



# Early Years Policy

Approved by the Governing Body

Spring 2026

*"The most valuable tools we give to children are the abilities to choose, to think for themselves, to negotiate, to work collaboratively, to question, reflect, find out, concentrate and persevere. These are the sound basis for lifelong learning"*

*Foundations for Independence by Sally Featherstone and Ros Bayley*

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Larkfields Infant School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in developing secure foundations for future learning.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception Year (F2), which is when children enter our school. We have one intake of Reception children in September. Children will enter with varying experiences and abilities. Their needs will therefore vary. They require a well-planned and resourced curriculum to take their learning forward.

Reception children start school by being phased into full time education gently. We begin with nursery visits to our main provider in May. Over June and July, we offer two opportunities for the children to join us. In addition, we deliver an information meeting to parents. In September the children stay for half days, followed by a full morning and lunchtime, and then within two weeks, they begin full time.

## **Aims of the Early Years**

The aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes. It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well being. We aim to:

- Provide a safe, calm, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will furnish children with the skills for future learning in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play in all areas of learning.

- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contribution.
- Ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning.
- Develop lifelong learning skills such as questioning, curiosity, resilience, independence and resourcefulness.

## **Learning and Development**

The areas of learning as described by the "Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage" document (Dfe 2021) are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive and Arts and Design

We believe these seven areas are important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We deliver all the areas through a combination of; independent child-initiated play, direct whole class teaching and teaching within play. With a greater emphasis on the three prime areas, which are taught across and through the other four (specific) areas.

## **Planning**

Thorough planning is the key to making children's learning effective and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning is informed by talking to our children and our observations of them.

### **Long Term Planning**

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. The Early Learning Goals and other educational programmes such as SEAL are distributed

over the terms to give a broad and balanced coverage. The main topics are planned around the six half terms with room to allow us to respond to the children's interests.

### **Medium Term Planning**

Medium Term planning is carried out every half term and addresses particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail. Learning intentions, activities and experiences for each area of learning are identified. Our medium term plans allow for flexibility to respond to the children's interests within a framework.

### **Short Term Planning**

Our short term planning covers 5 days. We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation and deployment of adults and resources. Our short term planning meets the needs of the children on a weekly and day to day basis. It allows for revision and modification, informed by ongoing observations and assessments. Within our short term plan we ensure all children have experienced independent learning, and a 1:1 adult input in mathematics and writing.

## **The Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming, stimulating and well organised learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experiences. We foster independence and encourage children to become independent learners and critical thinkers.

The learning environment has been carefully divided into quiet areas and more active areas with small communication friendly spaces. Within our environment we have areas devoted to:-

Role play and storytelling-

Reading-book and story corners

Writing areas inside and outside

Number areas inside and outside

Sand and Water,

Small and large scale construction

Small world play

Art area

A Mudpie Kitchen and Garden

Computers, an interactive whiteboard and other ICT equipment are also available for the children to use.

We also make extensive use of the school grounds for exploration and learning.

## **Assessment, Recording and Monitoring**

At Larkfields Infant School we undertake rigorous on entry assessment which takes the form of anecdotal observations and planned for assessments on counting and letter recognition. These make up a baseline from where our children begin. We can then plan the next steps to meet the children's development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process, as do discussion with parents and carers.

In addition we undertake the NFER Baseline assessments required by the Government.

### **Formative Assessment**

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment takes the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, planned assessment opportunities, the work the children produce, photographs, information from parents and talking to the children themselves. Each child is plotted against the ages and stages from Development Matters Booklet.

### **Summative Assessment**

The Development Matters Booklet summarises all the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against the ages and stages of child development. Our teachers attend the local network moderation sessions. In addition we are moderated by the LA every other year.

At the end of the year a written report is sent out to parents detailing the progress their child has made.

The Foundation Stage Co-ordinator and the Head Teacher monitor teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and analyse EYFS data to help inform future provision and the development of the Foundation Stage.

## **Partnership with Parents**

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators, we aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure that children achieve their full potential.

In the year before their child's admission we send a pack to parents which includes:  
The school prospectus, which answers the questions parents usually ask,  
A copy of the school's handwriting style, and many other information sharing documents.

Children are encouraged to share books at home and are provided with a collection of books to share with parents, until they are given a reading book.

Once a child is reading, parents are provided with a booklet outlining our approach to reading and are invited to a meeting about reading. As their child progresses they receive further information.

We invite parents each half term to engage and participate in their child's learning. This is done through play and stay sessions, information meeting and learning celebrations.

We send a parent book home every Friday which gives the parents the opportunity to comment on their child's development and interests.

## **Commitment to equality of opportunity**

We aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life. We work to ensure that every child is valued as an individual.

## **Provision for pupils with special needs**

All children with special needs are welcomed at Larkfields. The school's Special Educational Needs Policy states that "We aim to encourage all children to develop their full potential" by providing a "broad, balanced curriculum relevant to the needs of all pupils" and by fostering "links between support services, home and school".

Once a child has been identified as having additional needs a concern form is completed and discussed with parents. Assessments are carried out to determine the specific areas of need and programmes of work are planned and delivered by staff and support staff.