

Every child deserves the best start in life and support to reach their full potential regardless of attainment, ethnicity, gender, language and special educational needs. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A safe, secure and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS) runs from Birth to the end of the Foundation Stage Year. Children are assessed against the Development Matters statements which lead to a formal assessment through the Early Learning goals at the end of the Reception year. The expectation is that most children will be secure in achieving these Early Learning Goals.

We pride ourselves on having specialised and committed staff who welcome the support of other adults and parents in order to fully support each child's learning and development. This allows children to be given the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school life.

The curriculum of The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a single framework for care, learning and development. It underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's knowledge and understanding. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape a child's educational experience. All seven areas are equally important and interconnected.

Three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, these are:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Communication and language;
- Physical Development.

Children are also supported in four specific areas that include essential skills and knowledge that grow out of the prime areas, these are:

- Literacy;
- Numeracy;
- Understanding the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design.

Children will develop the following knowledge, skills and understanding in the above areas through the Effective Characteristics of Learning:

- Playing and exploring;
- Active learning;
- Creative and thinking critically.

Children will also develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through the following ways:

- Purposeful play based experiences with each other, independently, teacher supported and teacher led;
- Talk, investigation, observation and interaction to make sense of the world;

- The organisation of both indoor and outdoor resources in a stimulating way to encourage independence, self-help and a sense of ownership;
- Movement and using all their senses;
- Having time to expand and explore their ideas and interests, practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- Feeling secure enough to become confident learners;
- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of thinking and language;
- Learning how to control impulses and see the need for rules;
- Take risks;
- Make mistakes and problem solve.

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four key principles:

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

We understand that all areas of child development are equally important and that our children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We value and respect the diversity of our community and proactively seek to include our families in school life. We ensure that all children in our care are safe and feel confident to explore their surroundings. We believe that the children's emotional health and well-being is central to their ability to learn. We want our children to be confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens.

We ensure this by:

- Observing our children to see what they can do, to find out what they are interested in and to help plan their next steps;
- Inviting families to celebrations and events which highlight the learning and skills the children have been working on;
- This is linked to our project themes and may involve class assemblies/presentations, workshops linked to key aspects of their learning and opportunities for parents to join in with sessions within the setting;
- Sharing children's experiences at home. This includes talking and learning about the children's different cultures and faiths and visiting children in their home settings prior to them starting school;
- Keeping our environment safe and secure at all times, ensuring that resources are suitable and in good repair and by promoting a caring and supportive atmosphere where children feel confident and able to succeed and achieve independently;
- Talking and listening to children and their families, modelling positive relationships amongst all and expressing and managing feelings;
- Celebrating successes and encouraging team work and consideration of others.

Positive Relationships

We value each child as an individual and strive to meet their needs. When each person is valued for who they are and differences are respected, everyone feels included and understood. We work closely with outside agencies to support our children with Special

Educational Needs, Gifted and Talented children and our more vulnerable children. We value the role of parents as educators and seek to share and celebrate their child's achievements whether at home or at school. We know that working in partnership with our parents has a positive impact on the child's development and learning. We build strong relationships with each child in order to support their learning more effectively. This enables our children to be confident, independent and inquisitive learners. Adult interactions are key to developing children's skills and extending their thinking.

We ensure this by:

- Suggesting possible ways in which they can support their child further at home, based on the weeks learning;
- Updating our class pages on the school website;
- Allowing time to talk with and play alongside each child;
- Celebrating children's play, ideas, work, behaviour and themselves as special individuals;
- Children share and discuss their Learning Journeys with staff and parents;
- Through listening to children in a variety of situation such as during Reflection time, Circle time and Show and Tell time children are able to share their experiences of both home and school;
- Whole class and individual recognition of trying hard 'persevering' and during whole school celebration assemblies;
- Time to share news about the children with parents/carers on a regular, sometimes daily, basis;
- Encouraging parents to help us to know the whole child through sharing information through Tapestry, sharing photographs and news of things they are interested in and have done at home;
- Participating actively during child initiated play times so that they benefit from high quality interaction;
- Developing strong relationships with all children so that when their learning is challenging, they show the ability and confidence to reach their learning potential;
- Taking appropriate opportunities to learn about each child before they start school e.g. home visits, school visits to their new class, talking to parents, children and nursery key workers.

We value our working partnerships with parents and this ongoing dialogue continues throughout EYFS, into school and beyond; through transition to high school. Parents have many opportunities to come into school to talk informally to the EYFS teacher about any aspect of their child's learning and development. In addition to this, two formal meetings occur in the autumn and the spring term and an end of year report to parents is written about each child at the end of the summer term.

Enabling Environments.

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. All planning starts with observing children in order to understand and consider their current interests, their culture and development and learning needs. The environment both indoors and outdoors, supports every child's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable. We work to continually enhance the learning opportunities taking into account children's interests and next steps in their learning. We believe that being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of their development. The outdoor environment can offer

opportunities on a different scale such as first-hand experience of the natural world, freedom to explore and being physically active and exuberant.

We ensure this by:

- Observing all the children over a period of time, and respond to individual steps on the children's learning journey; giving the opportunity to consolidate and extend skills through challenge and support;
- Staff plan how they will observe during these times when children are engaged in child-initiated activities. This gives opportunity for incidental and/or targeted observations where they plan to follow specific children. All members of the team are involved in observations through the use of Tapestry;
- Ongoing assessments inform us of individual needs of all children and supports our medium, short term and daily planning;
- Providing a safe and secure shared outdoor learning environment for both reception and nursery children;
- Encouraging the development of social awareness, sharing, turn taking and team games outside;
- The inside environment is organised into areas which provides a richness of opportunity across all areas of learning;
- Children can access both exciting and challenging indoor and outdoor activities and resources independently or through adult teaching and learning;
- Encouraging learning outdoor in all weathers where possible. Parents are encouraged to provide outdoor weather gear so that children can learn in the outside environment all year round;
- Planning enrichment opportunities for visitors and visits to engage, excite and stimulate learning for our children. Involving local people in the community to share their experiences and expertise to support the development of children's interests and skills;
- Contacting outside agencies as appropriate and using their professional advice for individual children;
- Staff being aware of the need for children to learn through appropriate (calculated) risk taking;
- Following Government guidance on the teacher/child ratio;
- Professionally developing the expertise of students and training teachers;
- Meeting regularly as a team to share good practice, reflect and discuss research.

Learning and Development.

The curriculum reflects the way that young children learn, through purposeful and well planned play and first hand experiences across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. Play enables the children to make choices, solve problems and develop and practise skills. In their play children learn at their highest level and are encouraged to explore, experiment and take risks. We recognise the importance of active learning for all children regardless of their special education need, their home language or cultural experiences, and provide stimulating opportunities to engage and involve the children for sustained periods. Our learning environment is set up to provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking, allowing children to play with ideas in different situations with a variety of resources. Adult interaction is key to develop children's communication, language and thinking skills. Through our planning we connect all areas of learning and provide a balanced curriculum where all are equally important.

Children's attainment is assessed during the Nursery years and then tracked through the Reception year using the EYFS Development Matters statements, teacher knowledge and summarising through the Early Learning Goals at the end of the year. On Entry assessment is undertaken during the first half of the autumn term; followed by 3 assessment checkpoints at the end of the autumn, spring and summer term. A summary of each child's learning and development relating to the Characteristics of Effective learning is discussed at Pupil Progress Meetings with the headteacher and formally reported to Governors. These identify any individual learning needs and inform future planning. All our work is underpinned by the principles of the EYFS. This is reflected throughout our policy and in our daily practice. All staff value the importance of learning and are committed to supporting every child in their personal, social and emotional and academic development.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Early Years Leader actively seeks to develop their own personal and professional expertise through attending relevant courses, networking with Early Years Practitioners, attending cluster moderation; building partnerships with similar settings; and undertaking appropriate research.

The role involves:

- Developing a vision for our young children;
- Sharing and imparting expertise;
- Supporting staff professional development needs;
- Implementing change;
- Monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of our Early Years classes to provide the very best start for our children;
- Overseeing smooth transitions into Key Stage;
- Developing an annual action plan and keeping relevant policies up to date.

Policy Review

This policy was agreed by governing body of Levens CE School on 23.5.19

Signed - R Gillard (Chair of Governors)

This policy is due for review in Spring 2022