

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).

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Policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education, 2024)

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

Early childhood forms the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. At Sutton Valence School, we highly value the role of the EYFS in establishing secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is important, as a unique stage of life. It is vital to view the EYFS as preparation for life itself, not just for the next stage of education.

Children enter our school with diverse experiences and knowledge. It is the privilege of the Early Years Practitioners in our Little Lambs Nursery and our Reception settings to build upon this prior learning and experience. This is achieved through a holistic approach to learning, with collaboration between parents/guardians, specialist staff, and Nursery and Reception teachers to support children's development.

Children joining our school have already acquired substantial knowledge, often from various settings within the local community. The Early Years education we provide is based on these principles:

- It builds on what children already know and can do.
- It ensures no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structured learning framework with varied starting points, content tailored to young children's needs, and activities that allow for both indoor and outdoor learning.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- It facilitates a smooth transition from home to school.

In the EYFS, children learn best through play-based activities and first-hand experiences. Every child deserves the best possible start in life. We strive to achieve this by focusing on what children can do and supporting them to reach their potential. Children become independent learners through a balance of child-initiated and adult-led experiences.

Aims

Every child has the right to grow up safe, healthy, and happy, with opportunities to achieve and make a positive contribution. At Sutton Valence School, Early Years Practitioners are committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum that supports the emotional, social, physical, creative, and intellectual development of each child at their own pace. Every child is valued as a unique individual and the aim is to create an environment that is inclusive and supportive of all needs.

The principles which guide our work, and the work of all Early Years Practitioners are grouped in four themes:

- **A Unique Child**
Recognising that every child is unique and develops in their own way and at their own rate.
- **Positive Relationships**
Building warm, secure relationships between children and adults to support development.
- **Enabling Environments**
Creating safe, stimulating, and challenging spaces that encourage exploration and learning.
- **Learning and Development**
Providing a curriculum that is broad, balanced, and creative, laying a strong foundation for future learning.

Early Years Practitioners in our Little Lambs Nursery and our Reception settings strive to create a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that caters to the needs of all children, including those with additional needs. Our curriculum is designed to be inclusive, allowing all children to learn through purposeful play and first-hand experiences, both indoors and outdoors. We value what each child can do and use ongoing assessments to help them progress, fostering independence, self-confidence, and self-discipline.

We work in close partnership with parents and guardians, recognising the importance of their contributions in supporting each child's learning journey. Our aim is to develop positive home-school links and a shared sense of purpose, encouraging children to develop a lifelong love of learning and a positive attitude towards education.

Learning and Development

At Sutton Valence School, Early Years Practitioners believe in the vital importance and inter-dependence of the 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.

Curriculum and Learning

The EYFS Framework (2024) 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.

Learning and Planning

Learning and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) differ based on the child's age. Planning in the Little Lambs Nursery is flexible and responsive, focusing on children's interests to create a sense of 'awe and wonder'. In Reception, planning revolves around a series of topics that are adaptable to meet children's evolving needs and interests.

All staff collaborate regularly to plan together, share resources, and ensure consistent coverage of the curriculum across different classes. Planning is essential for effective, engaging, and progressive learning. It is based on observations of children's current interests and developmental needs.

There are three stages of planning: Long Term, Medium Term, and Short Term. Long Term planning provides a framework of topics that deliver the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and support a creative and balanced curriculum tailored to the children's needs.

Assessments of children's progress are made regularly and shared with parents to inform future planning.

Teaching and Learning Style

The teaching approach combines first-hand experiences, clear explanations, appropriate interventions, and play to facilitate learning. The curriculum is carefully planned to help children work towards and beyond the ELGs.

There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children to communicate about their learning, develop independence, and build their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional abilities. We are committed to listening to the voice of the children and to have a democratic learning environment.

Creativity and critical thinking are encouraged across all areas of learning, with adults supporting children's thinking and encouraging exploration and connection-making.

Active learning is promoted by providing children with independence and control over their learning, enhancing motivation and engagement. Real-life relevance and opportunities that might not be available elsewhere are also integrated into learning.

Role of the Environment

The learning environment is crucial for supporting and enhancing children's learning. Staff observe children's interests and development to plan engaging and challenging activities that extend their learning. A strong relationship between the indoor and outdoor environments is encouraged, in order for the children to develop an appreciation for the natural world around them.

Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to engage in their child's learning through formal consultations, written reports, and informal sharing of observations and assessments. They can view their child's progress and discuss their development regularly.

See our Parents & Home-School Links section.

Positive Relationships

The Early Years Practitioners at Sutton Valence 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 Key Person in the Little Lambs Nursery and the Form Teacher in Reception is the child's and parent's primary point of contact in this regard.

Importance of Play

Play is considered essential for children's development, offering opportunities to explore, solve problems, and understand the world. It allows children to practise skills, think creatively, and develop social and emotional abilities in a safe and supportive environment.

Both child-initiated and adult-led play are used to maximise learning opportunities.

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.

At Little Lambs Nursery and Sutton Valence School, we support the DfE's promotion of 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."

Overall, the learning approach in the Little Lambs Nursery and Reception is child-centred, flexible, and supportive, fostering development across all areas in a collaborative and engaging environment.

Safeguarding and Welfare

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 wellbeing of all children.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, 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, 2024)

In compliance with the statutory framework for the EYFS 2024, we must

- safeguard children.
- ensure the adults who have contact with children are suitable.
- promote good health.
- support and understand behaviour.
- maintain records, policies, and procedures.

For more information, please refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy as well as the statutory safeguarding and child protection guidance for schools in England, Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE, 2024) available on the [Department for Education website](#).

Equal Opportunities

At Sutton Valence 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.

Inclusion

At Sutton Valence School, the EYFS Practitioners are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that values the diversity of all individuals. We do not discriminate against any child based on race, religion, abilities, or perceived differences. Every child and their family are valued and respected within our community, and we strive to provide every opportunity for each child to achieve their best. This includes setting realistic and challenging expectations that cater to the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities, and those from various social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

To meet the diverse needs of our pupils, we:

- provide a safe and supportive learning environment where all contributions are valued.
- plan opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience, and interests, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence.
- use a wide range of teaching strategies tailored to the learning needs of each child.
- offer diverse opportunities to motivate and support effective learning.
- utilise resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- plan challenging activities for children who are advanced in their abilities yet may need additional support with language and communication skills.
- monitor children's progress and provide timely support when necessary.
- respond to children 'in the moment' to address their immediate needs.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Teachers, Teaching Assistants, and Key Persons are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of each child. High-quality teaching and differentiation form the foundation of our approach. The School's SEN Co-ordinator (Head of Learning Support) provides additional guidance to staff and parents, and arranges further support, external referrals, assessments, and interventions when necessary.

For more information, please refer to the School's SEND Policy.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

For children whose home language is not English, we ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS. When assessing communication, language, and literacy skills, we assess these in English. If a language delay is observed, we consider the background of the child, including their home language and ensure that their proficiency in their home language prior to establishing whether there is a concern. This can be done in consultation with the Head of Learning Support.

For more information, please refer to the School's EAL Policy.

Parents & Home-School Links

At Sutton Valence School, Early Years Practitioners recognise parents as children's first and most enduring educators and highly value their contributions to their children's education. We believe that a strong partnership between home and school significantly enhances children's development. To foster this partnership, we maintain a two-way flow of information, knowledge, and expertise between parents and staff.

We support this relationship by:

- engaging with parents before their child starts in our Nursery or Reception, discussing their child's needs and expectations.
- offering several opportunities for children to familiarise themselves with their practitioners before starting school, including a 'Meet your new teacher' taster day, and shorter introductory sessions such as (but not limited to): "Mini Musicians" and "Little Bookworms."
- visiting new pupils at their current Nursery to facilitate a smooth transition or inviting the current Nursery team to visit if and when appropriate.
- maintaining an 'open door' policy, encouraging parents to discuss any concerns or queries with their child's practitioners.
- providing regular opportunities for parents to talk about their child's progress, view their schoolwork, and participate in various activities throughout the year.
- hosting formal meetings several times a year to discuss each child's progress, settling in, and next steps with their teachers or Key Persons.
- sharing children's progress through tools like Family.
- organising talks for parents on relevant topics to support their child's learning journey.

All Early Years Practitioners aim to build strong relationships with children by interacting positively and taking time to listen. In each class, Nursery staff and Reception teachers act as the 'key person' for each child, supported by teaching assistants and other practitioners who contribute to the children's care and learning.

We further strengthen home-school links by:

- inviting parents to an induction meeting before their child starts, outlining the Nursery and Reception curriculum and daily routines.
- encouraging regular engagement with Family and sending home a curriculum outline at the start of each term.
- providing opportunities for parents to support their child's learning at home, such as listening to reading and practising key words, and recording progress in a home-school reading diary or Learning Journal.
- offering termly written reports summarising each child's progress against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and Foundation Stage curriculum.
- conducting a 2-Year Progress Check between the ages of two and three to ensure early identification of any additional support needs.

By fostering a collaborative environment, we aim to ensure that every child receives the best possible start in their educational journey.

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.

Ratios

We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework 2024 guidance on ratios. These differ according to age group.

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 *Key Person* 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 are 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 other lessons such as (but not limited to): Music, PE, Dance, Swimming (Reception only), Yoga (Nursery only), Outdoor Learning and French sessions during term time.

Responsibilities

The Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery provides oversight of activities in the EYFS settings during term time. The Nursery Manager is responsible for the continuous running of operations throughout the year and is supported by the Pre-School Lead, who deputises in her absence. The Senior Management Team remains informed of all operations, providing guidance as needed.

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. Both the Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery and the EYFS Team meet regularly to discuss issues that might arise.

Policy Review

This EYFS Policy will be reviewed annually.

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Policy date: September 2024

Approval by Governors: November 2024

Review date: September 2025