




The LETTA Trust

EYFS Policy

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“Early childhood is a period of momentous significance for people growing up in our culture. By the time this period is over, children will have formed conceptions of themselves as social beings, as thinkers, as language users, and they will have reached certain important decisions about their own abilities and their own worth”

Margaret Donaldson

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children in the Foundation Stage access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills (cultural capital) needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and parents and carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The document also complies with The LETTA Trust funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Rationale

The LETTA Trust is committed to meeting the needs of the whole community, the provision for early years is a child centered, special place where children receive the highest standards of care and education in a safe, stimulating and creative environment. We want our youngest children to feel happy, valued and excited to come to school. Our two year olds at Stebon have their own room and their own outdoor play area with age appropriate resources and furniture. Three and four year olds in both schools have large open plan classrooms with direct access to the outdoors. Both environments are exciting, safe, challenging, hands-on and purposeful with meaningful activities based on children's interests.

Experienced and well qualified staff foster a love of learning inspired by high-quality teaching which develops and builds upon children's individual strengths and talents. We believe that children learn best through direct experiences and interactions with people and the environment. Established routines and inspirational activities enable children to fully engage in the nursery day. We value the strong relationship with our local community and encourage a positive partnership between children, their home, the school and the wider environment. Together we can support the children in our care to develop into well rounded, kind, curious and creative individuals who will lead happy, successful and rewarding lives in an ever changing world.



4. Parent Partnership

We foster a positive and supportive partnership by working collaboratively with parents/carers. We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- Offering a new parents evening to outline the Foundation Stage curriculum
- Offering a home visit to all children prior to starting nursery
- A phased entry for each child with a build up to full time
- A weekly update of activities on offer
- Providing regular parent/carer progress meetings to provide an opportunity for asking questions and sharing information
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Regular parent workshops/stay and play sessions
- Inviting parents/carers to volunteer in school and to accompany children on school visits and fun events
- Encouraging parents/carers to read to and listen to their child read each night
- Providing an annual written report to parents/guardians in July summarizing their child's progress against the early learning goals.

5. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up"

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage-March 2021)

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. The LETTA Trust greatly values the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and as preparation for life. The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age.

All children begin nursery with a variety of experiences and learning and practitioners working in the foundation stage build upon this prior knowledge. This is done through ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and practitioners work together effectively to support children's learning and development. This is achieved by the sharing of information with parents/carers and between staff to ensure that each child's learning is a continuous journey.



Our Foundation Stage follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This sets the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old.

The LETTA Trust aims for children to be confident, independent learners. We want all children to believe in their unique self and we recognise that each child develops at their own pace. We offer a language rich curriculum that ignites children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. This builds their capacity to learn, to form relationships, interact positively with others and thrive. We believe that play is central to a child's learning and this is at the heart of our EYFS curriculum.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. Three 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 four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The curriculum for two year olds at Stebon has the three Prime Areas of learning at its heart. The three Prime areas, Personal, social and emotional development (PSED), Communication and language (CL), and Physical development (PD), describe universal core aspects of early child development.



6. Curriculum Intent (Aims)

At the LETTA Trust we are clear on the purpose (Intent) of the Foundation Stage Provision and have a shared vision across the trust of how the curriculum is implemented and what we want the curriculum to achieve (Impact). (See curriculum goals – Appendix 1)

We aim to support all children in our community by:

- Ensuring that the well-being of the child is paramount
- Recognising that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured and develops in individual ways and at varying rates
- Providing the highest standards of care and education recruiting and retaining the highest quality of staff and investing in their development
- Ensuring quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes rapid progress and no child gets left behind
- Including and supporting every child through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Building positive and productive relationships with families to promote learning and well-being
- Developing secure attachments for children as a basis for learning
- Working in partnership with other agencies where appropriate to share information for the benefit of children
- Offering welcoming and stimulating indoor and outdoor environments which reflect the experiences and cultural background of the children
- Providing a rich curriculum with a wide range of age appropriate learning opportunities
- Building awareness of the children's place in the locality and community
- Accelerating communication skills and narrowing any communication gaps through early identification of language delay/disorder and providing high quality conversations, well-chosen play activities and other practical experiences
- Inspiring children with a love of stories and other books to further enrich spoken language and their understanding of the world around them
- Offering fine and gross motor challenges to build physical skill and confidence
- Encouraging healthy food choices and participation in social snack times
- Developing self-help skills to build independence and confidence
- Monitoring children's progress accurately and accelerating their learning to provide the cultural capital needed for the transition to the next phase of their educational journey

The LETTA Trust Early Years curriculum whilst underpinned by the EYFS Framework is unique to our settings, it is not static. It evolves and changes as staff get to know children and as cohorts move on. It is responsive to children's needs and reflects the families/community we are working with.



The curriculum is shaped by children's developing interests; however, we also plan the core knowledge and skills which children need to be taught. The curriculum is planned to widen children's experiences and to prepare them for their next stage in education.

Breadth of understanding and knowledge is more important than rushing onto the next stage. We define learning as a change in long-term memory. If a child can't remember and retrieve what they have learnt, then they haven't learnt it. Practitioners ensure that a child's learning is secure before moving onto new concepts or skills. Secure learning is more important than covering lots of things superficially. We define progress as "knowing more and remembering more".

Starting Point

The starting point of the EYFS curriculum is the needs and characteristics of the unique child. These are assessed through observation, noticing what the child knows, understands and can do and by collaborating with parents/carers. We recognise the wide range of developmental stages of very young children and provide a play based curriculum based around children's individual interests and needs. The curriculum is planned to promote behaviors for learning, rapidly develop language skills, promote independence, develop physical skills and provide opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving. The curriculum takes into account the similarities and differences of children in the provision and is uniquely tailored to meet the needs of our school communities.

The curriculum aims to provide continuity with what went before and progression to what will follow.

As practitioners, we continuously work to extend children's critical thinking and problem solving, by supporting them to respond to new experiences and challenges. We want children to become confident and active learners, able to question and investigate and make links between their own ideas and the ideas of others.

For most of the time in nursery children are engaged in exploration and play based learning in an environment which is well-resourced and well-supported. This learning does not have immediate fixed outcomes. But practitioners are mindful of the outcomes we want children to reach, and guide children towards them. Children have choice and independence as they play. This supports their developing confidence, independence, collaboration, persistence and self-regulation. Exploration and play-based learning can be chosen entirely by the child or can be guided by the practitioners in a playful way. Children need both options. Practitioners have a key role in supporting this learning by listening to children and developing conversations with them, they challenge thinking and provide suggestions and resources over time to make the learning more challenging. Practitioners use new vocabulary naturally and repeatedly, so children use and learn those words. As practitioners interact with children, they are reflecting on how their interactions can support further learning. Everything is underpinned by support for children's confidence and emotional wellbeing.

However, children in the early years also need adult-guided learning and direct teaching to learn key skills and concepts. For example; they need to learn new words which are not present in everyday speech, mathematical concepts or have direct support to learn a new skill.

Safe and secure – free to explore

It is important to us that all children feel safe and secure. We aim to educate children on boundaries and rules, and to help them understand why those boundaries exist. We provide children with meaningful choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children are encouraged to take managed risks and are taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. At



The LETTA Trust, we comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. In order to do this, we:

- Actively promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behavior effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their needs

Relationships and Routines

At the LETTA Trust we believe that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships.

- In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2021) each child is assigned a key person. This is an important role. Children thrive from a base of loving and secure relationships. This is normally provided by a child's parent/s but it can also be provided by a key person. A key person is a named member of staff with responsibilities for a small group of children. The key person helps all children in the group to feel safe and cared for. The key person responds sensitively to children's feelings and behaviors and meets their emotional needs by giving reassurance, such as when they are new to the setting and supporting the child's well-being
- The key person supports physical needs too, helping with issues such as toileting and dressing. This person is a familiar figure who is accessible and available as a point of contact for parents and one who builds relationships with the child and parents or carers
- Records of development and care are created and shared by the key person, parents and the child. The key person 'tunes into' children's play and their conversations to really get to know the children in the group well. Children feel settled and happy and are more confident to explore and as a result become more capable learners

Attachment Matters

Attachments are the emotional bonds that young children develop with parents and other carers such as their key person. Children with strong early attachments cry less when separated. They engage in more pretend play and sustain attention for longer. They are less aggressive and relate better to their peers and adults. Their sense of who they are is strong. Children need to be safe in the relationship they have with parents or carers. They are vulnerable but will develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by an adult. Being emotionally attached to such an adult helps the child feel secure that the person they depend on is there for them. When children feel safe they are



more confident to try things out and be more independent. They are able to express their ideas and feelings and feel good about themselves. Attachment influences a child's immediate all-round development and future relationships.

British Values

British Values are embedded in our EYFS curriculum and are defined as follows:

- Democracy - We have a voice
- Rule of law - We share and take turns
- Individual liberty - We have a choice
- Respect - We show respect to everyone and everything

7. Implementing the curriculum (Enabling Environments)

The LETTA EYFS curriculum is ambitious for all children, there is a strong focus on helping children to learn and a belief that every child can progress well in their learning and with the right support every child can thrive. The curriculum reflects special events locally and nationally and the rhythm of the year in the natural world. In the autumn term we focus on me and my family, in spring term me and my world and in summer term growing, changing and moving on.

Most learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside.

There is a balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences. Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner. Parent involvement is crucial. We learn a great deal about each child from their parents. Parental support and a high quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children.

At The LETTA Trust we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We provide an enabling environment which include opportunities for play and exploration with, sand, water, gravel, mud, paint, block play, home-corner, mark making and writing opportunities. Mathematics is embedded into all that we do, as is language, communication, speaking and listening which are given the highest priority.

The core books, and core rhymes and songs, which we feel children should experience, are embedded into the curriculum. Children are encouraged to become familiar and confident with the stories and songs, supporting their social and emotional development, communication, language, speaking and vocabulary.

Our early years classrooms and outdoor spaces have workshop areas with clearly labeled resources to ensure children can access them easily. The environment is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning and a variety of activities are planned for and set up each day. We understand the importance of outside play and we create outdoor areas which are stimulating and exciting, take account of the children's interests and are used throughout the year.

We:

- Use the outdoor space as a natural resource for learning



- Include the outdoor area when planning for continuous provision
- Include children when planning for learning outdoors
- Provide the opportunity for children to access the outdoor area on a daily basis
- Ensure that the outdoor area offers children the opportunity to investigate and explore, problem solve, use their imagination and creativity
- Ensure the outdoors offers children the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills
- Encourage the children to respect the outdoor environment and care for living things
- Give children the opportunity to manage and use the space and freedom afforded by the outdoors
- Give children the opportunity to work alone or in collaboration with peers or adults
- Teach the children to use tools and outdoor equipment safely and appropriately

8. Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know, understand and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is informed by children's prior knowledge and experiences including observations we have made of the children. These observations allow practitioners to understand and consider children's current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

Planning the curriculum:

The LETTA Trust follows the EYFS guidance.

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, and deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment, including having focus children each week. Planning is flexible and responds to the needs of the children both in the moment and over time. Developing children's language and communication is at the heart of everything we do.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long term planning

The big picture. This is everything we want children to know, understand and do. Our long term planning looks at the learning opportunities for the whole year and includes setting up the learning environment both indoors and outdoors, organising areas of provision, deciding on core equipment, making decisions about regular routines and developing strategy to ensure coverage of the seven areas of learning and development. This planning is adaptable and provides a framework which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum.



Medium term planning

Activities are planned for each term based on the learning goals and with core books, songs and rhymes at the centre, we follow the natural cycle of the year and reflect special events locally and nationally.

Our medium term plans place sequencing at the heart. The aim is to build knowledge and skills across the curriculum and relate back to prior teaching in order to form a fully cohesive programme.

Short Term Planning

Practitioners plan activities and experiences for children that take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. We scaffold children's learning "up" rather than offer a "watered down" curriculum.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Much of short term planning is in the moment as practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

9. Observation and Assessment

At The LETTA Trust, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Practitioners continually assess children during the day (assessment in action), observing children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. They reflect on what they have noticed to better understand each child and their interests. These observations are used to support learning in the moment and to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account and value observations shared by parents and carers, time is set aside each day for evaluation, to talk about children and plan for the next day's learning. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations and other focused assessments e.g. sounds, number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents/carers.

Each child has an individual Learning Journey (special book), and in reception, writing books. We plan for observational assessment during planning meetings.

At the end of the reception year, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child.

10. Equal Opportunities

The LETTA Trust aims 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. The Trust has an anti racist statement and policy which is embedded in our curriculum.



11. Inclusion

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities are given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are abler, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio. Support Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Foundation Stage teachers discuss these targets with the SENCO and with parents/carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term.

12. Foundation Stage to Year 1 Transition

Foundation Stage and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the day.

During the summer term in reception class practitioners build up the amount of time spent doing structured activities to encourage less dependence on adult support

Milestone data and assessment records are passed on to year 1 teachers



Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according to the EYFS statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	The LETTA Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Refer to most update policy)
Procedure for responding to illness	The LETTA Trust Health & Safety Policy Incl. Security Procedures (Refer to most update policy)
Administering medicines policy	The LETTA Trust Medical Needs Policy Incl. Asthma & Intimate Care (Refer to most update policy)
Emergency evacuation procedure	The LETTA Trust Health & Safety Policy Incl. Security Procedures (Refer to most update policy)
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	The LETTA Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (Refer to most update policy)
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	The LETTA Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy



	(Refer to most update policy)
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	The LETTA Trust Complaints Procedure (Refer to most update policy)