Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved by:	**Full Governing Body**
Date:	**October 2025**
Next review due by:	**October 2028**

St. Leonard's C.E. Primary School (St Leonard's) is a Church of England School. All policies implemented across the school support the creation of a learning culture which celebrates our Christian vision of preparing children for "Life in All its Fullness" and our core values of Love, Respect and Responsibility.

Rationale and principles

1. This policy explains the process and practice which informs the School's compliance with the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

2. At St. Leonard's we engage, challenge and inspire children from the very beginning of their learning journey. St. Leonard's early years education is carefully structured within a well organised, safe and enabling environment, offering children rich and stimulating experiences, building on what they already know and providing opportunities to develop what they need to know next. All children will be valued and feel secure. No child will be excluded or disadvantaged because of their gender, culture, religion, race, family background, disability or special educational needs.

3. We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings, namely:
   a) Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
   b) Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
   c) Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
   d) Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

4. At St. Leonard's we provide a learning environment within a framework of care, consideration and safety. We develop in each child a sense of responsibility towards themselves, others and the environment. Through play-based activities and first hand experiences we aim to encourage independence, self-motivation, cooperation, creativity, communication, problem solving and self-discipline. We work to provide a caring, secure environment where the children can learn to the best of their ability and maximise their potential. We work alongside the rest of the school, Reception children integrating with Key Stage 1 for weekly collective worship and the whole of the EYFS joining in for some special visitor assemblies and events such as fetes and sports activities.

The St Leonard's Early Years Curriculum and Pedagogy

The EYFS curriculum we provide makes provision for the different starting points from which the children will develop their learning and be relevant to the varying stages of children's development.

Three of the seven areas of learning 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:

a) Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
b) Communication and Language;
c) Physical Development Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:
a) Literacy;
b) Mathematics;
c) Understanding the World;
and
d) Expressive Arts and Design

The St Leonard's Early Years Curriculum is a long term plan that outlines core texts and rhymes for each term in Nursery and Reception. It also includes indoor and outdoor experiences, visits and visitors, seasonal activities and festivals that are relevant to the children. It also plans for progression in skills and knowledge across the seven areas of learning and the Educational programmes from the statutory framework. It is also based on our observation and knowledge of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. This is to enable children to achieve 'Good Level of Development' at the end of the Reception year.

Partnership with parents is a key element in our curriculum, we acknowledge that parents know their children best and are their child's first and continuing educator. We recognise that at home children have already acquired many skills and much knowledge and we aim to build upon these foundations in partnership.

Pedagogy is based upon Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, with regular reviews of learning to ensure that children 'know more, do more and remember more'. New learning is introduced and modelled to children and opportunities are planned for children to practise this through adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Time spent interacting and playing with children means that adults have the opportunity to assess children's knowledge and understanding regularly. Children's learning is then supported and extended as appropriate. Please see our school 'Teaching and Learning Policy' for more information.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand 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. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between classrooms and the outdoor area.

Planning is in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework. Activities may be planned by adults (adult led), set up by adults to encourage child initiated or initiated by children. Adults will observe play and interact to engage children in the learning process, to foster shared sustained thinking and to help them progress.

Short-term weekly planning in Nursery and Reception is based around a core text. The environment plan is also created using feedback from our recent observations of the children's interests, abilities and next steps which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses. Evaluations of activities inform future planning. Continuous provision ensures each area of learning is well resourced and equipped for the children to learn, practice, transfer and develop skills. Enhanced environment helps cater for children's interests and next steps.

Nursery and Reception children may have whole class, differentiated or small group times. The group times in Reception include a daily phonics session using 'Little Wandle' and Mastery in Mathematics.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are encouraged by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching & Learning and Curriculum

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching & Learning and all the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching & Learning are the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – and underpins learning and development across all areas; they support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. We look for the Characteristics of Learning throughout all observations and encourage children to reflect upon the characteristics that they have shown or need to work towards.

Assessment

Children's progress is continually monitored through observation of child initiated and adult led activities and recorded. In Nursery and Reception these observations and examples of work are recorded using Celebration books. Class Dojo is used for communication, messages are shared as a whole class. If requited, messages can also be sent confidentially; all parents have their own access and are able to add comments and their own observations of their children's achievements at home. All practitioners and parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to these records.

The class teachers, with assistance from key persons, are responsible for producing a written report, including the characteristics of learning, for parents at the end of the Reception year. Class teachers will make judgements against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals which will

be attached to this report. This is a statutory requirement and results will be sent to Oxfordshire County Council.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Reception teachers to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to agree a starting point in Year 1 and support a smooth transition. The discussion held helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

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. The school has stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety and welfare.

The Early Years Leader completes the 'Musts Audit' every 6 months to ensure we are complying with the statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare.

All staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have completed the training, including the 'Prevent' training.

Regular meetings are held where the safeguarding and wellbeing of our children is discussed including any health and safety issues that may have arisen throughout the week.

We have trained paediatric first aiders within our Nursery and Reception Classes. All staff are aware of the protocol for any concerns regarding safeguarding and know who to go to with reports of concerns. If children fall asleep they must be checked regularly.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, teaching the importance of cleaning teeth (area of need identified in our school), following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Equal Opportunities

The EYFS is accessible to all regardless of ability, gender, religion, race, family background, disability or special educational needs. We aim to reflect the various different cultures present within our community.

There is a school SEND policy that applies equally to the EYFS. There are regular meetings between the EYFS staff and EY-SENCO to discuss children's progress. Where necessary other professionals such as an Educational Psychologist, or a Speech and Language Therapist, may also work with children. A child may receive additional support to meet their educational needs.

Oxfordshire County Council controls the allocation of the Reception class places in accordance with the criteria laid out in their preference booklets which are made available at the beginning of each school year. A place in our Nursery class does not guarantee a place in fulltime education in Reception. There will be a single main point of entry in September of each academic year and children begin school on a full time basis.

During the term before children begin Reception a meeting is held for parents and arrangements are made for children to visit their new class and meet their new teachers. Discussions are held between their current Nursery teachers and visits are made to their current Nurseries. In Reception Home visits are also encouraged during the preceding Summer Term.

Other Agencies

School staff liaise with various other agencies or professionals who work with young children in the area.

Compliant with this policy will be monitored by the named Early Years Leader and the Head Teacher.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following government guidance and internal school policies.

Government guidance:

• Early Years Statutory Framework (EYFS) September 2021

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)

School policies:

• Child Protection and Safeguarding policy;
• Equality policy;
• Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy; and
• Teaching and Learning policy
• Admissions Policy