children and their families have a comfortable and relaxed start to nursery or preschool.

The nursery, pre-school and reception teams work very closely together with year one teachers. Events, celebrations, visits and themes are shared between each age phase. Assessment runs as a thread between nursery, pre-school, reception and beyond and this means that all staff are well informed about the learning needs of each child and how to address these. The reception team works closely with the year one teacher to ensure a successful transition through handover meetings and pre-visits to new classrooms.

The EYFS team and full-time Family Support Worker have made links with local nursery settings, health visitors, charities, and the local library to promote family support services on offer locally. A tailored programme of family support can be put in place for any child who is socio-economically disadvantaged. Further information is included in the EYPP Statement.

School policies which are also relevant to EYFS:

- Safeguarding Policy:
- Intimate Care/Toileting Guidance
- Child protection
- Suitable people (DBS Records, Information and records)
- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills
- Health & Safety
 - Medicines
 - Food and drink
 - Accident or injury
 - Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

- Managing children's behaviour
- Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment
- Premises
- Risk assessment
- Special educational needs
- Complaints

Early Years Pupil Premium



Some three- and four-years olds are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium.

Parents will need to complete the relevant paperwork.

From April 2015, nurseries, schools, childminders and other childcare providers have been able to claim extra funding through the Early Years Pupil Premium to support children's development, learning and care.

National data and research show that children eligible for free school meals tend to do less well, e.g., in 2014, 45% of children eligible for free school meals achieved the expected level at the end of the early years foundation stage compared with 64% of other children.

The Early Years Pupil Premium will provide us with extra funding to help close that gap.

We can use the extra funding in any way we choose to improve the quality of the early years education that we provide for children. This could include, for example, additional training for our staff on early language, resources to support home learning, investing in a partnership working with our colleagues in the area to further our expertise or supporting our staff in working on specialised areas such as speech and language.

The money is paid directly to the provider by the Local Authority.

Please contact the school office to access forms to enable you to apply for the funding or give you the number of the Local Authority so that you can check your eligibility.

Families may be eligible if they are receiving any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support from NASS (National Asylum Support Service) under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Universal Credit

It is well documented that high quality early education can influence how well a child does at both primary and secondary school and so we want to make the most of this additional funding. This could make a real difference to your child's learning and development.