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St Leonard's CE Primary Academy

Living and Learning Together with God's Help

EYFS Policy 2026-2027

This policy should be read in line with our schools' vision statement, 'Living and Learning Together with God's Help', as it encompasses everything that we do. It stems from the Christian belief that all children are to believe in themselves, being a unique human being, made by God and Loved by him, and so develop a love of lifelong learning and a sense of community, as we grow together as part of God's family; being with God and having his help as we live and learn together in all that we are and seek to be

1 Aims and Objectives

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 and the guiding principles that 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 independent and to persevere when encountering difficulties, through **positive relationships**
- Children engage with learning opportunities in **enabling environments**, where the experiences provided respond to their individual needs and where there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

1.1 The aim of this policy is that the implementation of the curriculum should:

- build on the children's prior experience and knowledge, taking into account of how they learn and grow
- ensure equality of access to all areas of learning in a high quality environment
- provide opportunities for children to learn in a variety of ways
- play is the prime medium through which young children learn. It should be supported and developed by enthusiastic and sensitive adults who have high expectations
- ensure quality relationships among children and adults and build on partnerships with the families/carers
- provide space, time, quality resources and variety in a safe environment
- be relevant, enriching and challenging and provide opportunities for reflection

Living and Learning Together With God's Help

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- nurture and develop the child's self esteem
- develop positive attitudes to learning within a broad and practical curriculum
- develop creativity and exploration
- be dynamic - its review and development should be informed by a regular process of observation and analysis including contributions from all the adults involved in the child's learning

2 This Early Years Foundation Curriculum aims to provide suitable learning experiences in the following areas of learning:

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our long-term expectations for the children as well as on our daily observation of children's needs and interests across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals. We reflect on the way children learn through the three Characteristics of Effective Learning- **Playing and Exploring-engagement, Active Learning-motivation, Creative and thinking critically-thinking-** and apply this in our practice.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The prime 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 are:

2.1 Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family
- equip and encourage children to feel confident and secure in their environment and lead to the development of positive self-esteem enabling children to acquire control of themselves, their environment and their learning
- give children time to wonder, reflect, discuss, consider and question. This means adults actively listening and responding to what children say, thus developing their confidence and ability to do these things
- develop confidence and perseverance in problem solving; This comes from having first developed feelings of security and self worth within a supportive environment
- enable each child to form good relationships with other children and develop the social skills to make friendships with both children and adults; Listen, play and work co-operatively
- provide opportunities for children to socialise formally and informally, in small and large groups and with a range of people from outside the close family network. They need to work in situations where there are clear boundaries, where rules need to be negotiated and be given opportunities to interact with other children with minimum adult intervention
- create opportunities for talking and listening with peers and adults. The development of the concepts of right and wrong, of compromise and regard for others is vital, as is the development of the child's ability to apply self control
- encourage children to maintain personal hygiene
- make children aware of rules for ways of keeping safe
- ensure that the children know they belong to certain communities
- interest, excite and motivate children to learn

2.2 Communication and Language

- focus on children developing competence in speaking and listening.
- value each child's home language
- develop each child's use of spoken language
- encourage clear and fluent communication between the child and others
- develop the use of imaginary and descriptive language
- encourage self expression and confidence
- develop a greater awareness of the world around the child
- encourage the sharing of information and ideas

- develop listening skills so that the child hears the correct use of language

2.3 **Physical Development – Gross and Fine Motor Skills**

- focus on children developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments and awareness of how to keep healthy and safe.

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied, these are

2.4 **Maths**

- focus on achievement through practical activities and on using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas thus providing the foundation for numeracy

In Mathematics - we will strive to:

- develop a sense of pattern and order
- develop logical thinking - predicting 'what comes next?'
- begin to use simple estimation
- begin to recognise, understand and use and record real numbers
- order by size, weight, length
- use one to one correspondence
- group/sort by colour, pattern, number/object
- develop the use of mathematical language, e.g., circle, in front of, bigger than, less than
- we will provide daily experiences in a rich and interesting environment and encourage children to be enthusiastic to join in with or talk about mathematical activity
- learn, consolidate and extend mathematical knowledge through games

2.5 **Literacy – Word Reading, Comprehension and Writing**

- Focus on developing the understanding of phonics, reading and writing

In Reading - we will strive to:

- ensure that there are opportunities for children to gain enjoyment and pleasure from all types of reading
- enable children to appreciate that reading is a necessary and important part of our lives
- help children understand how text works
- provide opportunities for communicating through reading
- create an environment rich in print

In Writing - we will strive to:

- help children understand the importance and purpose of writing
- create an expectation that the children will write and that adults will value this writing
- provide opportunities for writing through play and for a purpose.

2.6 **Understanding of the World**

- focus on providing a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning
- begin to ask questions to gain information and to notice similarities and differences
- look carefully at features of their local area, and will begin to see patterns in their environment, to question why things are as they are and to notice change
- record their responses to stimuli in a wide variety of ways, communicating both observations and feelings
- think about the consequences of their actions, and those of others
- look at the differences between individual people and communities leading to an appreciation of other cultures

- make predictions and test ideas
- learn to think about their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others
- wonder about other people's lives as well as their own, about the place in which they live and how people used to live in the past

2.7 **Expressive Arts and Design**

- focus on the development of art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play
- a secure, rich and stimulating environment which will inspire children to explore and participate with curiosity, eagerness and confidence and learn through all of their senses

3 The children will use and react to the opportunities offered them in a variety of ways, for example

3.1 Through Art:

- experience with a range of media which can be used for expressing and interpreting mood or feeling or for representing information
- familiarity with properties and character of the materials and tools used in creative expression;
- confidence with some of the processes of art and craft
- an increasing ability to choose, select and use materials and tools independently and learn how to take care of them safely
- an appreciation of the beauty in the world about them
- a confidence and curiosity to explore and experiment with ideas which are new to them
- an increasing ability to talk about, plan and participate in self chosen activities
- work creatively on a large or small scale

3.2 Through Music and Dance:

- develop the ability to become involved in listening to and responding to stories, poems and music;
- exploring sounds, words and rhythms in songs and music, joining in and sharing experiences with others;
- recognise that music and dance can express feeling, mood, situation or culture;
- have confidence to move spontaneously to music, growing in poise, control and co-ordination;
- develop an awareness of musical elements.

3.3 Through imaginative drama:

- experience creating and acting out situations in imaginative play, improvised drama and story making
- appreciate the need to share, co-operate and negotiate with others
- developing an understanding of the needs and feelings of others
- use imagination in art, design, music, dance, imaginative and role play

4 Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 At St Leonard's, we recognise that play, together with language, is the primary means through which children learn about themselves, others and the world around them. We strive to provide a curriculum based on quality play experiences, which is flexible enough to respond to children's overall development needs.

4.2 **What is play? -**

A child's constant state of activity is play; it is a learning child's active and creative expression. Children do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work'. They should

be given opportunities to engage in activities planned by the teacher, and also those they initiate themselves. The actions of play are essential and observable, and these are; observation, imitation, exploration, experimentation and repetition. Children also gather information through sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. As practitioners, we demonstrate to the child (observation), encourage the child to try the activity (imitation, exploration), give the child space to experiment within reason, and let the child repeat the activity at another time. Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

4.3 Why is play important?

Play enables children to; acquire knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes in a meaningful context; make informed choices and become confident independent learners; work at their own pace in a non-competitive environment; achieve success and acknowledge failure as part of the learning process; learn how to express and deal with their emotions and behaviour appropriately, understanding the need for rules; begin to shape their attitudes and make sense of the world; gain in self-esteem and develop a sense of personal identity; grow, develop and change; increase their ability to understand and use language effectively; think creatively and imaginatively; express concerns and fears in situations and environment.

4.4 The Role of the Practitioner

The role of the teacher and Teaching Assistant is crucial in planning and resourcing a challenging environment; supporting children's learning through planned play activity; supporting children's spontaneous play; extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

4.5 Learning through play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Classroom activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage should be developed from a range of routes. The activities can be; teacher-led, teacher-initiated, and child-initiated. Where possible, these three routes into learning happen alongside each other.

5 Assessment and Recording

5.1 Assessing progress and ensuring progression will be achieved by following the Development Matters guidance in conjunction with our assessments checkpoints and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

All ongoing informal observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing, model making.

6 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 and set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.
- Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Child Protection.

7 Pupils with SEND

- 7.1 Children with special educational needs will be assessed regularly and a suitable learning environment will be provided whenever possible within St Leonard's. See DBAT SEND policy for more information.

8 Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Leonard's CE Academy, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed 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.

9 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 through regular meeting and curriculum parents' sessions.

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 and inviting members of the community into our setting.

10 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 and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to the Reception class in order to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In addition, practitioners carry out home visits, prior to the start of Reception, to begin to develop strong relationships with children's family groups.

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

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