St Newlyn East
Learning Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Introduction

'Growing Excellence Together'

"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' March 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We follow the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**.

A Unique Child
Passion, purpose and perseverance
At St Newlyn East Learning Academy, we know how important the Early Years Foundation Stage is in creating a solid foundation upon which children will continue to develop throughout their schooling. We strive to enable and assist children into becoming independent, enthusiastic and focused young learners. Our intent is for children to develop in every way possible: physically, creatively, emotionally, cognitively, verbally and socially. Our three curriculum drivers are **passion**, **perseverance** and **purpose** and we keep these in mind in all that we and the children do!

We understand that every child is an individual with **individual strengths and interests**. We don't know what these children's talents and **passions** will be and therefore we do our best to provide 'top quality' tuition across the curriculum; this in turn allows our children to reach their own unique potential. With this in mind, we begin each year and each term with the needs and interests of the children. The learning comes from them, their interests and needs, therefore their learning has a real **purpose** and they feel truly **passionate** about it.

We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop in order to **become effective learners**. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a passion and drive for learning and high self-

esteem.

Our intent is to prepare children for the rest of their education by creating inquisitive, focused and independent young learners; however, we also want to begin to prepare them for the rest of their lives by creating kind, nurtured and **well-rounded citizens**.

All of the above key principles and practices provide children with the foundation for strong **personal development.** For example, the early focus on developing independence and displaying good manners are two examples of the citizenship qualities we want our children to develop personally.

During their first year at school, the children are introduced to **good learning routines**. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative, thoughtful and to use reasoning. They are also taught to **persevere** in all that they do.

In our school we believe that *all our children matter* and we help all our children to achieve their very best. This includes boys and girls, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, children who are more-able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups, children deemed disadvantaged and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. For this to happen we have an *aspirational EYFS curriculum which places high standards on all children*; this, for example, can be illustrated with all children having equal access to all of the learning. Any specific intervention which might be needed (e.g. SALT) will be undertaken for a very short amount of time and at differing times to ensure there is no lost learning.

We give our children every opportunity to **achieve their best**. We do this by taking account of each child's individual **passions** and areas for development and plan to harness and progress these in a fun and engaging way.

We also aim to:

- use a wide range of **teaching strategies** based on children's learning needs;
- provide a wide range of **opportunities** to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- provide a **safe and supportive** learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- use resources which reflect diversity and are as free as possible from discrimination and stereotyping;
- plan **challenging activities** for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitor **children's progress** and take action to provide support.

It is important to us that all children are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they 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 well-being of all children. (See

our Child Protection and *Safeguarding Policy*)

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Needs
The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. Children are encouraged to **develop a positive attitude** towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it.

Ramps and a disabled toilet are available within the school to cater for children with physical disabilities. Toilets in Early Years are gender-neutral.

Our curriculum respects a child's **ethnic faith and cultural heritage**, and the **special educational needs** of each child, by ensuring that these areas are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children in our care with additional educational needs including more able children. We liaise with the school's SENDCO to identify next steps in learning in partnership with the parents.
(See *SEND Policy* and *Equal Opportunities Policy*)

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.

At St Newlyn East LA we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children;
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children;
- comply with the Trust's policies on use of images and storing them securely.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships
Children learn to be strong and independent by enjoying secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with our children and

their families.

Parents as Partners
Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We do this by:

- gathering information from parents about their child as their child starts our school;
- having an open-door policy where parents can ask questions, share concerns, and celebrate successes,
- inviting the children to spend time with their teacher in the classroom before starting at school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts school;
- encouraging parents to attend parents' evenings in the first term to discuss their child's progress;
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- sharing our approach to the teaching of phonics and reading through frequent parent reading workshops early in the school year;
- sharing our learning aims at school and providing some suggestions for parents to engage with at home via 'Class Dojo' (online communication platform);
- inviting parents to our 'Stay and Play' sessions.
- enrolling parents on Class Dojo so that all parents can keep informed about their child's learning.

Staff develop **excellent relationships** with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher, if there are any concerns.

Enabling Environments
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; this includes indoor and outdoor learning on a daily basis.

Observation, Assessment and Planning
At St Newlyn East LA we place the children at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through observation and frequent, informal assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice.

We achieve this through:

- observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child-initiated activities and planned activities, and learning about what the child does at home;
- observing what children can do, and identifying their stage on their developmental journey;

- considering ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development;
- considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in our care. This information is then effectively used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

The EYFS requires us to undertake summative assessments in which staff review children's progress and share a summary with parents at the end of the foundation stage through the EYFS Profile.

Within the first six weeks of being in school, alongside our on-going school-based assessments, we complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a statutory assessment which uses activities to make assessments of pupils' starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

Pupils will use practical resources to complete these tasks and teachers will record the results. The assessments will support our school-based assessments to ensure that we provide a curriculum tailored to the needs of our pupils.

Throughout the year, the class teacher and teaching assistant assess children's progress and development by assessing them informally within the classroom. They then use this to plan how to help the child progress to their next steps.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, we complete the EYFS profile for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It furthermore provides information on individual children's strengths, passions, areas for development and next steps as they move into Year 1. The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals.

In compliance with Early Years regulations parents may have access to developmental records about their child.

The Learning Environment

The setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, or be quiet and focussed. The classroom and outdoor area is set up to help the children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It presents the children with opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access the outdoor learning environment and help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

We are very lucky to have a large, natural and flexible outdoor space. This is currently undeveloped which means its possibilities for learning are endless. We get lots of natural wildlife and have a big field which changes and grows across the year. We use both our indoor and outdoor spaces to provide provision which is

catered to the needs and learning of our current foundation children.

The Golden Roots
Within our school, we have five **Golden Roots** (Rules). We talk about these often and the children become really familiar with what they are.

- We are kind and helpful.
- We work hard.
- We are gentle.
- We are honest.
- We look after property.

This is the language we use when we praise the children. During their Foundation year, our children become so familiar with the **Golden Roots** that they praise each other when they spot them.

Learning and Development
Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected; allowing our children to enjoy being creative, inventive and inquisitive as well as making sure they achieve their full potential in Reading, Writing and Maths.

Teaching and Learning Style

- We use a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- A carefully planned curriculum helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- Children 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 needs are supported with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space and equipment.
- We identify progress and future learning needs of children through observations.
- Our topics are carefully planned to ensure there is coverage of each of the 7 areas of the EYFS Profile.
- Our timetable is reasonably structured in the morning; where we teach the skills needed for reading, writing, phonics and Maths. Our afternoons are more 'free-flow' during our 'Plan, Do, Review' time. This is where the children are encouraged to follow their own interests, curiosities and learn with independence.

Play
"*Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.*"

Through play our children develop and explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children, fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are

encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Active Learning
"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

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
"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, the discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunities 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 learning environment to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning
Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning and development.

The ***prime*** **areas** are:

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

The ***specific*** **areas** are:

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

The prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As they grow, these skills will support the child as they extend their development in the specific areas. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and interdependent. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already

implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We promote these values through our aims, values, our curriculum and enrichment activities.

Transition
From Pre-school / Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition.

- Parents are invited to a meeting to meet the teacher, see the classroom, discuss any concerns and find out more about our school.
- During the summer holidays parents are encouraged to complete a 'Special Box' with their child. This is a shoe box filled with special things that tell their friends, and the teacher, more about the individual child. It is used during the Autumn term to support transition and to inform planning.
- The children are invited to visit their Reception class on multiple occasions, to meet their new classmates and teacher; this may also include additional break-time offers for children who attend the pre-school on site.
- Children receive a letter from their teacher, sent to their home during the summer holidays, reminding them of the exciting adventure they are about to have.
- EYFS teachers will endeavour (where possible) to visit children at their pre-school setting and/or speak with each child's Key Person within their setting.
- Children requiring extra support will be offered additional visits regardless of their setting.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1
During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer estimates can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the **early learning goals**. The profile indicates whether children are meeting the expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels.

We pride ourselves on our transition and we continue to develop this to ensure that children leave Reception **ready for Year 1**. To support this, we use time within the summer term to begin to move towards an approach that closer reflects that of Key Stage 1, for example joining Year 1 for periods of learning.

Role of the EYFS Lead
EYFS is led and developed collaboratively by the team as a whole and overseen by the Headteacher. The role of the Headteacher is to provide professional leadership for the Early Years in order to facilitate the highest standards of teaching and learning and to secure effective use of resources.

This will involve:

- monitoring of pupil progress
- pupil conferencing
- analysing data
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing, purchasing and organising resources
- supporting colleagues in their CPD
- keeping up to date with recent developments in the area
- checking that assessment of the EYFSP is carried out in line with the school's Assessment Policy and statutory requirements

Monitoring and Review

The EYFS will be monitored in line with the School Development Plan by the Headteacher for EYFS in the first instance. The EYFS team regularly discuss EYFS practice, providing feedback to the school Leaders and the Headteacher, raising any issues that require discussion. Work scrutiny by curriculum subject leader take place on a termly basis and EYFS is included in those monitoring drop-ins.

For all monitoring of local policies, we adopt a rigorous and reflective approach. We take into account multiple perspectives on the effectiveness and success of the policy and procedures in question, including:

- the experience of the member(s) of staff designing and delivering the provision;
- feedback from our pupils
- observations and feedback from staff – both internal and external
- engagement in research, relevant literature, and continuing professional development (e.g. relevant training/workshops).

These perspectives inform our action plans for each aspect of our school provision – with an emphasis on meaningful reflection, improvement and enabling everyone to flourish and shine.

Local Governing Body (LGB)

The role of the Local Governing body is to support the school while also constructively challenging areas for development to ensure the school is always moving forward in the best way possible. We have a designated EYFS Governor who works closely with the Headteacher and EYFS lead to ensure our curriculum and guidance enables children to meet their full potential. This is ensured through frequent meetings and discussions where leaders discuss the development plans and how to ensure these are achieved.