

Lawley Village Primary Academy



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024

Introduction

“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.” (DFE, 2021)

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Lawley Village Primary Academy, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

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. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Foundation Stage to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. Our foundation Stage team work effectively together to support children’s learning and development.

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) at Lawley Village Primary Academy. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Aims and objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Lawley Village Primary Academy, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

Our aims are that each child will:-

- Be happy and feel positive about school.
- Feel safe and secure in their new environment.
- Fit in well with his/her peers and be a co-operative member of the class.
- Make friends and develop confidence in relating to new children and adults.

- Be polite, kind and considerate towards others.
- Become more independent and self-confident about tackling new skills and activities.
- Develop their vocabulary and communication skills, feel confident to express their ideas and know that their ideas will be valued.
- Develop good attention skills and the ability to concentrate on tasks.
- Achieve their best in all areas of the curriculum and be proud of their achievements.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

The Unique Child

At Lawley Village Primary Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, 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 feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At Lawley Village Primary Academy we recognise that children learn to be independent confident learners from secure relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

Additionally we believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

We also plan and consider the Learning Environment. The Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Learning and Development

The early learning goals and the educational programmes are set out in the “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” document (DFE, 2021).

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children’s learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas of learning and development are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

- Mathematics (M)
- Literacy (L)
- Understanding of the World (UW)
- Express Arts and Design (EAD)

Children’s development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child’s progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception Baseline Assessment

The 2021 Government issued a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which all pupils must complete within 6 weeks of starting Reception in the UK. The RBA is an activity based assessment of children’s starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

The children will complete these tasks using practical resources and the teacher will record the results on a laptop. No numerical score will be shared and the data will only be used at the end of year 6 to form the school-level progress measure. The teachers will only receive a short narrative statement that tell them how each child has performed in the assessment.

Phonics

At Lawley Village Academy we value phonics as an essential tool for the development of pupils' literacy skills. In Early Years, staff are trained to deliver systematic high-quality phonics, using the Read Write Inc. programme as a basis for planning and assessment. Children are taught in ability groups according to the phonics phase in which they are working.

In nursery, we begin with teaching children the 7 aspects of Pre-Phonics to support their listening and attention skills: environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds, oral blending and segmenting. These activities will be taught in discreet 5/10 minute phonic sessions and are planned for the children to access in the wider provision and throughout the day. In the Summer term, the children will be introduced to Read Write Inc sessions where they will learn the first set 1 sounds in preparation for Reception.

On entry to Reception, children are informally assessed to ascertain their prior learning and knowledge of phonics and put into an appropriate phonics group, which may be any of the phases. Phonics assessments continue each half term to ensure pupils are working at the most appropriate level for their ability. Phonics home learning, which is matched to the phase that children are working in, is typically sent home weekly.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring

Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'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 explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn 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. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- Active learning

Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

'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 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.

- Creating and thinking critically

We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they 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 the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Teaching strategies

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 shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in EYFS at Lawley Village Academy are involved in making observations of the children’s new learning. Observations should be discreet and may not always be recorded. It is essential for pupil/practitioner dialogue to be at the forefront of every interaction and this should not be interrupted by the staff member recording evidence.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the Reach2 EYFS Curriculum, focusing on a different topic each half term. This is then added to and developed based on the children’s interests and development needs. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning; however they may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. The class teacher is responsible for writing the plans, but support staff are able to attend the meeting and give input whenever necessary. Parents will have access to a weekly letter on their child’s Tapestry Learning Journal, outlining the week’s activities and any activities they can carry out at home with their child, including Reach Write Inc. videos to consolidate their learning at home.

The planning includes direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children’s play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Assessment, observations and portfolios

During the first 6 weeks that a child joins our Nursery of Reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using baseline observations. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of recorded observations (on Tapestry) as well as teacher’s professional’s judgement. These observations are used to inform the end of Foundation Stage assessment against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of effective learning (DfE, 2021).

The children’s journal takes shape in the form of Writing books, Maths books, Learning Journey files and Tapestry observations. Tapestry is an online learning journey which is used by all the EYFS team at Lawley Village Academy to record those learning/WOW moments in the classroom and link to the

area of learning. It also enables us to keep parents involved in partnership and allows parents to capture and share any special moments at home with their child. All observations on tapestry are checked and published by the class teacher. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the Reception team during informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead. Staff share iPads to capture and note observations and next steps for learning.

Within the final term of the Nursery/Reception, the class teachers provides a written report against the Early Learning Goals to parents and comments on where their development is within each ELG, either 'working towards' or 'expected'. The parents are given the opportunity to meet the class teacher at various points throughout the year.

Key Workers

As required in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021, every pupil in Nursery and Reception has a key worker. The key workers are the teachers or teaching assistants that work in EYFS. The key worker will:

- Plan and then support the children with some activities
- monitor and record the children's progress in those activities with written observations and photographs
- Plan next steps (alongside the teacher for teaching assistants)
- deliver specific activities that will help those children develop and learn
- be able to discuss the child's learning needs and development with their parents/carers, review the child's progress at regular intervals with parents/carers and contribute to, or write, their report.
- Help the children become familiar with the setting, so that they child feel safe and confident.

Visits and Visitors

Visits and visitors is given a great emphasis at Lawley Village Academy. We aim to start a topic with a 'Memorable experience' to hook the learners into the topic as they set the scene and provide the context for learning. We aim to make optimum use of the local environment, using the surrounding area as a tool to enhance learning opportunities for the pupils. These trips can range from a minibeast hunt around the local area, to a trip to the farm. We actively seek parental support on trips, aiming for a ratio of 1:6 in Reception. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along on school trips.

Classroom Organisation

The EYFS classroom have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. The classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. The classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. There is also an adult

guided activity table, where children learn new skills and work alongside the teacher during adult guided tasks.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day and so our classrooms have direct access on to a safe play area. It is securely fenced off and includes large apparatus for imaginative and physical play as well as availability of smaller equipment such as bikes and scooters. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction.

Each child has their own labelled peg and drawer in the cloakroom area of the classroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely in one place!

Children have easy access to washing and toilet facilities. 3-5 year olds need ready access to their own facilities with few restrictions on use, so the Nursery and Reception classrooms have their own toilet facilities located adjacent to the classrooms (reception) and within the nursery classroom. Children are able to access this area freely during activity time.

Partnership with parents and carers

It is important for parents/carers to feel involved in their child's education and to recognise their role as partners in this process. At Lawley Village Academy, we believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- We provide daily opportunities for direct contact between parents/carers and teachers. This ensures that any problems or concerns of the child, teacher or parent/carer can be dealt with promptly and facilitate the child's successful start to school life. The class teacher (or another member of the Nursery/Reception team) will be on the gate every morning and afternoon if there are any small concerns and parents are able to arrange a meeting with the class teacher if a longer meeting is required.
- We hold further curriculum workshops to guide parents in supporting their child's learning at home.
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in their reading diary.
- Encourage parents/carers to complete any extra home activities with their child. These activities are sent home via the Tapestry Online Learning Journal.
- Discussing children's individual targets with parents/carers parents' evenings two times a year.

The relationships established between local pre-school providers will be fostered and expanded as these groups can offer valuable information on the new pupils entering school.

Admission procedure

Nursery

The process for consideration for admission to the nursery is as follows and is dealt with by the Lawley Village Academy Office Team:

- A nursery 'Expression of Interest Form' may be obtained from the website or the nursery administration office and returned upon completion.
- Children's names will then be placed on a waiting list.
- The information is treated as confidential and in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act.
- Once the place has been confirmed, parents/carers will receive confirmation from the nursery and you will be asked to complete the full admission form prior to your child's start date.
- Your child will be invited in to attend a 'stay and play' session in the weeks leading up to their start date.

Reception

The process for admissions to our Reception classes is dealt with by Telford and Wrekin Admissions team:

- In September the application window opens. Complete the application form online at www.telford.gov.uk/admissions.
- The application closing date is at the start of January
- Primary National offer day is in April and you will be sent an email by Telford and Wrekin school admissions team, informing you of the outcome of your application.
- Your child will start school in September.

Transition/ Induction Programme

Smooth transitions are essential for pupils to feel settled, secure and ready to learn.

Nursery

In Nursery, we offer children two stay and play sessions during the half term before they start at our Nursery. This will give the children a chance to familiarise themselves with the environment and the staff. Parents/carers are encouraged to stay at this session so that they can settle their child and have a chance to talk to the staff in our nursery. If the child has attended a previous nursery setting, we will contact the nursery for further information about the child and teachers will read any reports to ensure a smooth transition for each child. A 'Day in the life of Lawley Village Academy Nursery' is also sent home with the parents/carers to share with their child in the run up to starting at our Nursery.

Reception

Reception children are visited in their pre-school setting (or a phone call is made to the nursery if this is not suitable), where staff are able to have a dialogue with the child as well as their keyworker to

ascertain the pupils needs, likes and interests. The Reception staff also read and make effective use of the reports and information received from their pre-school settings.

The children will then attend a transition morning or afternoon session at our school during the last part of the preceding term. The visit is without their parents/carers and is their first experience of interacting with their peers and teacher and allows them to begin to establish a class identity.

The parents/carers are invited to a meeting prior to their children starting school. The Head teacher and class teacher lead these meetings. Parents/carers are informed about the procedures for the start of their child's first term in school. They are given specific information about the Reception curriculum as well as general information that will assist their child's smooth entry into school. A 'Day in the life of Lawley Village Academy' is also sent home with the parents/carers to share with their child in the run up to starting school in September.

The children have a gradual introduction to a full school day as follows:

- On the first day children start school at 8.35am, they are collected by their parents/carers from the school hall at 11.45am.
- The children attend school for mornings only for the remainder of that first full week, staying for lunch on the Friday and being picked up at 1.15pm from the school hall.
- During the second full week the children stay for whole days. School is flexible and children may attend for half days this week as well.

Equal Opportunities

Nursery and Reception pupils should be offered equal access and opportunity irrespective of gender, ethnic group, ability or disability, religion or faith.

Special Needs

The class teacher will follow the procedures set out in the school's Special Educational Needs Policy when identifying children with special needs. Early identification and assessment of children's special needs is vital for children with learning difficulties, or a sensory or physical impairment and so the need for a positive and supportive introduction to school is very important. Such children need to experience success at an early stage. Liaising with the child's parents/carers and professionals who have supported them before they start school should ensure appropriate support for them on entry to school. We will continue to make links with parents and professionals to ensure that the children are able to access our Nursery and Reception.

Safeguarding

In Nursery and reception we follow Lawley Village Academy's safeguarding procedures as detailed in our Safeguarding Policy.

At Lawley Village Academy, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2024. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children;
- Ensure that EYFS children are within sight and hearing of an adult when eating;
- Promote good health, including oral 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.