

Early Years Policy

North Leigh CE Primary School



Valuing Everyone in our school, in our community, in our world.

This policy was updated in January 2023.

The policy must be reviewed and updated at least every 36 months.

All children are provided with equal access to the curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

The impact of this policy on staff workload has been considered.

Signed *Elizabeth Mason*
Headteacher

Sophie Warner
Chair of Governors

Date **30/01/2023**

Early Years Policy

Date: January 2023

Next review: January 2026

Statement

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at North Leigh CE Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS settings, including both teaching and non-teaching adults and will be monitored by the Headteacher.

In the policy, the term 'Reception' refers to the Early Years educational provision at North Leigh CE Primary School.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS settings at North Leigh CE Primary School, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence, independence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ to their own
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside
- Supporting children in developing the Characteristics of Effective Learning

Ensuring the Safeguarding and EYFS Welfare Requirements for all children are embedded in EYFS practice and in line with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in Reception at North Leigh CE Primary School is delivered in accordance with the

Government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' [March 2021]. This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments with Teaching and Support from Adults' and 'Learning and Development at Different Rates'.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Practitioners also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Learning experiences and continuous provision support children in developing the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We believe these underpin future learning behaviours. The characteristics are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

Educational programmes which practitioners deliver in Reception involve activities and experiences from all seven areas. These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All areas of learning and development are given equal weighting and value.

We believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework supports children in developing the skills they need to be learners throughout their time at North Leigh CE Primary School.

We recognise the importance of a smooth transition into Year 1 and that some pupils will be exploring the ELGs (Early Learning Goals) in greater depth in some areas, whilst some will still be working at Expected and Emerging levels. This breadth of ability is reflected in the planning, and a transition action plan is created each summer term in order to ensure that pupils move seamlessly from Reception to Year 1.

To support children as they start their Reception year and schooling at North Leigh CE Primary School, close relationships with our partnership preschool, North Leigh Preschool, means that transition is well planned for and children become familiar with the Reception classroom and practitioners. A transition plan is created each year and followed from the summer term through to September. In the summer term, prior to starting, the class teacher together with the Pastoral Lead make voluntary home visits to meet with Reception cohort parents and their child(ren). Parents are also invited to attend a welcome evening at school and there are planned transition days. The

Reception Teacher also liaises with feeder preschools as necessary. The SENCo is involved in the transition of children with SEN and EHCPs.

Please refer to the Transition section of this policy.

Active Learning Through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our Reception class has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process that supports them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative, independent and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In Reception, we provide both adult focused activities and child initiated play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support them to discover, explore, investigate and develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired vocabulary and knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

Assessment and Record-Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of Reception. Regular, planned and focused observations and assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). We make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly.

We also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded electronically using Target Tracker as well as keeping evidence of learning in individual Learning Journeys. The teacher and teaching assistants are involved in observing children.

We use observations to support the developing knowledge of individual children. It informs us of children's abilities, needs and interests. Electronic observations are evaluated by the Reception class teacher and children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is administered within the first six weeks a child enters Reception using the statutory assessment tasks in accordance with administration guidance and the assessment and reporting arrangements from the Department of Education. At the end of the Reception year, the Reception class teacher uses evidence to decide the extent to which the Early Learning Goals have been met.

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning takes into account the individual

children's learning and developmental needs. The parents are informed of this and kept up to date with the topics that the child is covering in class through Holly Class page on the school website.

All areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the Reception classroom. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and outdoors. Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom. Visitors are also welcomed into school.

Parents as Partners

North Leigh CE Primary School recognises the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. We encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires, WOW vouchers and informal chats we encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (eg characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports us in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the settings through the school newsletter, parentmail, the school website, weekly Seesaw (e-learning platform) posts and informal chatting when appropriate. We also give suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Throughout the year, parents are kept informed about their child's attainment, progress and targets. They are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. Parents are encouraged to add to their child's Learning Journey via Seesaw. These observations, together with the Target Tracker observations, document the learning taking place and next steps across the whole curriculum, including the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Parents receive a school report at the end of the year detailing their child's learning from the year. Class assemblies during the year allow children to share their learning with parents and the whole school.

Transition

The smooth transition for children into our Early Years settings is of the utmost importance to us at North Leigh CE Primary School. We understand that starting in a new setting can be an emotional time for both the child and their parents and we aim to make the process positive, nurturing and supportive. At the School there are separate transition policies for the two settings:

Reception (The academic year in which a child will turn five)

Parents receive an induction pack after they have accepted their child's place at school.

In the summer term, Reception staff work with North Leigh Preschool to support the transition of children into Reception. This includes regular snack times together in the Reception Classroom and joint play sessions between Reception and Preschool. The Reception teacher meets with Preschool leaders to share information about the children and their learning so far. Preschool staff also take photographs of the Reception classroom and staff so that they become familiar to the children moving up into Reception.

In the summer term parents are invited to an induction meeting with the class teacher. This is a time for parents to talk about their child and to ask any questions or raise concerns.

Children starting in Reception are invited to two transition mornings, to meet each other and teachers and get to know their new classroom. During one of these meetings, parents are invited to meet the Headteacher and hear more about North Leigh CE Primary School.

Most children start Reception full time from September. Parents can discuss a staggered start with the class teacher and Headteacher if this is preferred.

Transition into Year 1

The school recognises the importance of a smooth transition for children from Reception to Year 1. The teachers work closely to share information about the children both socially and academically. Children also have a transition morning with their new teacher, in their new classroom. Children who require more support with transition, meet regularly with their new teacher over the course of the summer term. The Year 1 teacher will spend time in the Reception classroom, joining the children for snack, stories and play. In September, Year 1 reflects the learning environment and routines set up during the Reception year before gradually transitioning to a more formal learning structure over the year.

Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at the school have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS settings. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within Reception. All children are celebrated and valued.