



St Lawrence College Junior School Policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil 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 of Education, 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Lawrence College, pupils can join the school the term of their third birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Lawrence College, we greatly value the important role that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development; however, we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as a special part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

All children begin our school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Nursery and Reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, specialist staff and the teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our local community. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do.
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activities that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- it enables children to make an effective transition from home to school.

In the Foundation Stage children learn best through play-based activities and first-hand experience. Every child deserves the best possible start in life. In the EYFS classes we aim to

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deliver this by looking at what the children can do and supporting them to fulfil their potential. Children become independent learners through the provision of a balance of child-initiated and adult-led experiences.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution.

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment, which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development; use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions, to include all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability
- provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development
- develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults
- encourage active learning through first-hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play and through both verbal and non-verbal communication
- encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline
- foster positive home/school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents

At St Lawrence College, we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop emotionally, socially, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential and at their own pace. Each child is unique and is valued as an individual.

The principles which guide the work of all Early Years practitioners are grouped into four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Lawrence College we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, develop self-regulation and be 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 the feedback they receive. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration, sharing, Circle Times, Assemblies, rainbow stickers and sticker books, and Head's Award certificates to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of perceived differences. All children at St Lawrence College are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities and all children and their families are valued within 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 Nursery and Reception classes we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all 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 which are differentiated to provide challenge for children of all abilities
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is important to us that all children in the setting are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and ways to keep themselves safe and to help them understand why these 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 wellbeing 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.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. (Department for Education, 2021)

In compliance with the statutory framework for the EYFS 2021:

- we promote the welfare of children
- we promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- we manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs
- we ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- we ensure that we never knowingly employ any person who is disbarred or disqualified from working with children or who co-habits with a person who is disqualified from working with children. Appropriate checks and assurances are taken at the time of recruitment and at regular intervals during an individual’s period of employment at the School
- we ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- we ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- we maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Equal Opportunities

At St Lawrence College Junior School we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of School life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. For further information see the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy.

British Values

Under the equality Act 2010, which underpins standards of behaviours and incorporates both British and universal values, we have a legal obligation not to directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise those with protected characteristics

The DfE have promoted the need “to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.”

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At St Lawrence College Junior School these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

- **Democracy:**

We listen to and take account of children’s and parents’ voice. We encourage children to contribute and co-operate, and take into account the views of others. We support children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) by giving them opportunities to develop their self-confidence and self-awareness, to make choices and decisions about what they want to explore and how they're going to use the resources we have made accessible to them.

- **The Rule of Law:**

We consistently reinforce our high expectations of children. Children are taught the value and reasons behind our expectations (rules), they are there to protect us, that everyone has a responsibility and that there are consequences when rules are broken. Children learn to manage their own feelings and behaviour. They learn about right and wrong, about behaving within agreed and clearly defined boundaries, and about the consequences of their actions.

- **Individual Liberty:**

Within St Lawrence College, children are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. As a school we educate and provide boundaries for young children to make choices confidently, through our provision of a safe environment and empowering teaching. Children are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms. We help children to develop a positive sense of themselves by helping them to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities.

- **Mutual Respect:**

Part of our school ethos and Behaviour Policy is based around ‘Ready, Respect, Safe’ and this is modelled to children by caring, sharing and listening to others. Staff help children to understand how to respect others by talking about how their actions/words can affect others and reinforcing the Golden Rules. We have an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance in our setting, where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and where we encourage children to engage with their wider community.

- **Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:**

We aim to enhance children’s understanding of different faiths and beliefs by learning about a range of celebrations throughout the year. Books, artefacts, food and other resources are provided to support and develop children’s understanding and interest. We encourage parents/carers to participate in and support our multi-cultural events.

Special Educational Needs (Learning Support)

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access additional support from teaching assistants, specialist staff or outside agencies. Quality First teaching and differentiation are the first fundamental levels of intervention.

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The School's SENDCo, provides additional information and advice to teachers, teaching assistants and parents, and is responsible for arranging additional support for pupils, external referrals, assessments and interventions where necessary. For further information, see the school's Learning Support Policy.

Positive Relationships

St Lawrence College recognises 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.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents 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 Nursery or Reception and encouraging parents to fill in an 'All About Me' form for their child
- providing children with opportunities to spend time with their practitioners before they start at our school. Children are invited to attend a Spring activity morning with their parents. In the Summer Reception children are invited to a Family afternoon where children can spend time in their new classroom with their parents and then a Moving on Morning when parents are encouraged to leave their children for a couple of hours. Nursery children are invited to book taster sessions before they start in the Nursery. The day before the start of the Michaelmas Term we host a family tea party where children spend some time with their new teacher
- having an 'open door' policy and encouraging parents to talk to their child's practitioners about any concerns they may have
- at the start of the year, we have a 'Meet the Teacher' session where parents are given information on the EYFS curriculum and expectations for the end of Reception
- parents receive half termly Topic sheets detailing the proposed curriculum for the next half term. We then supply further information to parents via our school website or online sites to support learning at home
- photos and observations posted on Tapestry enables a successful two-way dialogue for the children's progress and development between home and school as do reading record books where parents are encouraged to comment on their child's progress as well as staff.
- we invite parents to attend three formal meetings per year; Michaelmas, Lent and Summer terms, at which time parents discuss how their child has settled and their progress and development with their class teacher
- we send home twice yearly full written reports, showing children's levels of development, progress and next steps in all areas of the curriculum
- regular social events for parents such as seminars, quizzes and the Speech Day picnic
- weekly Home Learning Challenges allow parents to engage with their children's learning

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. At our School, the Nursery and Reception

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Teachers in each class act as the 'key person' to all children within the class, supported by the teaching assistant, with other practitioners contributing towards the care and learning for the children and their parents.

Food, snacks and drinks.

We regard snack and mealtimes as an enjoyable and important part of our pupils' day. Eating is a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We actively promote healthy eating through mealtimes. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We are a nut free school. If the meat offered is Halal this will be stated on the information and Teachers who supervise lunch will ensure that children understand their options.

Children will have a snack time twice a day and a hot meal at lunch time. Children are encouraged to drink, and water is always available. Children who stay for After School Club can bring a snack from home if they wish.

Enabling Environments

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

The environment includes opportunities for children to learn and develop across all areas of the curriculum. Areas of the classroom include a book corner, construction area, writing area, maths area and an area for accessing art materials. Resources are labelled and children are able to access resources independently.

Observe, Plan, Review and Reflect

- Long Term planning maps out suggested topics, texts and progression of skills to be developed over the year. (In Nursery this is a 2 year cycle).
- Half-termly Medium-Term Plans will be developed from these, taking into account children's progression and needs. A mix of adult led activities and enhancements to the provision for child-initiated activities are planned at an appropriate level with topics to engage children's interests.
- These plans are adapted on a day-to-day basis based on observations by teachers of the children's interests, needs and next steps.
- Practitioners continually observe and informally assess children. Observations may be recorded using Tapestry. Staff use information from these formative assessments to plan for the environment and areas of learning, and to inform adult and child led activities to enable individual children to be progressing towards next steps, including interventions for children who need extra support in an area.
- Children have a baseline assessment at the beginning of Nursery and Reception to allow staff to plan for their needs and to monitor progress, and progress is formally recorded in a termly tracking document. EYFS Reception Baseline data are produced using a mixture of teacher observations and assessments based on the EYFS framework and using the Development Matters guidance.

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- Language skills are assessed at the beginning of Reception using Language Link, and interventions take place for those who are flagged as needing extra help.
- Termly phonics assessments in Reception allow staff to plan appropriately for different groups of children.
- PIRA and PUMA tests in the Summer Term of Reception give information on strengths and gaps in learning of individuals and groups in reading and Maths which is used to inform future teaching.
- Assessments based on ongoing observations are recorded on a termly tracking document.
- Assessment data is brought to termly pupil progress meetings which are held to monitor children's progress and discuss individual children to highlight any gaps in learning and to identify any areas requiring additional support. Children are provided Quality First teaching and then if Teachers identify or assessment reveals a need for interventions these will be planned and implemented as Wave 2 or Wave 3 with the support of the SENDCo.
- Alongside this, informal observations, photographs and parents and children's comments form the basis of an EYFS profile. The class teacher's final assessment of the child's progress towards achievement of the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) is completed at the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception).

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, as well as areas where they can be quiet and rest. As far as possible, the environment is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Nursery and Reception classes have their own enclosed outdoor areas and also share the main Pre-Prep playground and adventure playground with KS1 at playtimes. They also regularly use the Forest School. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to begin to take responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside.

Learning and Development

At St Lawrence College we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

• Teaching and Learning Style

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- Regular CPD ensures staff have an understanding of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- Staff plan for a mix of adult led and child-initiated time bearing in mind young children's attention spans and their need for physical activity
- a range of approaches is 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 curriculum is carefully planned to help children work towards the ELGs throughout the year
- the children are able to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- learning is supported with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- progress and future learning needs of children are identified through observations, which are shared with parents.

• **Play**

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage",
(Department for Education, 2021)

At St Lawrence College, we support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They practise and build up ideas and learn self-regulation and understand the need for rules. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Play underpins the delivery of the Nursery and Reception class curriculum.

The children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of resources. Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

• **Active Learning**

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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**

Children are given the 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 setting to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS Framework (2021) is made up of three prime areas of development:

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

And four specific areas:

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

At St Lawrence College we believe in the vital importance and inter-dependence of each of these seven areas in order to promote the development of the whole child. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

In each area there are ELGs that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception class. The ELGs and the educational programmes are set out in the document:

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education, 2021).

Home-School Links

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff. When parents and/or carers and practitioners work together in the Nursery and Reception classes, the results have a positive impact on the children's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts at our School
- encouraging parents and/or carers to complete the home-School 'All About Me' admissions booklet or online through tapestry;

- sending home an outline of the Reception term’s curriculum at the beginning of each term;
- operating an open door policy, whereby parents and/or carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner;
- inviting parents and/or carers to accompany children on School visits;
- encouraging parents and/or carers to listen to their child read or practise key words each night and to comment on reading progress in a home School reading diary;
- in Reception there is an opportunity for two-way communication in a written Learning Journal;
- encouraging parents to access the online Learning Profile or Care Diary called Tapestry;
- Providing termly written reports to parents and/or carers summarising the child’s progress against the ELGs and foundation stage curriculum for Reception classes.
- A Progress check will be completed between the ages of two and three. There will be three informal catch ups with a Nursery Keyworker throughout the year. Mrs Una McInerney and Miss Lisa Davidson will share the Tapestry tri-annual report at the parent catch-up meetings.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs.

- **Long Term Planning** maps out suggested topics, texts and progression of skills to be developed over the year. (In Nursery this is a 2-year cycle). These topics are relevant to the needs of our children and enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum, which will enable the children progress towards the Early Learning Goals.
- **Medium Term Plans** are half-termly and developed from the Long Term Plans, taking into account children’s progression and needs. A mix of adult led activities, and enhancements to the provision for child-initiated activities are planned at an appropriate level with topics to engage children’s interests.
- **Short Term Planning** is adapted on a day-to-day basis based on observations by teachers of the children’s interests, needs and next steps.

Staffing and Supervision of EYFS Children

EYFS children are supervised in accordance with the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021.

3.36. For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in free schools and academies), where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, an instructor, or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, is working directly with the children:

- *for classes where the majority of children will reach the age of five or older within the school year, there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children*

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- for all other classes there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- at least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification

3.37. For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in academies), where there is no person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, no instructor, and no suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, working directly with the children:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every eight children
- at least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification
- at least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification

There will be a member of staff with appropriate paediatric first aid training available to pupils in the EYFS at all times. Furthermore, the majority of staff in the Pre-Prep are paediatric first aid trained and there is an ongoing rolling programme of training.

EYFS children spend the majority of the school day with their Class Teacher (alongside a Teaching Assistant), who takes full responsibility for their welfare and the learning opportunities throughout the day and is their Key Person. At times during the week other staff will also be involved in leading some activities, including lessons for Music, PE, Swimming and French. The Nursery Class (maximum 16 children) and Reception Class (max 20 children) are both staffed with a Qualified Teacher (QTS) and a Level 3 Qualified Teaching Assistant. On the occasions the teacher is out of the class for short periods e.g. on a break, a second Teaching Assistant or Gap Tutor covers in class.

At lunchtime, EYFS children eat in the Dining Room Annexe with Year 1. During lunchtime there is always a Qualified Teacher on duty alongside the teaching assistants and staff sit with the children to eat lunch. After lunch, and during morning break the Nursery and Reception children go out to play with the Year 1 and 2 children. They are supervised by the staff on duty. The EYFS staffing ratios are adhered to; as a result, there is always a Qualified Teacher on duty alongside the Teaching Assistants.

There is a Duty Rota to ensure supervision requirements are met during Pre-Prep Playtimes and for Before and After School Clubs. Before School (8.00-8.15) and After School (3.30-5.00) which are available to Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are supervised by a Qualified Teacher (QTS) alongside Teaching Assistants.

Staff Supervision

EYFS Staff receive half-termly supervision. At the supervision, the Head of Pre-Prep, Teachers and Teaching Assistants and have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have with regard to pupil progress and pupil welfare. To encourage continuous improvement, they are also encouraged to discuss their own professional practise and CPD needs.

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