

# St Leonard's Primary School



## EYFS Policy Updated October 2025

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Leonard's Primary School, children can join Nursery in the year that they turn four, or the term after they turn three for afternoon Rising 3 places, and in the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of developing high quality learning together and to make the most of their abilities and talents for life long learning (Reference to Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025)

We endeavour to "ensure that children are supported to fulfil their potential within a secure, safe and happy environment where children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We aim to promote high quality teaching and learning to ensure children's "school readiness" and to give the children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life". (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025)

This policy has been updated in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage published in 2017 and last updated in September 2025.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency** so every child makes at least expected 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 individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents/carers;
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

### **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Leonard's Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through positive and secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Enabling Environments**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. We will respond to individual needs and develop a strong partnership with parents/carers.

## **Learning and Developing**

We understand that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by interactions with the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning. We will provide a balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and the balance will shift according to the child's age, stage and maturity.

## **The role of all adults**

This should include:

- The recognition of the importance of the role of all significant adults, teachers, early years' practitioners and parents as partners.
- The understanding of the importance of warm, caring relationships between adult and child, to provide positive and meaningful interactions that enhance self esteem and confidence.
- The encouragement of well- planned quality play by adults who interact and extend the children's activities in a way that positively affects the attitudes of learning that the children develop.
- The provision of an appropriate mix of adult directed and child initiated activities.
- Promoting children's learning through planned experiences that are challenging but achievable.
- Modelling a range of positive behaviours.
- Using language that is rich and grammatically correct to develop children's language.
- Direct teaching of skills and knowledge
- Planning the indoor and outdoor environment to provide a positive context for learning and teaching

## **Confidentiality**

All adults working in the EYFS must understand that all information in the course of employment will be kept confidential. Details of children, families and staff must remain confidential and must not be discussed outside of school (see separate social networking and mobile phone policy).

## **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St. Leonard's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

For those children with special educational needs, the focus will be on removing barriers for children and on preventing learning difficulties developing. Children's learning difficulties will be identified at an early stage and teaching will respond quickly to areas of difficulty. This will involve working closely with parents and developing an effective strategy to meet these needs. This may involve working with staff from other agencies in drawing up Individual Early Education Plans.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

### **Welfare**

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

At St. Leonard's we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children;
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

### **Health and safety**

The school's guidelines on health, medical and safety issues are followed by the EYFS.

Children will only be dismissed to a Parent or Carer at the end of the day unless staff have been notified of any change. The EYFS uses a safeguarding system to ensure the safety of the children if they are collected by an adult unknown to EYFS staff. All children must be handed over personally to their Parent/Carer at the end of the day or to a previously agreed person.

At least one person who has a current Paediatric First Aid Certificate must be on the premises at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings.

In the EYFS, we will continue to complete written risk assessments for any occasion that the children are leaving school premises.

### **First Aid**

- All injuries must be recorded in the class accident record.
- Any head injury must be reported to the class teacher immediately. Any child who has had a head injury must go home with a 'bumped head' form, to alert parents. Any head injury causing concern must be referred to the school office.
- Any personnel dealing with any other first aid must inform the class teacher of the injury and treatment.

### **Parents as Partners**

At St. Leonard's we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;

- the teacher offers to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting Nursery/School;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Taster' days and Transition sessions;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- regular parent home links about themes and ideas for activities to share with their child at home;
- termly stay and play sessions for parents to have an opportunity to see the learning within the classroom;
- both Reception and Nursery have dedicated pages on the school web site, containing parent's information;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journeys';
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which teachers and parents discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their Reception year.

We operate an open door policy where parents can talk with us at the end of the school day whenever possible.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

The EYFS Leader takes overall responsibility for all children and staff within the setting as a whole.

### **Interactions, Assessment and Planning**

At St. Leonards' School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by interacting with the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

All EYFS staff are responsible for observing individual children's interests, having quality interactions with children and assessing appropriate next steps for the child and implementing them.

EYFS staff have worked collaboratively and created a skill-based curriculum which is progressive across the age ranges. There is an 'umbrella' topic for both Nursery and Reception but staff amend this accordingly with children's individual interests. Topic webs and 'what I would like to know' sheets are shared termly so parents are able to detail what their child would like to learn

and any interests they have. This is then linked to the skills within St Leonard's curriculum. All of the skills are referenced from the 2020 Development Matters.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. As part of our philosophy of **child-initiated learning**, our **Formative Assessment** informs everyday planning and is based on on-going assessments of interactions with children.

All adults working in the EYFS are responsible for observing children. Children are observed for levels of well-being and involvement, interests and the Characteristics of Learning. Each child has an individual Learning Journey in which this evidence is stored.

At St. Leonard's all children's learning is recorded within their own learning journal, which covers the 7 areas of learning and 17 Early Learning Goals of the EYFS Profile. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and the Characteristics of Learning. We give a reasonable opportunity for the Parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. A copy of the Profile report will also be given to the Year 1 teacher. At the end of the Reception year, the EYFS coordinator will spend time moderating with year one for reading, writing and numeracy, as part of our transition.

### **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The areas will include:

- An attractive and comfortable place to read;
- Explorative, sensorial play with a variety of equipment;
- Mathematical and scientific equipment;
- A writing area with a variety of paper and tools to mark make or write;
- Imaginative play areas;
- A variety of creative media such as paint, clay, wood, junk materials;
- Growing things;
- Collections of interesting objects to handle;
- Collections of musical instruments;
- A variety of outdoor play equipment;

All areas will be attractive and suitably resourced so that children are encouraged to use them and engage in purposeful, challenging activities with or without the presence of an adult.

Resources will be organised in such a way that children are enabled to make informed choices, select independently what they need and take responsibility for clearing away.

Having daily access to the outdoor environment is a priority at St. Leonard's. For many children, it is their preferred space and the EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor areas. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that the outdoor learning environment contributes to all areas of learning. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. Children have access to the whole learning environment both in and out of doors for a substantial part of each session.

Resources outdoors and indoors are organised similarly to enable children to be independent and take responsibility.

All children are encouraged to take part in the full range of outdoor experiences.

### **Learning and Development**

At St. Leonard's we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

- the partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;

- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

### **The staff**

- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Promote children’s learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable;
- Teach skills and knowledge;
- Understand that children learn in different ways and at a different pace to each other;
- Use rich and varied language to help children develop linguistic structures for thinking;
- Plan both indoor and outdoor provision to maximise opportunities for children’s learning.

### **Play**

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. All staff work together to foster the characteristics of effective early learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

### **Active Learning**

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of

doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We recognise the three Prime Areas (PSE, CL, PD) underpin all the other areas of learning. The remaining Specific Areas support them and help strengthen children’s learning and development. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Developmental Matters and Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of all EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and EYFS coordinator will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

### **Leadership and Management**

The central leadership of the EYFS is undertaken by the EYFS Leader. Regular EYFS meetings are held to discuss assessment, individual pupils, EAL/SEN issues and joint planning. All members of the EYFS are encouraged to attend to help the consistency and effectiveness of the EYFS team. Priorities relating to the EYFS are identified in the School Improvement Plan and in the EYFS Annual Curriculum Review.

Roles and responsibilities for all staff are reviewed in line with Performance Management Procedures and staff training and development needs are outlined in the School Improvement Plan. All staff and governors are aware of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the importance of this Key Stage in relation to children’s learning and its impact on raising standards across the school.

The Leader responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage is Mrs Abigail Fleming

Date reviewed: October 2024

Date to be next reviewed: October 2025