



Leamington Hastings Academy Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date approved by Governors: November 2020

Date for renewal: November 2023

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Nursery and Reception class. The children in EYFS are a part of our school, and all other school policies also apply to these year groups.

Aims

At Leamington Hastings C of E Academy, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child, and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and to help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 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.' We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS, the non statutory Development Matters, and the principles that guide and 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 and challenging experiences**.
- ❖ Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs.
- ❖ There is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- ❖ Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- ❖ Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning. The curriculum uses play as the vehicle for learning.
- ❖ Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- ❖ Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- ❖ Work in partnership with parents/ carers and within the wider context.
- ❖ Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported and scaffolded by the adults.
- ❖ Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and out.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning, to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year, and ensure they are well prepared for Key Stage One. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS: '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 that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact and model play to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and ensure these are present in our practice. We create a stimulating enabling environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out. This moves on in Reception to a mix of focussed groups and free-flow, preparing them for Year 1.

All the seven 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 are the **prime** areas:

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.

The **specific** areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

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

We write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans are reviewed by the Early Years Leader. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses. We endeavour to plan a 'sparkly start' and 'fabulous finish' for each topic to increase enjoyment and engagement with the topic.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move into Reception at Leamington Hastings C of E Academy and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children participate in whole and small group times, which increase in time and frequency as they progress through the EYFS. In Reception and Nursery, children have a daily phonics session using 'Letters and

Sounds' and whole group sessions that focus on key skills in mathematics, literacy and other curriculum areas. In Reception this also includes shared reading and writing.

We are enthusiastic about whole body development, enabling children to build the important foundations in maths and English through joyful activities. We have developed our timetable to include the below:

Funky Fingers - Developing the pincer movement and strength in the fingers to improve tool grip and control. Funky fingers also gives an opportunity to ensure that all children receive various sensory inputs (e.g. playdough/textures/materials) and have practise with a range of tools. Opportunities are also given for finger discrimination and crossing the midline. Funky Fingers takes place on a daily basis.

Core Strength - Research is ongoing that modern children lead much less active lifestyles. It is thought that poor core strength not only has an impact on balance and co-ordination, it also affects how children are able to sit on the carpet and at a table. This leads to difficulties in writing as the children get older, as they are not able to obtain a good writing posture. It can also affect concentration, as a proportion of their processing power is taken up with distraction and concentration to attain the act of sitting. All children in the unit take part in a weekly core strength session in the school hall, with Reception children also taking part in two further P.E. sessions.

Dough Disco - Finger discrimination - this helps with counting in maths, separating the fingers from being one whole mass into individual parts. It also helps with the 'five-ness' of one hand. Hand strength is developed through movements such as kneading, squeezing and slapping the dough, this helps to build the hand strength required for fine motor tasks. Crossing the midline takes place as part of activities to connect the left and right sides of the brain for bi-lateral co-ordination. This enables the dominant hand to develop the skills it needs, and enables writing and reading from left to right. Dough disco also has the bonus benefits of developing rhythm, following instructions and is a sensory based activity to calm children after lunchtime play. It also serves as a good warm up for Reception handwriting. Dough Discos takes place daily for all children within the unit.

Rhyme time - Nursery rhymes provide bite-sized learning opportunities for young children to develop key developmental skills. They are a powerful learning source in early literacy and enable children to become interested in the rhythm and patterns of language, particularly exploring vocabulary, alliteration and rhyme. Early numeracy skills are also supported via the use of number rhymes and props. Many nursery rhymes are also repetitive which can support the development of memory and kickstart the practice of listening and speaking. Our rhyme time also has an active element, boosting physical skills.

Show and Tell – This enables nursery children to independently express their knowledge about the world and develop their ability to compose and understand a range of question types. It also develops the listening and attention skills of the group. We send a programme of show and tell 'themes' home to parents to help us assess children in their understanding of the varied areas of the curriculum, and build on the vocabulary and understanding of the group through collaborative exploration and discussion of items and experiences from outside the school environment.

Book Choosing - As well as prioritising the status and enjoyment of books, book choosing time gives the practitioner time to initiate some simple 'book talk' with nursery children, with open invitations such as 'Tell me what you thought/felt about...' or 'Have you come across anything like this before?' and then focuses on extending the children's responses with prompts such as, 'Tell me more about...', 'What led you to think that?'. We can also assess the objectives in literacy such as holding a book carefully, turning pages, talking about favourite characters and events or predicting what they think might happen from the title. Some children also choose books from past topics, enabling them to re-explore key texts and revisit past learning.

Story Time – Whole class story time occurs daily, which enables a combination of the book talk strategies previously described, an opportunity to explore key texts prior to literacy inputs (meaning that carpet learning can be more effective) and opportunities for discussion of new vocabulary through the FANTASTICs reading lenses. Through whole class story, we are able to explore a wider range of texts related to our topic to help widen learning opportunities and knowledge. Children are given the opportunity to exercise the British value of democracy by voting for one of the two books offered at story time. Story time always happens daily.

Independent maths and literacy opportunities also progress throughout the unit, providing a level of challenge in other areas that can be assessed by the adults.

Observation 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, mostly through our online platform Evidence Me. Everyone including school staff and parents are encouraged to contribute, and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents. Some key moments are shared with parents as they happen and parents are encouraged to add their own key moments from home. These on-going observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile/early years outcomes. The child's progress is reviewed every term and is regularly discussed with parents. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening, which includes a short report on their child's strengths and next steps. A full report is written in the Summer term. We also offer an open evening in the Summer term where parents are invited to come into school to collect their children's work and discuss any queries or concerns they may have.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which 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, teaching good hygiene habits and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

All policies and procedures written for the school with regards to Health and Safety and Safeguarding also apply to the EYFS unit.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Leamington Hastings C of E Academy, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets 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, and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Parents as Partners and the Wider context

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 to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time 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. This may include other settings, including nurseries. There are introductory sessions to Reception in the Summer term, before children are due to start, to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Reception staff also offer a home or nursery visit to get to know the child in a familiar setting.

Reception children attend introductory sessions in KS1, and the Reception teacher and KS1 teachers liaise to discuss the individual children, their needs and analyse the assessment data to inform planning.

Dependant on intake (September, January, Easter), Nursery offer stay and play sessions and home visits to aid transition into Nursery.