

# *St Luke Academies Trust*



## EYFS Policy



Adopted: October 2017

Review Date: Autumn 2018

## **Early Years Foundation Stage policy**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation stage accommodates children from the age of 4. In our school we have two full time reception classes. Each class has 30 places and there is one teacher and two LSAs in each class.

### **Aims**

At Our Lady of Walsingham Primary school we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, where they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

We encourage children to develop independence within our inclusive setting, supporting children to build relationships and develop their social skills as they take increasing responsibility for themselves and consider the welfare and wellbeing of others. We help each individual child to recognise their own strengths and achievements, encouraging and promoting resilient and confident learners.

Our high expectations enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally to achieve their full potential. We offer learning in which children are immersed in new and exciting first-hand experiences through which they can consolidate, test and explore skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and understanding they will need for the rest of their school journey.

### **The curriculum.**

The Reception classes follow the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document which is available to download at :

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf>

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Developing

### **A Unique Child**

At Our Lady of Walsingham Primary School we believe that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, confident and independent. We recognise that each child learns in their own individual way and at their own pace. Children's attitudes to learning are influenced by positive,

constructive feedback from others; we use praise, encouragement, celebration and rewards to develop positive attitudes towards learning.

### **Positive Relationships**

We believe that we can best meet the needs of individual children by working closely with parents / carers. We aim to develop partnerships between parents/carers, children and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect, promoting the sharing of information and knowledge for the benefit of the children in our care.

### **Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key part in supporting the children's development. Through continuous observation we assess children's interests through which we plan challenging and achievable activities and experiences. Children have access to both indoor and outdoor activities whenever possible and we believe children should have access to a variety of resources which allow them to move their learning and promote independence.

### **Learning and Development**

Our Foundation Stage has two large classrooms and one very large shared outdoor space. All of our learning environments are set up to encourage and promote independence and to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where children can be active, as well as areas where children can be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined indoors and out so that the children are able to locate equipment and resources independently.

### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas:

- Personal , Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.

There are four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and Design

Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

At Our Lady of Walsingham all areas of learning are delivered through a well- planned play based approach. There is a balance of adult led and independent tasks as well as child-initiated activities. Our Long-term, Medium-term and short –term plans ensure that the children have the opportunities needed to develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding in every area according to their developmental stage. Our long term plans ensure coverage which give children the opportunity to work towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

These are defined by the Early Years Framework and can be viewed on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows for flexibility to ensure both the children’s interests and needs are taken into account.

## **Play**

Learning through play, alongside quality adult interactions underpin our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation stage. We know that young children learn best from activities and experiences which interest them and that quality adult interactions when children are engaged best move the children’s learning forward. Children have opportunities through play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as adults and on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon prior learning and consolidate their understanding. The children learn to negotiate, adapt, discuss, communicate, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Characteristics of Effective Learning and the prime and specific areas of learning are all interconnected. They underpin everything that is offered in the environment. The *Characteristics of Effective Learning* are about **how** children learn rather than what children are learning.

The characteristics are:

**Playing and exploring** – Children investigate and experience things and “Have a go.”

**Active Learning**- Children concentrate and keep on trying even if they are finding things difficult, and enjoy achieving.

**Creating and Thinking Critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

## **Inclusion**

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and value the abilities and strengths of **all** our children at **all** levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experiences they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and plan to meet the needs of boys and girls, those with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which contributions of all children are valued. Where a specific need is identified we will liaise with the Inclusion team and parents to create an individual plan, contacting outside agencies if necessary to provide the best support we can. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Policy of the school.

## **Assessment**

Throughout Reception children's knowledge and understanding is tracked and monitored using the document "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage."

Getting to know the children really well is a crucial part of our assessment process and as such we endeavour to maintain close relationships with parents and carers. We gather information from a variety of sources; through discussion with parents/carers and nursery practitioners, through observations during child-initiated activities as well as adult led interactions. We keep written and photographic documentation of evidence which help us to build a picture of each child's strengths and achievements throughout the year and these go into a "Learning Journal" which is shared with parents.

From September 2015 reception children will be assessed during the first six weeks of school against statements in Maths, Literacy, PSED, C&L, PD as well as their CoEL and wellbeing to determine a baseline, or starting point for their future learning. Judgements will be based on adult's observation of children through activities and play. There will not be any form of formal testing and the parent's views as well as those of nursery practitioners will be taken into account.

## **Transitions**

At Our Lady of Walsingham we recognise that transitions from nursery as well as transitions from Reception to year one can be extremely stressful and daunting both to parents and to the children. As such we have worked very hard to ease the transition process and established strong procedures. We endeavour to visit children in their nursery settings and at home. Children are offered transition times and dates when they can visit school on a regular basis both with parents and nursery practitioners in school time as well as after school visits.

At the beginning of the year entry is staggered to ensure children have the time to feel welcomed and supported.

When moving to year 1 the new teachers spend time at the end of the academic year in the Foundation Stage to get to know the children as well as having a week with the children in year 1. During the time in Reception children use a range of shared facilities which help to develop confidence and ensure continuity. Children use both the halls and the playground to ensure they are confident moving around school and mixing with older children. They take part in whole school assemblies and Mass.

### **Partnerships with Parents**

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel that they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our school. As well as the transition sessions and visits we offer weekly and termly sessions for our parents to give them the opportunity to share the child's learning environment. We also offer parents a variety of workshops to provide advice and information on how best to support their child's learning. We encourage parents to share information and teachers are available both at the beginning and at the end of the day to chat informally with parents and carers.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. In Reception parents are invited to join in with school trips and to join in with a range of activities supporting phonics and maths and completing reading records as well as sharing assemblies and sporting events.

### **Health and Safety**

Children learn best when they are healthy, happy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the people around them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory guidance and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and all our children receive free fruit and all those under 5 receive free milk. Children have constant access to fresh water and all children in KS1 are entitled to a free, healthy school meal.

The Foundation Stage classrooms have access to close toileting facilities and we teach the importance of hygiene and hand-washing.

