Early Years Foundation Stage policy

St Luke's CoE Primary School

Approved by:	Miriam MacAllan
Date approved:	13/02/25
Last reviewed on:	30/06/25

Next review due by:	June 26

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1. Aims

At St Luke's, we aim to ensure that every child grows into a well-rounded individual, empowered to become the best version of themselves. In close partnership with parents and carers, we strive to create a happy, nurturing, secure, and stimulating environment where children feel safe, valued, and inspired to learn.

We offer a rich, engaging curriculum that supports all areas of development and fosters strong connections with our local community. Our provision encourages children to become confident, independent, curious, and respectful individuals who take pride in themselves and appreciate the diverse world around them.

Each child is given individual care and attention wherever possible, alongside opportunities for fun and meaningful interactions with peers and adults. We actively promote parental involvement both within and beyond the setting, ensuring that the child's experience of home and school is connected and cohesive. Through this joined-up approach, we aim to help children feel happy, secure, and ready to thrive.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2023.

3. Structure of the EYFS

Our EYFS consists of one Nursery and one Reception class and we take up to 30 children in each year group. In Nursery, we offer part-time and full-time places (term time only). Our 15-hour sessions are Monday - Friday from 9am – 12pm (morning sessions) or Monday - Friday from 12:30pm – 3:30pm (afternoon sessions). Or 30-hour places are Monday - Friday from 9.00am to 3.30pm.

Children can be admitted in the term after their third birthday:

- Birthday before 1 September – they can start in the autumn term
- Birthday is before 1 January – they can start in the spring term

- Birthday is before 1 April – they can start in the summer term

In reception, children begin school in September of the academic year in which they reach the age of 5; although compulsory school age does not begin until the start of the term after the child's fifth birthday.

4. Curriculum

4.1 EYFS Principles

The EYFS framework forms the backbone of the Early Years curriculum at St Luke's CoE Primary School. There are four important principles that underpin practise at our school:

A unique child - Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
Positive relationships - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
Enabling environments - Children learn well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
Learning and development - Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years settings, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Within this there are seven areas of learning and these shape the educational programme in our early years setting. All areas are interconnected but there are three areas that are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building children's capacity for learning and to help them form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

4.2 The Role of Play

How children learn is as important as what they learn. We know that children learn best when they are engaged and involved in an activity and that the highest levels of involvement are seen in children during child-initiated play. What will captivate a child cannot be planned for in advance. Finding those moments of high involvement requires giving children time and space to explore their
own ideas and interests through play. Therefore, in our EYFS, most of the day is spent in child-initiated play, where each child chooses what they want to do.

4.3 Planning

Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

There are six topics which are rotated every year. This ensures children in both classes are always learning something new and that their learning can be shared and celebrated across the whole of EYFS.

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Cycle 1	Into the Woods	All About Me	In the Garden
Cycle 2	Food and Festivals	Imaginary Worlds	About Town

- Long Term Planning and Progression maps: Long term plans provide a brief overview of key learning across the year in Nursery and Reception including the wider curriculum e.g. trips, workshops, Global Citizenship. There are whole school progression maps for all subjects that include the relevant EYFS areas and aspects of learning. These aid practitioners in planning for progression in knowledge and skills in these areas to provide a firm foundation for Key Stage 1.
- Medium Term Planning: The medium-term planning takes the form of seasonal themes and reflects settling-in, the seasons and time of year, the major festivals and celebrations, favourite stories and the interests of the children. It ensures that all areas and aspects of the curriculum are experienced over the year and identifies learning possibilities within each area of learning. These plans are intended to be guidelines and have the flexibility to respond to children's changing needs and interests. They are reviewed regularly in order to respond to children have learned in previous terms and to ensure a rich and balanced curriculum. The initial 6 weeks of the Autumn term are planned settling-in periods which teach and enable children to use the environment autonomously and induct them into the routines of the setting. This provides an underpinning structure for the children's learning and development.
- Short Term planning: Teachers weekly plans are broken down into the Prime and the Specific Areas of Development to ensure that all areas are covered when a topic or activity is planned. Carpet sessions, adult focused activities and children's independent learning are planned on a weekly basis. The children have the opportunity to work in all learning areas within the classroom and outdoors. Staff plan group, whole class and individual activities for children that enable them to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum enabling them to learn effectively and work towards their individual targets.

4.4 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is delivered through carefully planned, purposeful play, as well as a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond sensitively to each child's emerging needs and interests, supporting their development through warm, positive interactions. As children grow and their development progresses, this balance gradually shifts towards more structured adult-led activities to ensure they are well-prepared for the transition into more formal learning in Year 1.

Phonics

In Reception, we follow the *Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS)* programme to deliver daily phonics sessions. Each lesson introduces a new sound or revisits previously learned sounds, typically presented using the interactive whiteboard. Children learn to recognise the letters (graphemes) that represent the sounds (phonemes), practise reading words and sentences containing the new sounds, and then apply their learning by writing the sounds, CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words, and high-frequency words on whiteboards.

In Nursery, we follow *Letters and Sounds*, focusing primarily on Phase 1, which aims to develop children's speaking and listening skills. This foundational phase helps children become attuned to the sounds in their environment and begins to prepare them for oral blending and segmenting—key skills for later phonics learning in Phase 2 and beyond.

Mathematics

Across both Nursery and Reception, we use the *White Rose Maths* scheme to deliver daily maths lessons. The scheme breaks the year into manageable blocks, which are then divided into small, logical learning steps. Teachers use a wide variety of approaches—including books, games, rhymes, daily routines, and outdoor learning opportunities—to foster a love of maths from an early age. Mathematical thinking is also embedded into continuous provision planning, ensuring children encounter meaningful maths experiences throughout the day.

5. Assessment

At St Luke's, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

At the end of every term, class teachers in Nursery and Reception assess each child's development and learning attainment against the criteria set out in Development Matters. Their assessments are entered onto Target Tracker, an assessment tool used by the whole school. We have regular, termly parents' meetings to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and next steps in learning.

In Reception, Phonics assessments are completed every half term. By utilising phonics assessments, teachers can pinpoint the strengths and deficits in their pupils' phonics skills and plan interventions accordingly.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the Reception, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child where pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals (ELGs), indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request. For children in Reception, the ELG assessment is included in the end-of-year report to parents.

6. Working with parents and carers

At St Luke's, we recognise the vital role that parents and carers play in their child's education and development. We are committed to working in close partnership with families to ensure each child receives the support they need to thrive. We do this through a range of strategies that promote open, effective communication and collaboration:

- A home visit is offered to every child and their family before they start at St Luke's. These visits provide an opportunity for teachers to begin building positive relationships with children and their families, for parents to ask any questions they may have, and to discuss their child confidentially in a comfortable setting.
- We operate a staggered entry system for Nursery children, with different start dates and times. This approach allows children to settle gradually and supports the development of secure, trusting relationships between staff, children, and their families.
- Parents and carers are invited into the classroom for Open Mornings. These events offer valuable insight into children's learning experiences and allow families to see the Early Years environment in action.
- Formal meetings are held throughout the school year to discuss each child's progress, development, and next steps.
- We welcome ongoing communication between parents and staff. Parents are encouraged to speak with teachers or teaching assistants at any time should they have concerns or wish to discuss their child's experience.
- We prioritise strong, respectful relationships with families, working together to establish a regular two-way flow of information that supports each child's learning and wellbeing.
- Surveys are sent out periodically to gather feedback from parents and carers, helping us to continuously improve our provision.
- We use Tapestry, a secure online learning journal, to share observations, milestones, and learning experiences with parents. Tapestry also allows families to contribute their own observations, helping to create a holistic picture of each child's development.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

At St Luke's, we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive, nurturing relationships with the adults who care for them. We are fully committed to safeguarding and welfare requirements, creating a welcoming, stimulating, and safe environment in which children can enjoy learning and develop confidence.

Staff-to-Child Ratios

We ensure that statutory staffing ratios are consistently maintained across the Early Years Foundation Stage to safeguard all children and meet their developmental needs:

- **Nursery (children aged 3 and over):** In line with class size legislation, we provide at least one qualified teacher per 13 children.
- **Reception:** We maintain a ratio of at least one teacher per 30 children, in accordance with statutory requirements.

First Aid Provision

We ensure that at least one member of staff with a current **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** certificate is present on the premises at all times when children are in attendance, including during off-site visits. PFA certificates are updated every three years, as required by statutory guidance.

Promoting Good Health and Oral Hygiene

We promote positive health and wellbeing throughout the year, with a particular focus on oral health as part of our broader health education. These activities are embedded in our curriculum and delivered in engaging, age-appropriate ways. Our provision includes:

- **Dentist Role Play:** Role play areas are set up as dental surgeries, helping to familiarise children with the environment, tools, and routines of visiting the dentist.
- **Tooth Brushing with Dolls and Toys:** Practitioners model correct brushing techniques using dolls and toys, allowing children to practise during Continuous Provision.
- **Stories and Discussions:** We use books and group discussions to explore topics such as dental hygiene, visiting the dentist, and the importance of brushing teeth.
- **Focus Group Activities:** In small groups, children learn about healthy eating and drinking habits, the importance of oral hygiene, and general ways to stay healthy and strong.
- **Dental Nurse Visit:** Each year, the Oral Health Team visits the setting to deliver the **Fluoride Varnish application** and offer expert advice to children.
- **Physical Activity:** Children are encouraged to be physically active throughout the day. Outdoor play is a key component of our Continuous Provision, with frequent opportunities for jumping, running, climbing, hopping, dancing, and more. In addition, Reception children receive weekly PE lessons following the *Complete P.E.* scheme.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Miriam MacAllan every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy