

# Ladock C of E School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## 1. Introduction / Rationale

The Early years is a most important stage of education provided by our school. It gives every child a firm foundation for successful learning including motivation, positive dispositions and an open approach to lifelong learning. The Foundation Stage deserves and is given a high priority in our school.

Across our early years provision at Ladock our ethos is to encourage '**Loving, Learning and Achieving Together.**'

## 2. The Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children can join our pre-school in the term when they are 3. They can join our school, full time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. We recognise it as a crucial stage in education, both in its own right and in preparing children for learning in Key Stage 1. We believe that all children should be given the best possible start to their education. We therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Foundation Stage.

The principles which guide our work are grouped into four themes:

**A Unique Child** – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At Ladock, we recognise that every child is unique and that children develop in different ways at varying rates. We work hard to understand the every child's learning style and their characteristics of effective learning, to effectively support their specific next steps and developmental journey. We celebrate the learning process and encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

**Positive Relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and / or a key person. In both Nursery and Reception we adopt a key person system, to best support each child throughout their time in our foundation stage.

**Enabling Environments** – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. EYFS requirements are being met by having an indoor and outdoor environment in which children have access throughout the day during 'playful learning time. Within these environments, there are specific resources available which target the development of the six areas of learning, such as reading and writing. Resources available to the children within these areas are easily accessible and open ended, which allow children to take ownership over and direct their own learning.

**Learning and Development** – In our Foundation Stage, play is a key role to support and extend each child's development. At Ladock, we put play at the heart of everything we do, which gives our children the opportunity to practise schemas, the characteristics of effective learning and to embed previously learnt skills and knowledge in a child-led way. Children are encouraged to take ownership over their own learning journey and by the end of their first year in school, we aim to ensure that children can talk confidently about the positive attributes of learning. We plan and tailoring learning experiences in response to

each child's individual interests and next steps, offering pupils a balance of both child-led and adult-initiated learning opportunities.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all 'areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.' EYFS Framework 2017.

### 3. Aims

- To promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning for all our children to ensure that none are excluded or disadvantaged. (See the *Equal Opportunities Policy*)
- To provide children with a bespoke curriculum which fosters enthusiasm for learning and is challenging and progressive within a stimulating environment.
- To develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of learning through first hand experiences.
- To provide opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning in a variety of safe and stimulating environments both indoors and outdoors.
- To establish and maintain a close partnership with parents/carers, families and pre-school providers in our community.
- To use focussed assessment and record-keeping based on direct observation of children and discussion with them. To use this to inform future planning, monitor progress and build on children's prior learning.
- The basis of all of our planning is the individual child –  
'What is right for this child, at this time, in this place?'

### 4. Admission

Our school follows the Cornwall Coordinated Admissions Scheme and information on how parents of prospective pupils can apply for a place is contained in the Starting School booklet circulated in the Autumn term. Currently, children who turn 4 before 1<sup>st</sup> September, are eligible for a full-time place in a Reception class from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September. Parents can elect for their child to attend part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. Compulsory school age starts at the beginning of the term after a child has their fifth birthday.

Arrangements for children settling into our school are flexible, so that children are given enough time to feel secure in their new environment. Parental involvement is valued and welcomed with plenty of opportunities for co-operation and collaboration.

## 5. Starting Pre-school

Starting pre-school will be, for many children, the first time they have been away from their parents or familiar adults for a substantial length of time. It is therefore important we ensure transition from home to school is made as comfortable as possible.

During the term prior to starting Pre-school, the EYFS holds Open Sessions for the children and their parents/carers to meet the staff, familiarise themselves with the provision and experience some typical nursery activities. In addition to this, the EYFS team will organise a home visit where they can meet the child in the familiar home environment. This important visit is a chance for both parents and child to get to know our staff, to discuss the child's needs and answer any questions. A welcome pack is given which includes information about the setting, daily routines, policies and procedures and there are also consent forms and an information sharing sheet to be completed prior to starting pre-school.

When the children start pre-school settling in periods are flexible as children's needs vary. If a child has previously attended playgroup or a toddler group and was settled there, we would expect the child to settle more easily. Children are usually fully settled within a few weeks, so if the child has not settled by half-term, the staff will review the situation. After starting, time is made for individual feedback whenever the parents/carers require some, in person or by phone.

Children with SEN will be assessed and, if necessary, special provision will be made or extra adult help provided to offer them equal access to the EYFS Curriculum.

Parents/carers are made aware of the effect irregular attendance has on a child's ability to settle and also of the effects of coming back to school after a long absence.

There are two Parents' Evening Sessions, one in the Autumn and one in the Spring term and a written report covering all areas of the Early Years Framework is provided to all pupils in the Summer term.

## 6. Starting School

Prospective parents and children are invited to visit the school prior to admission. Many of our new admissions attend our pre-school and these children are familiar with the school environment and teachers in the Reception classes. Alternative arrangements are made for children from other settings.

Once offered a place, children and parents are invited to an Information Session, where there will be an opportunity to:

- Receive an information pack.
- Meet the Head of School, class teachers, teaching assistants and other parents.
- Find out about school / class routines.
- Find out about school expectations.
- Talk about your child's learning and their learning journey through school.
- Find out about school uniform and school meals.

## 7. Environment

We review our environment on a regular basis by evaluating the learning opportunities provided in each area and in line with children's current interests and levels of development. Within our environment, we value the importance of offering lots of open ended resources to spark imagination and creativity.

We currently have a well-resourced classroom and outdoor EYFS space. We share the main playgrounds, field and other outside areas with the rest of the school. We have use of a well-equipped school library.

## 8. Resources

**Our Indoor and Outdoor Classroom resources include the following:**

- An inviting, homely reading area resourced with a wide range of picture and story books and puppets to encourage storytelling.
- A sensory tray with easily accessible water and sand equipment.
- Opportunities for writing in many areas both indoors and outdoors. This includes a variety of tools to promote mark making, creativity and early writing.
- A role play area with real life materials and open ended resources to encourage imaginative play.
- A variety of creative media and materials such as paint, loose parts, paper, glue and junk modelling materials.
- A realistic construction corner filled with a wide range of open ended resources that provides children with mathematical problem solving opportunities.
- A maths area with endless open-ended counting, problem solving and investigation opportunities.
- Artefacts and interesting objects to explore and discuss.
- An indoor reading den
- An outdoor music and movement stage.
- Quiet areas to promote small world play outdoors.
- A sensory kitchen to encourage sensory play.
- A low level sandpit.
- A water tray to promote scientific investigation
- Large open-ended construction materials and natural resources for building and physical development.

## 9. Staffing and Organisation

Our Pre-school and Reception classes are taught by teachers and a teaching assistant with Early Years qualifications and experience. We also welcome parental help in the classroom and on trips and visits.

We believe strongly in the importance of keeping our practice up to date. We therefore ensure that all our staff working in the Foundation Stage attend courses and training on a regular basis as part of our school Professional Development Programme.

## 10. Curriculum

Our core reference document is 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage', which includes the principles for good practice underpinning the provision at our school.

Our planning and assessment are clearly structured and are based on topics, organised around the prime, specific areas of learning.

### Prime areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical Development

### Specific areas:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are

Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** move through all areas of learning and children are encouraged and taught how to use these throughout their play independently. They are categorised as follows:

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

## 11. Learning and Teaching

### *Active Learning*

“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 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. Through active learning experiences, we encourage our children to explore, experiment, question, investigate, discover, create, practise and consolidate their developing understanding, knowledge and skills.

### *Creativity and Critical Thinking*

“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 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 classroom to extend their learning.

We firmly believe that if a child is excited and motivated by learning, especially in the early days at our school, then we are already helping that child to become a lifelong learner.

We also provide time for children to make choices and explore ideas and interests in depth. This means that our timescales are flexible when necessary allowing us to best accommodate for our children’s needs.

We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and this reflected in our teaching, learning and assessment.

As part of our healthy schools policy we promote healthy living. Children are encouraged to drink water. Free fruit is provided daily in our Snack Café. Children are encouraged to try a range of fruit and vegetables independently throughout the morning in the EYFS.

## 12. Play

“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, and 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to play in a secure environment with effective support from caring adults. We use the classroom and our outdoor area to enable children to access both planned, structured play activities and self-initiated, spontaneous play activities.

### 13. Assessment

Our assessment of pupil progress through the Foundation Stage is based on regular and close observations as well as questioning, listening and discussion with individual children. In this way, we are able to make professional judgements about what children have learnt as well as through the activities children have completed. We involve all adults who come into contact with the child and regard parents as especially important in this respect. We therefore want to ensure that parents are able to contribute to the assessment process through an ongoing dialogue between home and school.

On entry to school we make initial assessments of what children already know, understand and can do. We then share this information with parents. On a regular basis we track each child's progress against specific learning objectives, record significant achievements and share our observations with parents at regular intervals i.e. termly. We encourage parents to be actively involved in achieving the learning phases with their children. During the school year, we hold formal Pupil Progress Meetings. Parents are also offered the opportunity to informally discuss progress, achievements or concerns. Parents are supplied with a written report in the Summer Term, which shares information about their child's progress in the six areas of learning as well as the child's next targets.

To record and assess your child's learning, we take observations and photographs electronically using Tapestry. This provides us with your child's learning journey throughout their first year of school which you will be able to access online. Tapestry also gives you opportunity to add observations of your child's learning at home, which will contribute to their learning journey.

Assessments on the specific areas of learning are recorded half-termly as a 'step' judgement and recorded on our tracking system. Progress meetings are held each half-term with members of the SLT to identify and discuss pupils who are not attaining at an expected level or who are not making expected progress. Interventions and support are decided and then implemented as necessary. During the summer term, each child's achievements within the Foundation Stage Profile are summarised and data submitted to the LEA as part of statutory assessment and reporting.



## 14. Meeting Individual Needs

We provide a safe and supportive learning environment at our school, where the contribution of all children is valued. We also employ a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's experiences, interests, skills and learning needs. In particular, we plan carefully to meet the needs of:

- Boys and girls.
- Children with special educational needs.
- Children with disabilities.
- Children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Children of different ethnic groups including Travellers and refugees.
- Children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

In addition, we select our resources, equipment and materials thoughtfully, choosing those which positively reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

## 15. Partnership with Parents

'Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and / or a key person.' EYFS 2007

To this end, we work hard to promote a successful partnership with a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise.

Parents are:

- Welcomed into school/classroom as voluntary helpers to assist in many different ways from reading and craft work to gardening.
- Given clear information about the school e.g. prospectus, newsletters, displays, meetings, workshops, etc.
- Encouraged to support their child's learning e.g. listen to their reading, support phonic work.
- Assured that their views and knowledge about their own child are listened to e.g. on admission, arrangements for formal/informal consultations.
- Given the opportunity to share achievements with their child's class teacher by adding observations of their learning at home to their online learning journey.

## 16. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an annual basis by:

- Head of School
- EYFS Lead

It also forms part of our annual school self-evaluation process and will therefore be incorporated into our School Development/Improvement Plan as appropriate.