

Littledean Church of England Primary School and Pre-School



Early Years Policy

Aspiration - Resilience - Community

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experiences in the early year has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up’

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At Littledean C of E Primary School and Pre-School, we recognise and value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development and understand our responsibilities in ensuring that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

Through the implementation of this policy, we will provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2023) ‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework’
- DfE (2023) ‘Early years foundation stage profile: 2024 handbook’
- DfE (2023) ‘Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)’
- DfE (2023) ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023’

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child’s individual needs and ensure they reach their potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Ensuring there are appropriate policies, procedures and practices in place to deliver the 'Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework' in line with statutory requirements.

The Head Teacher will be responsible for:

- Upholding ambitious educational standards which prepare children from all backgrounds for the next phase of their education and life.
- Ensuring teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise.
- Ensuring valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing children's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and ensuring effective use is made of formative assessment.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory frameworks which set out the duties, responsibilities, and reporting arrangements to be followed.
- Ensuring all relevant staff read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring that staff have received appropriate training to deliver and report EYFS assessments.
- Ensuring children are informed about their child's progress, develop and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.

The EYFS Lead will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff members implement this policy.
- Ensuring that all staff are up-to-date with current statutory and Ofsted expectations.
- Supporting the policies, ethos and vision of the school and actively promoting high levels of achievement in the early years stage.
- Leading the early years team in planning and delivery of a creative and stimulation curriculum based on the education programmes of the 'Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework'.
- Ensuring the educational provision and practice is based on the EYFS characteristics of effective teaching and learning, supports a range of learning needs and develops children's independence.
- Monitoring the progress of children and reporting evaluated data to the Head Teacher.
- Developing and maintaining effective working relationships with parents, colleagues, the Governing Board and the local community.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets.
- Supporting staff development by identifying and/or providing regular training and CPD opportunities.
- Assigning a key person to support the needs of each child.

The key person will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the children they support receive learning tailored to their individual needs.
- Helping children become familiar with the setting.
- Building a relationship with parents/carers.

All teaching staff will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Ensuring they have a thorough working knowledge of:

- The DfE's current 'Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework' and the requirements therein.
- The DfE's current 'Early years foundation stage profile handbook'
- Using formative and summative assessments to assess, monitor and report on children's progress, plan next steps and shape learning opportunities.
- Identify any areas of concern relating to children and their learning, development and emotional needs.

EYFS Philosophy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to the end of Reception year. In our school we have children who attend our pre-school on a part-time basis and children who attend full time from the beginning of the academic year following their fourth birthday.

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop within enabling **environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from strong partnership between the school and parents.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

Learning and Development

At Littledean C of E Primary School we use Development Matters in the EYFS to support our planning, teaching, learning and assessment. Our staff teach children by ensuring we plan and deliver challenging, playful opportunities across the Prime and Specific areas of learning and development. We ensure that we foster the Characteristics of Effective Learning as these areas underpin learning and development across all areas of learning and support children in becoming effective and motivated learners for life.

The 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, they also enjoy achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in the EYFS. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and Language:
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical Development:
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development:
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics:
 - Numbers
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world:
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

Long Term Planning – Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals provide us with the core curriculum that we need to teach the children.

Medium Term Planning – Areas for learning are identified from the above documentation. A plan/sequence of teaching/activities/provision is planned which could be based around a book, a topic, a theme or the interests of the children. All EYFS planning takes into account the children's current attainment and what their next steps are.

Short Term Planning – Teachers ensure the children learn through a mixture of adult led activities and continuous provision both inside and outside of the classroom. Sessions could be taught as a whole class, small group or individual depending on the activity and the needs of the children.

Observation and Assessment

Observation is the primary strategy that is used in the EYFS to:

- Identify the children's interests;
- Establish what stage the children are working at;
- Identify next steps
- Celebrate achievements

At Littledean, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Expected- The child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of EYFS.
- Emerging- The child is not yet reaching the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS.

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

Forest School

All children in Reception take part in a Forest School session each week. We see Forest School as being an integral part of our curriculum as it is an effective way of promoting the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. Through Forest school children use natural materials found in the woodland and enjoy activities such as collecting sticks and leaves, tying knots, making dens, handling tools, climbing trees and building fires. Forest School offers children the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Forest School can help children to develop:

- Self-awareness
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Independence
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Physical skills including the development of both gross and fine motor skills
- Problem solving and risk taking
- Resilience
- Concentration
- Knowledge and understanding of the world around them

Our Forest School sessions are run by a member of staff who is a qualified Forest School Practitioner and who also holds an up-to-date first aid qualification which includes an outdoor element.

Inclusion

All children at Littledean C of E Primary School are treated fairly regardless of their race, gender or abilities. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children whatever their starting point. All activities and focus tasks are planned with the children's specific needs in mind and adapted accordingly.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support their need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

Monitoring

The EYFS Lead/class teacher, alongside SLT are responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress across the EYFS. This is done through Learning Walks, analysis of progress data, observations, staff discussions and audit of resources.

The Role of the Adult in the Setting

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activity.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.
- To provide quality interactions with children through sustained shared thinking; communicating and modelling language; showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging, questioning, recalling; providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating and setting challenges.

The Learning Environment

The school recognises that the physical and emotional environment play an important role in supporting, enabling, and extending pupils' learning and development.

The school will provide a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment that values active learning, exploration, and play, where children feel free to create, make links and develop critical thinking skills through investigation and first-hand experiences.

Early years practitioners will ensure that learning environments are well-organised and suitable for group, individual and whole class learning, with interactive displays and easily accessible resources utilised to encourage independence.

At all times, children will have access to indoor and outdoor learning environments. Staff will plan provision to ensure that there are a range of learning opportunities available, and that the learning opportunities available in the outdoor environment build on and develop those inside.

Independent learning will be encouraged through planned continuous provision where children can make their own selection from a variety of resourced areas, including:

- Blocks and construction
- Arts and crafts
- Sensory and dough
- Role play and domestic

Staff will support children to navigate and access the learning environment, intervening and interacting where necessary to ensure that all learning opportunities and teaching moments are captured and capitalised upon.

Appropriate and stimulating educational visits and visitors, from both within and outside of the local community, will be arranged to further expand children's learning experiences.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We include parents/carers by

- Showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educator.
- Encouraging parents/carers to share accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have and take action to support where appropriate.
- Providing a welcoming environment by being approachable and friendly.
- Establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- Inviting parents/carers to initial meetings to share information about their children and about our nursery and school.
- Sharing information about the curriculum through meetings e.g. DoJo, sending newsletters/leaflets home about topics, displays, informal discussions, Learner of the week certificates, class and community displays.
- Inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways and invitations to assemblies and other whole school events.
- Encouraging home school links through support with DoJo, phonics, story packs and reading books.
- We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Staff will be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Hayley McGoldrick. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) are Laura May and Suzanne Webb.

The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The DDSLs will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

Staffing

The school will:

- Ensure that people looking after children are suitable, have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. This also applies to any person who may have regular contact with children.
- Take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced.
- Obtain an enhanced criminal records check in respect of every person aged 16 and over who works directly with children or works on the premises – additional criminal records checks will also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.
- Tell staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, including through a criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with children.
- Record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed – this must include the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and the details of the person who obtained it.
- Make a referral to the DBS where a member of staff is dismissed, or would have been, had the person not left the setting first, because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.
- Ensure that no disqualified person is employed to work in connection with early years provision.
- Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children if they become aware of any information about staff that may lead to their disqualification.
- Notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children in their setting and provide specific details of any order made.

Qualifications, Training, Support and Skills

The school will ensure that:

- It follows its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
- All staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. This will include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.
- All staff are trained to:
 - Identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.
 - Understand the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.
 - Ensure they have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- Support staff undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is always on the premises and available when children are present and accompanies them on any outings - the certificate must be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the EYFS framework.
- PFA training is renewed every three years and is relevant for people caring for young children.

- All staff who have obtained a level 2 and/or level 3 qualification since 30 June 2016 obtain a PFA qualification within three months of starting work in order to be included in the required staff: child ratios at level 2 or level 3.
- It displays, or makes available to parents, staff PFA certificates or a list of staff who have a current PFA certificate.
- Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate.
- All newly qualified entrants to the early years workforce who have completed a level 2 or level 3 qualification on or after 30 June 2016, have either a full PFA or an emergency PFA certificate within three months of starting work in order to be included in the required staff: child ratios. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the training file in the Head Teacher's office.
- Staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the wellbeing of children in their care.

Staff: Child Ratios

The school is aware that there are a range of contextual factors that will affect staff: child ratios, and that these can change depending upon a variety of issues. The school will continue to monitor the ratios and ensure that:

- Managers appointed on or after 1 January 2024 have already achieved a suitable level 2 qualification in maths, or will do so within two years of starting in the position.
- At least half of the staff hold at least an approved level 2 qualification.
- To count within the ratios at level 3, staff holding an Early Years Educator qualification will also have achieved a suitable level 2 qualification in English.
- The EYFS Lead holds an approved level 3 qualification or above and should have at least two years' experience of working in an early years setting or other suitable experience.
- Staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.
- Children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met.
- They inform parents about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.
- Children are usually within sight **and** hearing of staff, but always within sight **or** hearing. Whilst eating, children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- Suitable students on long term placements and volunteers aged 17 or over, and staff working as apprentices in early education aged 16 or over, may be included in the ratios at the level below their level of study, if the provider is satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

The school will adopt the following staffing ratios:

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For children aged three and over:

- In registered early years provision where a staff member with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there will be:
 - One member of staff for every 13 children.
 - At least one other member of staff will hold an approved level 3 qualification.

- In registered early years provision where a staff member with QTS, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there will be:
 - One member of staff for every eight children.
 - At least one other member of staff will hold an approved level 3 qualification.
 - At least half of all other staff holding an approved level 2 qualification.

For children in Reception classes:

- Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher, as per infant class size legislation.
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Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

Food and Drink

The school will:

- Ensure that, where provided, meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced, and nutritious.
- Obtain information about a child's special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements prior to them attending the setting.
- Ensure that fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children.
- Record and act on information from parents about a child's dietary needs.
- Ensure there is an area, which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children.
- Ensure that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so, with all staff involved in preparing and handling food receive training in food and hygiene.
- Inform Ofsted if two or more pupils are affected by food poisoning within 14 days of the incident – note, failure to do constitutes an offence.

Children in Reception are entitled to receive Universal Free School Meals, children in the Pre-School are able to purchase a hot school meal if they would like to.

Children are entitled to free milk every day in school, up until the age of 5. This can they be purchased if parents wish to continue with this.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection
- Inclusion
- SEND
- Teaching and Learning
- Safer Recruitment
- Health and Safety

Date of policy review: April 2026

Date of next review: April 2027