

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



Little Lambs
NURSERY



SUTTON VALENCE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including, as the context requires, the Little Lambs Nursery, the Pre-Preparatory School, Preparatory School and Senior 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, 2023.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Sutton Valence Preparatory School, pupils can join the School after their second birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Sutton Valence Preparatory School, 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 Little Lambs 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 Nursery staff and Reception teachers 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 deliver this by looking at what the children can do and supporting them to fulfill 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;
- provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel;
- 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 Sutton Valence Preparatory School, 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 Child-centred Approach

At Sutton Valence Preparatory School we recognise that every child is unique. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by myriad factors derived from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Supporting each child includes recognising their unique character and potential, giving feedback, praise and encouragement, as well as reminding them of expectations. Our teachers,

teaching assistants, keyworkers and other staff are all part of this journey of self-discovery for the children, working very closely with parents and families of course. Ultimately we want to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning for life.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the School and do not discriminate against children because of perceived differences. All children at Sutton Valence Preparatory School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. 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:

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- 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;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary; and
- Responding to children 'in the moment'.

It is important to us that all children in the setting are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on expectations and boundaries to help them understand why they exist and how they help everyone in the community. 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.

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, 2023)

In compliance with the statutory framework for the EYFS 2023:

- 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 Sutton Valence Preparatory 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.”

At Little Lambs Nursery and Sutton Valence Preparatory School these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

- **Democracy:**

We listen to children’s and parent’s voice. As part of our School Behaviour Policy we expect children to contribute and co-operate, taking 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, self-awareness and self-regulation, to make choices and decisions about what they want to explore and how they're going to use the resources

- **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, and ultimately self-regulate through learning about right from

wrong, behaving within agreed and clearly defined boundaries and being aware of the possible consequences.

- **Individual Liberty:**

Within our School setting, 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 safely, through our provision of a safe environment and empowering individual children to be able to make choices within their learning. 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 has revolved around the expectation to be; 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' and children are modelled this 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. 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 celebrate diversity and 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 participating in a range of celebrations throughout the year. Children have the opportunity to dress-up in clothes and try different foods from other cultures and we encourage parents/carers to participate and support our multi-cultural events.

Special Educational Needs (Learning Support)

Teachers, Teaching Assistants and keyworkers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from specialist staff. High quality teaching and differentiation are the first fundamental levels of intervention.

The School's SEN co-ordinator, Head of Learning Support, is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff practitioners and parents, and for arranging additional support for pupils, external referrals, assessments and interventions where necessary. For further information, see the School's SEND Policy.

Positive Relationships

Sutton Valence Preparatory School 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. The keyworker in Nursery and the Form Teacher in Pre-Prep is the child's and parent's primary point of contact in this regard.

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;
- Providing children with opportunities to spend time with their practitioners before they start at our school. They are invited to our 'Meet your new teacher' taster day; and two shorter introductions prior to taster day. These are a music session called Mini Musicians and a story time called Little Bookworms,
- In specific circumstances, staff visiting new pupils at their current Nursery to ease the transition between Nursery and their new School;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and see their school work;
- Having an 'open door' policy and encouraging parents to talk to their child's practitioners about any concerns they may have;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, School and parents;
- Inviting parents to attend several formal meetings per year, at which time parents discuss how their child has settled, their progress, and next steps and targets with their teacher or keyworker;
- Sharing with parents their child's learning steps and care diary (for 2-3 yr. olds) with the online observation record called Family ~~Tapestry~~ ~~Tapestry~~;
- Inviting parents throughout the year to various talks relevant to the next steps in their child's journey with us.

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 staff and Reception 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. *See Staffing, Key Person and Organisation section.*

Toileting and Nappy Changing

Starting school or Nursery has always been an important and rewarding, yet potentially challenging time for children. It is also a time of growth and very rapid developmental change for all children. As with all developmental milestones in the Foundation Stage, there is wide variation in the time at which children master the skills involved in being fully toilet trained. Here at Sutton Valence Preparatory School we accept all children who are on the toilet training journey. We will provide nappies and full care for our children. For further details, please see our Toileting and Nappy changing procedure.

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 and about common etiquette. We actively promote healthy eating through mealtimes. We provide nutritious food which meets the children's individual dietary needs. Children have a regular snack offering dependent upon their age and a hot and cold meal choice at lunch time.

Learning

Learning and planning within the EYFS differs depending upon the age of each child. Nursery planning is much more fluid, responding to the children's interests to promote and provide 'awe and wonder'. Planning is therefore much more reactive and in the moment.

Learning and planning for the children in Reception is based around a series of topics. These plans are used by the teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however, the practitioners may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. The plans are used and implemented by the Nursery staff and Reception teachers who have a good understanding of the children. All staff meet regularly, plan together, share resources, and broadly ensure they cover the same material with all children.

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's learning. 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.

We then make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Observations and assessments are regularly shared with and reported to parents.

When a child is aged between two and three, staff will review the child's progress and complete the 2 Year Progress Check. Nursery staff also provide regular written reports to parents.

In Reception we invite parents and/or carers to attend formal parent consultations to discuss each pupil's progress in all areas. Parents and/or carers also have an opportunity to look at their child's work in the classroom. Furthermore, parents receive a written report on their child's progress at the end of each term.

Alongside this, informal observations, photographs and parents and children's comments are shared in and form the basis of an EYFS profile. The Reception 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 year (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 area with various age-appropriate play equipment and are also given regular opportunities to explore and play in the wider school site in a safe and secure manner. 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.

- **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our Teaching and Learning Policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have of how children develop and learn.
- the range of approaches 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 carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the ELGs and beyond;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children 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, 2023)

At Sutton Valence Preparatory School, 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 have the opportunity to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves 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 and critically 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**

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. Providing children with real-life relevance to their learning and opportunities they may not have elsewhere is also important.

- **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

Children should be given 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 (2023) 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 Sutton Valence Preparatory School 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, 2023).

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;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts School, where we outline the Nursery and Reception curriculum and a typical day for their child;
- Encouraging parents and/or carers to engage with Family;
- Sending home an outline of the curriculum (Programme of Study) 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;
- Encouraging parents and/or carers to listen to their child read or practise key words regularly 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;~~
- Providing termly written reports to parents and/or carers summarising the child's progress against the ELGs and Foundation Stage curriculum for Reception classes; and
- Providing a 2 Year Progress Check between the ages of two and three.
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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 shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice. It 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 the Nursery and Reception classes are involved in this effective process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. The scheme of work consists of a series of topics which provide the vehicle for delivering the ELGs and educational programme. These topics are relevant to the needs of our children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum.

Reception termly topics (choice of two each year)

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Emergency Services Festivals Light and Dark	Funny Bones Dinosaurs Science Investigations Around the World	Fairy Tales Minibeasts

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, success criteria, differentiated activities and deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly, day-to-day basis and individual lesson plans. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational teacher assessment. This planning format is consistent with the principles of assessment for learning.

Staffing, Key Person and Organisation

In Little Lambs, the staff are deployed to ensure ratios are met and pupils have familiar adults. Each child has a Keyworker and they will lead and oversee the children's care and education in their rooms. This will be our parents' and/or carers' main point of contact.

In Reception, there is one teacher per class supported by a Teaching Assistant. The class teachers is the parent's primary point of contact.

All EYFS staff work together as a team to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments for their year group. The children are also taught by other specialist trained staff for their Music, PE, Dance, Swimming (Reception only), Yoga (Nursery only), and French sessions during term time.

Ratios

We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework 2023 guidance on ratios. These differ according to age group.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Heads of Department and the Senior Management Team may carry out monitoring of the Nursery and Reception classes through formal/informal observation and discussion as part of the whole School development.

Staff Supervision

Staff receive termly supervision. At the supervision, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Nursery staff have the opportunity to discuss, with the Head of Pre-Prep, any concerns they have with regard to pupil progress and pupil welfare. To encourage continuous improvement, they also receive personal mentoring. The Little Suttons after School staff will have a termly supervision with the Little Suttons Co-coordinator (Mrs Lisa Bush). Both the Head of Pre-Prep and the Assistant Nursery Manager meet regularly to discuss issues that might arise.

Named Deputy

In the absence of the Head of Pre-Prep, the named deputy for EYFS is the Deputy Head during term time. During the holiday period the Nursery Manager has this role

Policy Review

This EYFS Policy will be reviewed annually.

Author: Mark Scholey (Head of Prep)

Policy date: September 2023

Approval date by Governors – November 2023

Review date: September 2024