LAUGHTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Firle CE Primary School

The Oak Tree Federation

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

In its March 2024 inspection report at Laughton , Ofsted stated that "Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. This is most effective in Reception, where children learn the phonics and mathematics skills they require alongside a range of subject-specific skills. Reception is a word-rich environment and teachers read a range of stories and poems every day"

In July 2025 at Firle they stated that "There is a positive culture of enjoying reading within the school that begins from the start of the Reception Year. Children relish the stories, rhymes and poems that are read aloud."







March 2026

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of early learning in our school.

Updated: March 2026

Our Vision

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage at our Oak Tree Federation Schools we aim to promote a Growth Mindset and 'can do' approach to learning to support all pupils to maximise their potential. Children's natural curiosity is valued, nurturing a love of learning and enabling a developing independence through hands-on, play based exploration.

We recognise, value and celebrate diversity.

We develop children's high self-esteem.

We promote respect for self and others.

We foster qualities of initiative, independence, co-operation and self-motivation.

We deliver high quality teaching, recognising that play is a vital tool in the learning process.

We encourage a positive attitude to learning.

We work closely with parents and carers.

Introduction

Through a supportive and engaging environment, children benefit from a creative curriculum with rich and stimulating learning experiences, including trips and visits, themed events and workshops.



Our mud kitchens enable children to enhance their cross curricular skills and supports a collaborative and independent approach to learning.

We strive for all children to feel included, secure and valued. The skills and concepts formed in the early years help children to make sense of and apply their knowledge and understanding. They are the foundations upon which the quality of later life depends.

We value our role in helping children to get the most out of every aspect of their school life. We also value the role that parents play in their child's learning and work in partnership together to support our children's needs.

The enabling indoor and outdoor environments are well resourced; this, combined with our knowledge of how children learn best, means that we can support our youngest learners and help them to develop life-long skills: a hands-on approach helps our pupils to be engaged learners, who are willing to have a go, are self motivated and have the perseverance to complete even the most challenging activities. Our pupils are also encouraged to have their own ideas, make links and develop problem solving skills.

Learning from everyday experiences: I wonder what happens to snow and ice over a day…





Using a range of malleable materials in our outdoor area such as sand, oil and water, pasta, slime, rice and foam, to develop fine-motor skills, which will in turn support pencil control and the building blocks for correct letter/number formation.

In EYFS we take advantage of our outdoor areas to work alongside Year 1 and 2. We utilise our sensory gardens, playgrounds, mud kitchens and local woods to provide engaging learning opportunities. Our children are stimulated to explore their environment and to use it to extend their understanding of living things.



Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021

We focus on three prime areas, which are 'particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.'

The three *prime* areas, are:

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

In line with statutory requirements, we also support children in four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four *specific* areas are:

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

The above seven areas of learning are underpinned by four key themes:

- **A unique child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

Effective planning for our Reception learners is dynamic and responds to children's interests. Practitioners reflect on individual needs and on the different rates children develop. Planning takes into account the 'three characteristics of effective teaching and learning', enabling children to be effective and motivated learners:

- **Playing and exploring**
- **Active learning**
- **Creating and thinking critically**

Our curriculum has been updated in line with statutory guidance, and is unique to our children, our setting, our families and community. High quality interactions between staff and children are at the heart of what we do, in order to develop spoken language, extend vocabulary and to support children's personal, social and emotional development. In turn, the development of these prime areas underpins learning across the entire Early Years curriculum.

Underwater and Pips Class

We are proud of our EYFS and the benefits that our creative, cross-curricular, topic-based approach has in enabling every child to reach their potential. This includes working together, talking and sharing ideas in order to adapt and improve our developing ideas. We often use themed days or events and curriculum weeks to enhance our creative approach to teaching and learning. We celebrate these across both our schools, joining together at least 3x a year. Children's work is celebrated and regularly displayed in our class to further support learning.

Our high-quality care incorporates well planned purposeful activities, with appropriate adult intervention and interactions to help and support children as they gain valuable new skills and experiences.

We work closely with our KS1 colleagues, to provide opportunities for shared learning from Reception to Year 2 and to aid transition at the end of the year.



Working together as scientists, technology experts, engineers and mathematicians during our joint KS1 and EYFS 'STEM' week.

Here we were exploring how to make things go pop, bang and fizz!

Following on-going staff training, we continue to use and embed the NCETM Maths Mastery approach to help children develop their skills, knowledge and experiences. By using a range of resources and asking open-ended questions (eg 'Explain to me'; 'Is it always true?', "what do you notice?") we enable our Reception children to



extend and consolidate their communication and language, number and problem-solving skills.

We focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning through 'Circle Time', planning discrete activities as well as integrated PSED sessions.

Assessment

It is essential to take a holistic view of the whole child; we use current guidance to help support each individual child's development pathway and to enable them to foster a positive attitude to learning.

We carefully observe and assess children throughout the year, to ensure we have a full picture of where they are in their learning and to plan for their next steps. In line with legal requirements, the class teacher completes the EYFS Profile for each child at the end of the year, assessing them against the Early Learning Goals. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners 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.

Each child has individual Learning Journey books, containing photographs of significant learning moments. This evidence enables us to see your child's progress and development across the prime and specific areas of learning throughout the Reception year and also provide fantastic celebratory books for parents and children to keep and treasure. We also use Class Dojo to record children's 'Wow' moments and this can be accessed and added to by parents and carers at home

We believe in Assessment for Learning in which the children are supported to reflect on their learning, celebrate their achievements and recognise personal targets. As educators, we also provide ongoing verbal feedback including next steps advice to help each child to reach their potential.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities for All

The Early Years Foundation Stage follows school policy in regards to Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and challenging more able pupils. We understand that children develop quickly in the Early Years and as outlined in Development Matters 2021 (DFE), observation checkpoints help practitioners 'to notice whether a child is at risk of falling behind in their development' or whether a child needs support to deepen and extend their learning.
Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.
School policies are available from the office on request.

Partnership with Parents and Carers



- Parents and carers have the opportunity to spend time with their child's new teacher before starting school at an induction meeting; the Executive Head teacher also meets with parents and an induction pack is given
- The Reception teacher will arrange a home-visit as well as a visit to each child's nursery, to aid transition from home/pre-school to school
- Parents and carers are invited to meetings to discuss their child's progress
- Parents and carers are encouraged to talk to their child's teacher on a regular basis if there are any concerns
- Parents are invited to record comments about their child's progress via individual communication diaries and at termly 'Learning Share' celebrations.
- Each term a curriculum newsletter and topic overview are sent home which details information across all seven areas of learning
- Parents and carers receive an end of year written report, which includes the individual Learning Journey books completed over the year
- Parents and carers receive bi-weekly newsletters, keeping them up-to-date with forthcoming events

Links to Pre-school

- We know our local pre-schools and visit their settings as part of our on-going liaison process
- We offer a series of transition visits in which pre-school children have the opportunity to visit their new school in the run up to starting school. This helps facilitate a smooth transition for the children when they formally join their class in September
- Pre-schools are invited to attend special annual events such as our Nativity performance
- Teachers visit children in our local pre-school settings

Organisation

How we work

- We have daily whole class sessions in key skills such as phonics and number.
- We have guided reading group sessions to support early reading skills and develop fluency
- Children have the opportunity to work alone, in pairs, in small and large groups.
- We recognise that children have different learning styles. A particular approach is selected which matches the children's needs and learning styles including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles.
- Groups change depending on the activity and children work in different combinations designed for the specific situation.
- Children have daily opportunities to explore and learn both inside and outside, to self-initiate activities and to follow their own interests.
- We regularly work as a joint EYFS and KS1 unit, for example on our weekly Welly Walk, as part of our outdoor learning experiences.

Learning through play



Our pedagogy is based upon our understanding of the value of high-quality learning through play. We know that each area of learning and development must be implemented through both adult-led and child-initiated activity.



'Play is essential for children's development' (DFE 2021) and it is a major vehicle by which children gain access to the curriculum and learn to take turns and share. As well as activities guided by adults, purposeful play led by the children features highly in our early years curriculum planning and permeates across all areas of learning and development.

We encourage high-level play and exploration as this sustains interest and motivation. Young children take their play experiences very seriously and enjoy exploring through construction, tactile resources and role-play scenarios.

Research indicates the benefits of productive play, and in their play we see children:

solving problems	**sharing**	**initiating ideas**
predicting	**taking risks**	**ordering**
communicating	**reflecting**	**planning**
applying skills	**leading**	**following**
sequencing	**co-operating**	**building confidence**
showing empathy	**anticipating**	**having mutual respect**

Reward, Behaviour and Discipline

Children are actively encouraged through positive reinforcement of good behaviour at all times. We use our Class charters, school values and a growth mindset 'can do' approach, to help us get the most out of every day at school. Children are rewarded frequently with verbal praise and individual, group and class rewards; they are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions in line with class and school rules and to celebrate each other's positive behaviour choices. For further information please refer to the school's behaviour policy.

The Buddy System

At our transition visits, each child is allocated a Year 6 'Buddy' to support them in their integration into their new school life. The Buddy will help the children settle quickly into their new school and spend time with them to learn routines and enjoy playtimes and lunchtimes.