

# Lightwoods Primary School

## Early Years Policy

2019-2020

### Our Vision

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential.

Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children within the Reception phase.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. 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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, March 2012

The Reception year must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The Reception year is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- 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
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
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This Early Years Policy includes the following:

- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Classroom organisation and resources

- Use of whole school resources
- Induction
- Involving parents
- Language and Literacy Supporting the Reception Child
- Assessment and record keeping
- Monitoring and evaluation

## Aims and Principles

- Reception practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners must respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- Involve parents and Carers.

## Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers children in the Reception Class.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are inter-connected.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical Development – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
- Mathematics – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- Understanding the World – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- Expressive Arts and Design – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.
- The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children’s interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child- initiated activities.
- The long term plan is the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available while children are in the early years.
- Medium term planning takes the form of a theme based upon the children’s interests. It is evaluated weekly to respond to other emerging interests that the children may have.
- Short term plans select activities and learning objectives from medium term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly.
- Planning should provide a clear balance between challenging the most able children in some cases to exceed Early Learning Goals whilst recognising that an attempt to implement the more formal work before a child is ready could damage a child’s disposition to learn.

## Classroom Organisation and Resources

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

The Reception class provides the following areas:

- Small world tray for retelling stories
- Role play area
- Large and small construction
- Sand and water
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Computers and printer
- Interactive whiteboard
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments

- Painting and creative equipment
- Maths games and equipment
- Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including areas for large construction, Literacy shed, Gross Motor equipment, sand and water (which may be changed throughout the year) natural materials, such as sticks, shells and pebbles and role play resources.

## Use of Whole School Resources

- The Reception classes use the hall for, physical education, Yoga and assemblies.
- Use of outside field, large playground and pirate ship (on a rota) bikes and trikes are in use daily
- Forest School area used on a rotating basis.

## Induction

As well as our own private nursery onsite (Tinywoods) we have close links with many of the local nurseries. This allows the pre-school children and the Reception teacher to become familiar with each other before the transition period begins.

During the Summer term before admission staff from Reception will visit children new to the setting in their own home and several transition sessions will take place in school. Contact is made with nurseries with either a visit or, if not possible, a telephone call to discuss new starters to Reception.

Also in July, a meeting is held by the Headteacher and Reception teachers to introduce parents/Carers to the school, reception procedures and curriculum. Parents/carers are given a school prospectus which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.

When school starts in September, children are introduced using a staggered start system, with the first week consisting of half days to accustom the children to the routines and allow more time for the staff to get to know the children in small groups and carry out initial observations.

Reception children are introduced to the life of the wider school gently as they are ready. Playtimes are separate in the first week allowing the children to settle with their classmates in a quiet atmosphere, building to full participation in school playtimes. The process is the same for assemblies, building up to full participation by the end of the first term. They participate in school assemblies as fully as possible and every attempt is made to ensure the children know what to expect.

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## Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.
- Sharing progress at school through parents evenings and termly reports.
- Inviting parents/carers in to special events in school such as 'play and stay sessions and rhyme mornings.
- In the Autumn term, there will be a meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.
- Twitter is used to keep parents informed of upcoming events and photos are shared of activities taking place in class.

## Language and Literacy Supporting the Reception Child

- Early in the first half term at school, children will begin to bring home a reading book and word box containing sounds, numbers and sight words so that parents/carers can support their child with the sounds he/she has learnt at school. This will be explained in detail at the Autumn meeting for parents.
- The first books that children bring home to share with parents/carers will be picture books and then books with simple repetitive text and rhymes.
- Children are also provided with 'learning bags' which are distributed on a rota system. The bags cover areas of Maths, Music, Art, Literacy and Science.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Foundation Stage leader will:

- communicate and understand the vision of the school and never lose sight of the link between the quality of provision and its impact on the children's learning and development.
- have high aspirations for children's achievement, irrespective of their circumstances or starting points
- have high expectations of their team's performance and of the quality of teaching and learning
- ensure consistency of teaching, learning and all routines across the Foundation Stage
- moderate assessments made on the EYFS objectives, set targets and monitor progress
- look for new and innovative early years ideas to create an exciting learning environment.
- carry out formal and informal monitoring
- plan with the Foundation Stage teachers an exciting and innovative curriculum
- maintain resources

The Foundation Stage teachers will:

- have high aspirations for children’s achievement, irrespective of their circumstances or starting points. □
- ensure consistency of teaching, learning and all routines across the Foundation Stage □ will moderate assessments made on the EYFS objectives, set targets and monitor progress □
- carry out formal and informal monitoring □ plan and deliver an innovative Foundation curriculum meeting all EYFS standards □
- maintain the aesthetics of the learning environment □
- maintain resources

### **Assessment and Recording**

This is in line with the school Assessment Policy. Children are assessed against the EYFS level descriptors and are judged at the end of the Reception years as either achieving , exceeding or not achieving the Early Learning Goals.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This is in line with the school self-evaluation policy and associated documents.

### **Further policies relating to the EYFS**

As part of the whole school

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure

To be reviewed on: Sep 2020