



Ladybrook Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to 5 years. At Ladybrook, children enter our Foundation Stage either at 3 years old in the nursery class or in reception at 4 years old. The 40 place nursery class has different groups attending for their 15 hours either doing two and a half full days or five mornings. Parents also have the opportunity to book extra sessions which they pay for, providing the adult child ratio does not exceed 1:13. The majority of nursery children move onto our reception class and others move to other local primary schools. The Foundation Stage is staffed by two teachers and two teaching assistants, as well as other support staff, students and parent helpers which vary depending on the cohorts in school at the time.

Aims and Objectives

In the EYFS at Ladybrook we believe all children deserve the best possible start in their school life; emotionally, intellectually and physically, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We care for all our children to ensure they are all happy, safe and secure. We recognise the significance of learning in the early years following research into brain development and psychology.

Ladybrook foundation stage encourages learners for life through playing and exploring, active learning and the development of creative and critical thinking skills.

We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.

- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates- physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to communicate their needs and manage their feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision making skills supporting them to learn through their mistakes and persevere to succeed.
- Engage and talk with children to develop communication skills vital for learning across the curriculum.
- Develop children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Support children to care and respect others and appreciate others may have different beliefs, cultures and opinions to their own.
- Provide active learning experiences through play which reflect children's personal interests in order to excite and motivate children to explore and learn.
- Use observation and assessment to inform planning.
- Provide experiences which build on children's existing knowledge, skills and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend learning and development.
- Provide effective learning opportunities through indoor and outdoor provision.
- Encourage the development of creative and critical thinking skills.

Principles of Early Years Foundation Stage

We are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage in our nursery and reception classes.

- 1. The unique child-** all children are treated as individuals throughout their primary school life at Ladybrook, starting in nursery through to Year 6. We understand all children learn and develop at different rates and in different ways. The characteristics of effective learning support our children to become motivated and effective learners. Children play and explore and are encouraged to have a go and persevere. Children develop resilience and enjoy achievements through active learning when they make links, explore ideas and develop strategies for problem solving through creating and thinking critically. Practitioners support children in developing all of these characteristics by engaging and playing alongside them and where necessary scaffolding and supporting learning. All children are treated fairly and welcomed into our setting so that they feel included, safe and valued. Being safe at Ladybrook is taught from nursery onwards; educating children on boundaries, rules and expectations. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including exercise and eating healthy food.
- 2. Positive relationships-** We believe all individuals flourish and learn when they experience positive relationships with others. At Ladybrook we promote positive relationships between children, staff and parents. Practitioners care for all children and respect the feelings of children and their families. We work closely with parents as we understand the significance parents play in their child's early education. We pride ourselves in knowing all our children as individuals and forming good relationships by engaging with them in all aspects of their learning.
- 3. The enabling environment-** In the EYFS at Ladybrook we recognise the importance of a rich learning environment indoors and outdoors. We prepare and plan areas of continuous provision in our entire EYFS environment to enable children to learn with and without the presence of an adult. The organisation of resourced areas indoors and outdoors changes on a termly, weekly or daily basis in response to the children's needs and stage of development. Adults facilitate and scaffold learning by providing additional resources in specific areas in response to children's interests and requests. Nursery and reception have similar continuous provision areas indoors, but resources have been organised and levelled to meet the developmental needs of their age group. Outdoor provision

includes different areas of provision organised on a weekly timetable, which may vary in response to weather.

4. Learning and development-There are seven areas of learning which are interconnected. The three prime areas are crucial to develop lifelong learning and help children form relationships.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development- children develop confidence and self-esteem, manage feelings, build relationships and respect others.
- Communication and Language- children have opportunities to experience a rich language environment, developing confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak, listen and understand in a range of situations.
- Physical development- children have opportunities to be active and interactive to develop co-ordination, control and movement. Children need to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy- children are encouraged to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children start Just Phonics in nursery and continue in reception. An interest in a variety of reading materials is encouraged from an early age including stories, rhymes, poems and non-fiction. Children start the Oxford Reading Tree reading scheme when appropriate either in nursery or reception. Opportunities for reading and writing are encouraged in different areas of continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors.
- Mathematics- children are provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, space and measures. Both nursery and reception have a range of maths resources including abacus and numicon materials. Maths objectives are taught in a variety of practical ways indoors and outdoors.
- Understanding the World- children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology.

In the EYFS at Ladybrook we have a variety of local places of interest within the local environment and both classes have Interactive Whiteboards, touch screen computers and i pads.

- Expressive arts and design- involves enabling children to play, explore and be imaginative with a wide range of media and materials and sharing feelings and ideas through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology. Children in our EYFS take part in whole school events such as creative week, Christmas concerts and class assemblies.

Active Learning

Throughout a child's school life at Ladybrook they will be encouraged to become truly independent learners. Active learning techniques are used throughout the school. This starts in the EYFS learning through play in areas of continuous provision, either by themselves or with a practitioner. Active learning may involve people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Practitioners encourage and facilitate learning through play. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging creativity and critical thinking skills and development in all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Play is flexible and can be used to meet all children's needs, interests and preferred learning styles.

Teachers in the EYFS also plan active learning experiences within a broad topic to develop specific skills through practical activities. These may be used within whole class teaching sessions or with small groups or individuals. Through engaging in practical first hand experiences children are able to discover, explore, investigate, develop interests and curiosity which help them make sense of their world and acquire skills, concepts and knowledge. Whole class active learning sessions may be through stories and drama acting in roles or an exciting event or visit leading to a variety of cross-curricular activities. Teachers plan exciting and fun experiences and activities to bring learning to life.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Observation, assessment and planning are an on-going cycle of our EYFS setting at Ladybrook. When children start in nursery and reception practitioners observe and engage with them to make initial assessments which form a baseline on the EYFS profile. From these baselines appropriate learning experiences are planned and all practitioners are aware of every child's developmental stages and needs and the next steps required to make progress in different areas.

Observations and assessments are on-going throughout the year and are formative; informing planning and provision in indoor and outdoor areas. They inform us of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Continuous provision areas will develop and change in response to assessments. We value **child-led planning** and from observing and engaging with children to find out what they are interested in and excited by, relevant activities are planned and resources provided. This style of planning raises levels of engagement and attainment. Teachers plan an objective and deliver it in different ways to different children depending on the children's interests. Therefore observation, assessment and planning are the key to quality teaching and learning in the Foundation stage.

Observations and assessments take different formats. They may simply be an individual dated, hand-written note on a post-it with a photograph or a lengthier, small group observation written up with quotes, links to the EYFS curriculum and next steps planned either on the i pads or hand written. They may also take the form of whole class grids recording progress or individual record sheets in specific areas such as reading and phonics. Assessments inform individual, termly reports and parent interviews. Individual progress and next steps in different areas of development are discussed with parents. Observations and individual profiles are in every child's **Learning Journey** alongside special pieces of work and photos of special moments throughout the year. All EYFS children also have their own space on the **Learning Wall** to display drawings, craft work, writing or other pieces of work and photos from

home. Observations and assessments provide evidence of progress over the academic year. The EYFSP is updated termly on paper and on SIMS.

Indoor and Outdoor Provision

Continuous provision indoors and outdoors is more than just a choice of interesting resources; it is carefully planned areas resourced to continue the provision for learning in the absence of an adult. At Ladybrook resources are selected and levelled to meet the developmental needs of specific children. Effective areas of continuous provision are more than just “choosing.” The careful structuring of areas of provision linked to assessments ensures high levels of engagement and attainment. Areas of continuous provision indoors may include mark making areas, role play, construction, sand, water, dough, reading areas and craft workshops.

EYFS children learning at Ladybrook enjoy a balance of indoor and outdoor learning which takes the form of a combination of child-initiated and adult directed activities. Children have long periods when they have access to indoor and outdoor areas of learning. We are very fortunate to have access to a fantastic outdoor area including a large natural area of grass, trees and bushes, a wooden trim trail, dens, mud kitchen, outdoor sand pit, wheeled vehicles area, role play, mark making and resources for all weathers. All children have their own wellington boots and we provide waterproofs, so they can access outdoor learning in all weathers.

Quality interactions between practitioners and children promote high levels of engagement and attainment in all areas. The children in the EYFS at Ladybrook benefit from a balance of child-initiated activities supported by practitioners and adult directed activities planned by the teacher. Teachers plan a broad half-termly topic with experiences and events to interest and motivate children in all aspects of the EYFS curriculum. Teachers use these in weekly plans alongside activities planned in response to children’s interests and objective led planning. To ensure children cover the breadth of the EYFS curriculum and are working within the Early Learning Goals or exceeding them by the end of reception, teachers plan whole class and group activities to meet these objectives, for example mental maths or Just Phonics.

Linked provision is introduced in nursery and takes place on a daily basis in reception. This is a short period of continuous provision linked to an objective at the start of the day. A weekly focus is planned in response to assessment and to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are taught. Children complete activities differentiated to their stage of development but meeting the same objective such as mark making, fine motor skills, problem solving, number, shape or literacy based activities.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties. Individual Education plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support as part of the whole school special educational needs policy. EYFS staff work closely with the school SEN co-ordinator to develop individual plans and consult with parents.

In line with the school's equal opportunities policy we provide all children regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual.

Health and Safety

All EYFS staff follow the school safeguarding policy and any matters of concern are reported to the school safeguarding officer. The EYFS promotes healthy eating; fresh water, milk, fruit and bread sticks are available at snack times. Ladybrook EYFS staff follow Stockport's intimate care policy when changing children who are wet or have soiled themselves. We have our own paediatric first aider in the EYFS building and a record of accidents and injuries is kept. Parents are notified of any accidents and treatment given during the course of the school day. Fire and emergency evacuation procedures are practised on a regular basis during the school year.

All staff are responsible for risk assessment of activities and equipment indoors and outdoors. Small broken equipment must be removed and larger broken equipment must be reported to the site manager or head teacher. Indoor water and sand play areas are checked regularly and cleaned to avoid risk of falling. In extreme weather conditions use of the outdoor area may be restricted or not used at all. The trim trail will not be used when it is wet and slippery. Risk assessments of indoor and outdoor will be reviewed regularly to ensure safety. All activities hold a certain level of risk; practitioners will assess an activity to decide if it is a reasonable risk. In such activities a minor injury could occur but with adult support and the teaching of guidelines regarding safety the risk of injury is minimised. No planned activity should have a higher than reasonable risk.

Parents as partners

At Ladybrook we do have an “open door” policy where parents can talk to staff or phone about any concerns however minor. Parents may speak directly with staff at the start or end of the day; alternatively they may phone or write a note in their child’s home school diary. EYFS staff communicate any problems during the school diary to parents using the same system.

We encourage home –school links through:

- Induction meetings for nursery and reception parents.
- Induction visits for children with parents initially progressing to children staying on their own.
- Phased part-time starts in nursery and reception.
- Year group meetings.
- Curriculum meetings.
- Termly reports.
- Parent interviews and open evening.
- Whole school events such as concerts at Christmas or Sports Day.

Transition to Year 1

When reception children leave our EYFS building to move up to Year 1, we aim to make the transition as smooth as possible. We make every effort to help the children adapt to a new building and curriculum. Reception staff meet with Year 1 staff to discuss all the children's stages of development, progress and next steps. Firstly in terms of getting to know a new building, induction visits take place in reception summer term with the Year 1 teacher. In terms of adapting to a new curriculum, changes are made gradually in the first term in Year 1. Classroom organisation, planning and daily timetables follow on from reception and are developed to meet the children's needs in key Stage 1. Linked provision, semi-continuous provision and outdoor learning continue through Year 1 and change in response to the demands of the curriculum and individual needs.