

LETHBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Therefore the reception year is the final part of the EYFS. It is important, both in its own right and as a preparation for later years in the school. In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life – to live, learn and achieve at Lethbridge.

AIMS

- To develop a child's knowledge, skills and understanding of the world in which they and others live in.
- To develop positive attitudes to learning: trust, confidence, curiosity, responsibility and independence.
- To enable children to learn through play and varied experiences.
- To help each child to develop:
 - A positive self image and self confidence
 - A natural curiosity for learning
 - The ability to think creatively, imaginatively and independently
 - The ability to concentrate for longer periods of time
 - The ability to communicate effectively
 - A kind, caring and respectful attitude to those around them
- To enable children to co-operate and respect each other in work and play.

OBJECTIVE

- To recognise and take into account what children already know and can do.
- To provide children with a planned programme which is challenging and progressive.
- To provide opportunities for children to make choices in order to become independent in their learning in a variety of stimulating and safe environments.
- To establish and maintain good relationships with parents/carers.
- To use focused assessment and record keeping which informs future planning and which builds on children's prior learning.
- To ensure that no children are excluded or disadvantaged
- To plan opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests.
- To use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.

- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

There are four themes that shape our practice at Lethbridge:

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

Each theme has an overarching Principle

THEME: A UNIQUE CHILD

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We know 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, as well as celebration and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

THEME: POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At Lethbridge school we understand that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

THEME: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

We fully acknowledge the key role the environment plays in supporting and extending children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

THEME: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We understand and recognise at our school, that children learn and develop in different ways, at different rates and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

The revised EYFS is made up of seven areas of Learning and Development and underpinned by the principles of the EYFS. These areas are interconnected and although each are equally important, three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

The three *Prime* areas are:

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

The three 'prime' areas are seen as the essential 'building blocks' for securing these positive outcomes later in life. Therefore at Lethbridge, we believe the right foundations of early learning make significant differences to outcomes for children and to future life chances.

We also support children in four *specific* areas through which the prime are strengthened. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive art and design

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE EYFS

We understand and recognise at our school, that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked. Teaching and learning in the EYFS is planned to help children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage.

The curriculum offered and received by children in the Reception year:

- involves the children in the learning process by asking them what it is they already know and what they want to find out;
- is implemented through planned purposeful play and a mix of adult-led and child-led activities;
- is broad, balanced and promotes social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual development;
- gives teachers the opportunity to observe children, so that planning can be based around appropriate learning experiences and concerns about a child's development can be identified.
- gives children the opportunity to learn explore and develop learning experiences;
- gives opportunities both in and outdoors;
- reflects teacher's understanding of how children develop and learn;
- ensures that a range of approaches are used to provide first-hand experiences in a controlled and safe environment;
- ensures development of communication through ensuring that all adults give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk;

- gives opportunities to think creatively, investigate and problem solve alongside other children as well as on their own;

Planning

Learning is firmly established within a framework of planning for the long, medium and short term. Long term and medium term plans are based around themes, such as activities related to settling in or celebrations such as Christmas. Short term plans change weekly and are produced in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

The planning:

- reflects an understanding of how young children learn;
- takes into account provision of a balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated or directed activities;
- gives opportunities for learning both in and outdoors;
- encompasses what the children have learnt using a variety of assessment information and identifies the next steps they need to take in their learning.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years Foundation Stage Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, as well as areas for quiet. The unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS Unit has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting

Assessment records are passed from the pre-school providers before the children enter school. During the first term in Reception, the teachers assess the children using a Baseline Assessment to identify what the children already know, identify patterns of attainment within the cohort in order to adjust the planning for individual or groups of children and to monitor progress throughout the year, identifying which children/groups of children are likely to need the most help. Parents and carers are also asked to share information to inform the initial assessment process and also throughout the year.

Throughout the year the teachers and other adults who work with the children make further assessments. They assess recorded work; carry out observations of adult directed and child initiated learning; use information provided by parents/carers; discuss things with the children and use incidental observations. The evidence gathered is used to inform the development matter and Early Learning Goals. The children's progress is tracked and monitored using 'Individual Learning Diaries' and School Pupil Tracker. Teachers also use the information to decide next step for learning and to assess the children's achievement at the end of the year.

Under the EYFS Profile, we are expected to make a judgment as to whether a child is meeting, exceeding or emerging in relation to the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year. This is a statutory requirement. In addition to these judgements against the ELGs we have to make an assessment against the 3 characteristics of effective learning. So, in total there will be the 17 ELG judgement on the bases of meeting, exceeding or emerging levels and a written statement setting out how well a child is developing against the 3 characteristics of effective learning by the end of reception year. Throughout the year teachers will meet to moderate their assessments across the year group to ensure consistency and fairness.

Each child's progress is reported to parents/carers both informally and at meetings, which take place during the Autumn and Spring terms. Written reports are sent out during the Summer term.

Staffing and Organisation

There are 70 children in reception. They are split into 2 registration groups and then into smaller teaching groups at various points in the day. Within the Reception unit we have three full-time teachers and three full-time Teaching Assistants.

The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom, conservatory areas and in the custom built EYFS outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistants, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

ROLE OF THE EYFS PHASE LEADER

The Early Years Foundation Phase Leader is part of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the quality of the education provided meets the needs of all the children and the aspirations of their parents.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In the EYFS, children are given equal opportunities to engage in activities regardless of their ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability. Please see the Equal Opportunities Policies for more information.

SAFEGUARDING

At Lethbridge Primary School we promote the safeguarding of all children. All adults working with the children are subject to an Enhanced DBS check. The safety and welfare of all children in Early Years is paramount to all the staff working at the school. It is important to us that all children in school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why these exist. We provide children with choices and believe that children should be allowed to take risks alongside being taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. The school has policies and procedures which all staff follow in order for all children to feel safe and be safe. The school has a named designated safeguarding lead who can be contacted (via the school office) if you have any

concerns about the safety of a child. Please see the relevant policies for more detail – Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, E-safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy. All staff and parent helpers are also required to sign the child care disqualification disclosure form.

SEN

Special Educational Needs are identified early and any necessary interventions are made swiftly with the help of the schools SENCO. We ensure the children's needs are met and that they continue to do well at school. Achievable targets will be set on the Early Years Provision map. The school also works closely with outside agencies to support children in school. (Please see the SEN policy for more detail)

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT - Parents and carers as partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We understand and appreciate the role they have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Engaging in dialogue about children before they start school.
- Providing a parent/child visit and an induction meeting during the term before the child starts school. A welcome pack is given which outlines the curriculum and school routines.
- Encouraging parents/carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. We also have termly 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents/carers to join in with the activities in the classrooms.
- Encouraging the sharing of 'Magic Moments' at school by providing a record sheet to enable special moments and achievements at home to be recorded.
- Inviting adult helpers to support either in the reception class or in other classes in school; and to accompany children on school visits (subject to a DBS Check).
- Encouraging support from home through: reading each night, making use of the word sheets sent home and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.

There is a formal meeting for parents/carers with the teacher in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss the child's progress. A final report on the child's attainment and progress at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and parents, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the EYFS teachers act as a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

ADMISSION

Transition between pre-school settings and school is planned carefully and carried out in a way which enables the children and parents/carers to move positively from one setting to the other.

When school places have been confirmed, members of the EYFS Team will visit the local pre-school settings to meet the children and liaise with the pre-school practitioners. Children from the local pre-schools will also visit the school with their pre-school practitioners to meet the EYFS staff and to see the EYFS classrooms. Children not attending any of the local pre-school settings will have an opportunity to visit with their parents/ carers in a separate visit.

In addition to the above the children make a visit into school accompanied by their parent/carer where they will spend time with their teacher, teaching assistant and meet some of the other children who will be in their class. There is also a morning session which is unaccompanied in order for the children to meet their teacher and teaching assistant again and all of the other children who will be in their class.

Lethbridge Primary School follows the admission procedures of Swindon Borough Council. Please see the information provided by the council about the dates that children entering Reception can start. At present all children regardless of their birth date can begin full-time in September. However, parents can defer the time that their child enters within the year in accordance with the Swindon Borough Council guidelines.

Admission takes place gradually. In the week before they are admitted all the children make a morning visit within a small group to give them time to get to know their teacher and teaching assistant and to enable some informal assessment to take place, so the teacher gets to know them better.

During the first full week after their visits, all of the children will stay for the morning and will go home at lunchtime. In the second week, they will stay for the morning and lunchtime, going home after lunchtime finishes. In the third week the children will attend full time. We believe this enables children to become fully secure in their environment and enables them to have the best start to their schooling.

Throughout the year meetings are held by the EYFS teachers to introduce parents/carers to the school and to give more detail about phonics, reading, writing and maths in Early Years.

TRANSITION TO YEAR 1

EYFS and year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. Children are encouraged to develop independence throughout the reception year in preparation for Year 1.

We want to ensure that children remain as secure and confident as possible when transferring to KS1 and the New Curriculum. Therefore we do the following:

- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Reception children meet year 1 teachers during assembly, playtime and other whole school activities. There is also a transition timetable in term 6 which enables all classes to swap so that all the children in reception have met the Y1 teachers.
- Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a morning session in July.
- The 'Letters and Sounds' national approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout year 1 and 2.
- There is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into year 1.
- There are planned learning walks each term for the teachers and support staff to visit both classrooms and gain a greater understanding of where the children are coming from and going to.
- There is an overlap in approach and routines, e.g. Fruit time, behaviour systems, timetables, etc.

- Where possible, the year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually becomes more formalised towards the end of the academic year.

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