St Luke's CE First School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

2026-2027

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Our School Vision

In our St Luke's family, we recognise we are all God's children and through our caring and nurturing environment, we follow His word. We trust and rely on God's teaching so that we can encourage each other, develop our relationship with one another and the world, and flourish in all that we do. *God's word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119 v.105)*

EYFS Vision

In Early Years at St Luke's, we believe that every child is a gift from God, uniquely created to flourish. We are committed to nurturing confident communicators who show kindness, patience, and love in their interactions. Through guided play and supported activities, we help children develop their vocabulary across the seven areas of learning, enabling them to build strong, respectful relationships with one another. We seek to inspire children to become independent, resilient learners who recognise their potential and take pride in their efforts and achievements. We celebrate each step of progress as the children flourish through their journey. Reading is a joyful part of our day, and we aim to instil a deep love of stories and language. Through daily storytelling, we spark imagination and wonder, echoing God's word.

Intent

At St Luke's First School, our aim is to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where every child is valued, respected, and supported to reach their full potential. We are committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that supports the holistic development of each child through play-based learning, exploration, and purposeful experiences.

Foundational Skills Focus

In line with Ofsted's emphasis on foundational skills, we prioritise the development of essential capabilities that underpin all future learning. We recognise that strong foundational skills are critical for children's success and wellbeing, both in the early years and beyond. Our curriculum is designed to:

-**Develop communication and language skills** as the foundation for all learning, ensuring children can express themselves clearly, listen attentively, and engage in meaningful conversations –

Build physical development through both fine and gross motor activities, enabling children to develop the coordination and control needed for writing, self-care, and active play

- **Foster personal, social and emotional development** so that children can self-regulate, build positive relationships, and develop the resilience needed to persevere with challenges

- **Establish early literacy skills** including phonological awareness, letter recognition, and mark-making, providing the building blocks for reading and writing

- **Develop early mathematical understanding** through practical experiences with number, shape, pattern, and measure

- **Strengthen attention, listening and memory skills** that enable children to focus, follow instructions, and retain learning We understand that these foundational skills do not develop in isolation but are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Our curriculum is designed to spark curiosity, foster independence, and build strong foundations for future learning through carefully planned experiences that develop these essential capabilities. We work in close partnership with families and the wider community to ensure that all children feel secure, confident, and ready for the next stage of their educational journey.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), effective from 1 September 2025.

Structure of the EYFS

At St Luke's CE First School we have one Reception class, offering a total of 30 full time places.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The prime areas are:

- Communication and language

- Physical development

- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy

- Mathematics

- Understanding the world

- Expressive arts and design

Foundational Skills Across the Curriculum

We recognise that foundational skills are developed across all seven areas of learning. Our curriculum planning ensures that children have daily opportunities to:

- **Develop spoken language** through rich conversations, storytelling, songs, and rhymes

- **Build physical skills** through both fine motor activities (such as mark-making, cutting, and manipulating small objects) and gross motor activities (such as climbing, balancing, and ball skills)

- **Strengthen self-regulation** through routines, transitions, and supported emotional development

- **Develop early reading skills** through systematic synthetic phonics teaching and a language-rich environment

- **Build mathematical foundations** through practical, hands-on experiences with number, pattern, and shape

- **Enhance attention and listening** through focused activities, stories, and group times We monitor children's progress in these foundational skills carefully, identifying any children who may need additional support and intervening early to ensure all children develop the strong foundations they need.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. Staff use the Development Matters framework to support their understanding of how children learn and develop, ensuring that the curriculum is broad, balanced, and appropriate for each child. Planning explicitly addresses the development of foundational skills, ensuring that children have regular, purposeful opportunities to develop their communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional skills. Staff consider how each planned experience will support children's foundational skills development alongside subject-specific learning. Staff consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of every child in their care and use this information to plan challenging, engaging, and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability (SEND), staff carefully consider whether specialist support is required and, where appropriate, work in partnership with relevant external agencies to meet the child's needs effectively. This includes identifying any gaps in foundational skills and providing targeted support to address these. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn—such as through playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Teaching Foundational Skills We recognise that strong foundational skills require explicit teaching alongside opportunities for practice and application. Our teaching approach includes:

- **Daily systematic synthetic phonics teaching** to develop early reading skills

- **Regular opportunities for sustained conversations** with adults and peers to develop communication and language

- **Planned fine and gross motor activities** to develop physical skills and coordination

- **Explicit teaching of self-regulation strategies** to support emotional development and behaviour for learning

- **Daily mathematical activities** that develop number sense, counting skills, and mathematical language

- **Focused activities to develop attention, listening and memory** through games, stories, and group activities Staff model language, skills, and behaviours explicitly, providing children with clear examples to follow.

They use questioning, scaffolding, and feedback to support children's learning and development. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Assessment

At St Luke's, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Assessing Foundational Skills

We pay particular attention to assessing children's progress in foundational skills, recognising that these underpin all future learning. Staff regularly assess:

- **Communication and language development** including vocabulary, listening, attention, and understanding

- **Physical development** including fine and gross motor skills

- **Personal, social and emotional development** including self-regulation, confidence, and relationship-building

- **Early literacy skills** including phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and early writing

- **Early mathematical understanding** including number recognition, counting, and mathematical language

Where assessment identifies that a child is not making expected progress in foundational skills, staff work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, external agencies to provide targeted support. Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development

- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, including their development of foundational skills. We share information about how parents/carers can support their child's development at home, particularly in key areas such as communication and language, early reading, and physical development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, including their foundational skills. Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We recognise that 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. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere. See our child protection and safeguarding policy for more information.

Staffing Ratios

We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils.

Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Absence

We're required to promptly follow up on absences. If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. See our attendance policy for more on this, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences.

Oral Health and Tooth Brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to the children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things

- The importance of brushing your teeth

Safer Eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair or carpet space, where possible, in a designated eating space. Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences

- Food allergies and intolerances

- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each child. We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods. We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child

– with the help of health professionals, where appropriate

- We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff We will prepare food in a way that: - Prevents choking

- Meets each child's individual developmental needs

- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer, and then take action as appropriate.

Accident or Injury

We keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible. We keep a written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment. We will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child

- First aid treatment given

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Safer Sleeping

We do not routinely allow children to sleep during their time at the setting. If a child appears excessively tired and we feel they are unable to remain awake safely, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the child’s needs and appropriate arrangements.

Safety of Premises

We make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises. We comply with the requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

Routine Equipment and Premises Checks

To maintain a safe, well organised, and legally compliant environment, we carry out regular checks of all equipment and areas used by children, staff, and visitors. These checks ensure that any hazards are identified promptly and that resources remain safe, accessible, and in good working order.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

To safeguard children in our Early Years setting, personal mobile phones and cameras are not used in areas where children are present, and staff, visitors, and volunteers must store personal devices safely away during session times. Only school owned devices are used to take photographs or recordings for educational or assessment purposes, and these are stored securely in line with data protection requirements. Images are only taken with parental consent, used appropriately, and never shared on personal accounts or devices, ensuring children's privacy and safety at all times.

Digital Technology and Screen Time

In Reception, we use digital devices such as interactive whiteboards and tablets to support and enhance active learning, ensuring technology complements rather than replaces hands-on, play-based experiences. Our approach to screen use is guided by the DfE's *Help for Early Years Providers: Screen Use* guidance, which ensures that digital technology is used purposefully and appropriately for young children. We carefully plan and monitor all screen-based activities to ensure they are age-appropriate, time-limited, and support specific learning objectives across the curriculum. Staff regularly audit digital screen time to maintain a balanced approach that priorities physical activity, social interaction, and exploratory play as the foundation of learning in the early years.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board for ratification.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **First Aid and Medicine Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **SEND policy**
- **Attendance Policy**