

# LITTLE GADDESSEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## EARLY YEARS POLICY

Approved [March 2018]

Review by March 2021

*“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 for Education, 2012**

At Little Gaddesden Primary School, we are committed to providing a high quality early years’ education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

### **AIMS**

#### **We aim to**

- Provide quality and consistency of provision which is safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and positive.
- 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.
- 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/Carers and value their contributions
- Ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Be aware that children develop in different ways and at different rates and to be sensitive to the needs of all children; irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, gender or ability; including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

## **Staffing and Organisation**

At Little Gaddesden Primary School, we have two part time EYFS teachers, and two part time teaching assistants.

The Reception class has a dedicated classroom and a spacious outdoor area. The classroom has a carpet area and the rest of the space is organised into learning zones for the children to access.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child initiated experiences throughout the day. Sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Practitioners are aware of the need to be flexible in order to respond to unplanned events that the children are interested in.

## **Learning and Development**

The early learning goals (knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” document. (Department for Education 2017).

The three prime areas of learning and development are;

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

In addition, there are four specific areas of learning:

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

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children’s needs, their interests and their stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts and skills in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know.

## **Effective Teaching and Learning**

Play is essential for children’s development - building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Uninterrupted time is planned into the routine of the day to allow this to happen.

We aim to provide an attractive, challenging learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. There is a range of “continuous provision” available in the classroom that is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively and explore how resources can be adapted. Each week, the provision is enhanced with additional resources, based on the previous week’s observations.

At Little Gaddesden, we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2017)

Every member of the early years team recognises how crucial these characteristics are in early learning. Adult led activities are practical in nature and based on first hand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others. It is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led or guided by adult by the end of Reception.

### **Observation and Assessment**

At Little Gaddesden Primary School, we use a range of strategies to gather information about the children’s learning and development and use this information to ensure that our planning meets the needs of all learners.

Formative assessment is undertaken by all members of staff and may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, annotated examples of work, photographs and information from parents; as well as the data provided by ‘Tapestry’. Each child has a learning journal in which this evidence is stored.

We use our knowledge of each child to decide which age band they are working on in each area of the curriculum. This is recorded using the Hertfordshire EYFS Observational Assessment Sheets. These are completed after the first few weeks of the first term (attainment on entry) and then at the end of each term using a different coloured highlighter each time. This information is closely monitored to ensure that all children are making good progress.

In the Summer term, practitioners consider the 17 ELGS in the EYFS Profile to decide whether each child is working at the expected levels, exceeding the levels or have not yet met the levels. Judgements against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are based on ongoing observation; all relevant records; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. The results of the Profile are shared with parents and/or carers, and there are opportunities for them to meet their child’s class teacher to discuss this information.

At the end of the year, Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This helps to create a smooth transition and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. The EYFS profile results are reported to the local authority, which monitor and moderate the judgements made.

### **Working in Partnership**

We recognise that children may access EYFS provision through other providers throughout the week and that all providers have an equally important role to play in their early years experiences. We seek information about the other settings that our children attend so that we can establish communication about their learning and development.

### **Parent Partnerships**

We value the contribution that our parents and carers make to their child's learning and take every opportunity to work in collaboration with them. Each term, we publish a newsletter to inform parents of what their child will be learning and how they can support them at home. Parents/Carers are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's online journal and/or share WOW moments (at home) via Tapestry or using the 'postcard' format. A notice of weekly themes also appears in the outside noticeboard.

In the Autumn Nursery we hold a "meet the teacher" session with parents where we discuss how their child has settled, introduce the learning journal and answer any questions parents may have. In the Autumn and Spring term we hold parents' consultations and in the Summer term we have an open afternoon where the children share their completed learning journal. We welcome contributions from home and encourage parents and carers to come in for our termly 'Hands on sessions' and assemblies. The children take reading books home to share and can also choose reading for pleasure books from our lending library

### **Community Links and the Wider World**

Over the year, we arrange visits from members of the local community to support our topic work. We also arrange trips for children in the EYFS within the local community, for example visiting the library, or 'School in the Woods', which we always aim to visit on a regular basis. Film clips, non-fiction texts and artefacts are also used to introduce new concepts in real-life contexts. We aim to develop the children's awareness of other cultures by exploring different countries and celebrations.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

We have a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We can support each child's needs by:

- removing or helping to overcome barriers where these already exist;
- being alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and
- responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as required;
- stretching and challenging all children.

Please refer to the school's Equality and Inclusion policies and to our other school policies for related topics, including:

**Induction**

**Equal opportunities**

**Safeguarding**

**Risk assessment**

**Health and safety**

**Teaching and Learning**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Head Teacher and EYFS leader and will be reviewed on an annual basis.