

Our Vision

As part of the St Leo's and Southmead family; our children are happy, resilient and successful. Our school community is enriched by positive role models who nurture and support; delivering a curriculum which embraces memorable opportunities and lifelong skills.

Our Promise

Nurture



We will provide a safe, warm and welcoming environment where everybody is valued

We will develop the whole child through our pastoral approach where inclusive attitudes are modelled every day

Inspire



We will celebrate the skills, talents and natural abilities of everybody in our school community

We will deliver exciting and memorable learning opportunities through our creative curriculum in order to provoke thoughts, dreams and life-long goals

Succeed



We will guide our children so that they are eager to exceed their full potential in all that they do

We will encourage confidence and risk taking through quality first teaching, effective feedback and challenge

Our Values

*Everybody is valued
We are all role models
Talents are celebrated
We never give up*

'Nurture, Inspire, Succeed'



St Leo's & Southmead

Catholic Nursery & Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

At St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Nursery and Primary School we pride ourselves on providing a safe, warm and stimulating environment for all of our children.

Our Early Years unit has two classrooms and a shared outdoor area – Nursery and Reception. Each class in the EYFS is taught by a qualified Early Years teacher and supported by a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistants and qualified Early Years support staff.

Our Aims

We aim to –

- Provide a happy, stable, caring, safe and stimulating environment in which the children can establish solid foundations, and foster a love of learning.
- Enable children to achieve their full potential; socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually.
- Nurture strong partnerships with parents and carers in the development of the whole child.
- Support children's social communications skills and encourage them to build healthy relationships with adults and their peers.
- Support child led learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor provision that enhances learning opportunities and meets the needs of all children.
- Foster and encourage independence.
- Develop a sense of rights and responsibilities by living our school values alongside the British Values.

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- Encourage and provide children with experiences to develop the school’s ‘Super Learning Powers’ in all that they do – Collaboration, Resilience, Focus, Problem Solving, Originality and Independence.
- Teach the children in a range of ways that are matched to children’s individual needs, abilities and interests

St Leo’s and Southmead Nursery

Children can join Nursery the half term after they turn 3. All 3-year olds are entitled to 15 hours of funded education the term after they have turned 3.

Parents who both work at least 16 hours a week are entitled to 30 hours of childcare provision. This is subject to a valid voucher code being submitted at the end of the term before they start. Parents are provided with morning or afternoon session for their child.

St Leo’s and Southmead Reception

Children will begin Reception in the academic year in which they turn 5 years old.

Parents must apply directly to the school and Knowsley Council to secure a school place. All children who are starting Reception have the opportunity to visit the school for a transition session in the Summer term before they are due to start.

There will be an opportunity to meet the class teacher, Head Teacher and Early Years Lead and find out a little more about the curriculum, daily routines and ask questions. during an intake meeting (Usually takes place in June). Before a child starts Reception there will be an individual meeting, where you can meet the class teacher and Early Years staff, to discuss any private issue/concerns and allow an opportunity for the child to familiarise themselves with the classroom and staff before they start.

Once the children are in school both Nursery and Reception parents will be invited to a parents evening. This allows parents to learn more about the curriculum and find out what their child has been doing in their first few weeks of school. For those children who join us part way through the academic year there is an option for parents to request a transition session if they so wish.

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When Joining Nursery, the child is invited to a stay and play session. There are opportunities to meet the teacher and the Nursery staff, visit the setting and attend a transition session if you wish. We operate an open-door policy and parents are always welcome to talk to us or message us using the Dojo app.

EYFS Curriculum

The Children in Nursery and Reception follow the Early Years Curriculum. We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum which enables children to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The curriculum is broken down into Prime and Specific areas of learning and incorporates the characteristics of learning.

Prime Areas

Personal Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Specific Areas

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding of the World

Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

These characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and the way in which they play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

Playing and Exploring- the children engage with their environment, investigate and take part in new experiences and are willing to "have a go".

Active Learning- the children develop levels of concentration, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and take pride in their achievements.

Critical Thinking- children have their own ideas and ways of doing things, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Learning in the Early Years

We have a combination of child led and adult directed activities though the day. Learning through play is an essential part of the Early Years. Children learn best through activities that interest and inspire them and we provide the children with a range of meaningful first-hand experiences. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own.

Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and the children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace.

The children also access a range of adult led focus tasks. This may be in a small group or whole class and allow children to develop new skills or develop their knowledge and understanding of a subject.

Planning

We have a focus topic each half term which provides a springboard for the children's learning. This may include topic launch activities, visitors in school. Alongside this we follow the children's interests and build on their learning from their starting points.

Development Matters is used to plan for progress and we follow the 4 principles of the Early Years.

- A unique child. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.
- Positive relationships. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Enabling environments.
- Learning and development.

Phonics

We follow the Read Write Inc (RWi) programme in school. This is a structured approach and teaches letters sounds (phonemes), formation of the letter shapes (graphemes) and builds and develops the skills of segmenting and blending to read.

The children develop their phonological awareness as they progress through our Foundation Stage and work at a pace that is right for them.

Assessment

When children begin at St Leo's and Southmead, they are assessed and a baseline. The children in Reception will be completing the STA Baseline Assessment (RBA). This then informs future planning, ensuring that all children make good progress from their starting points.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is through a range of focus tasks and observations which are made of children whilst they are engaging with the provision in the learning environment. At the end of the Reception year, the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. (ELGs) Teachers make a judgement as to whether the children are emerging, if they have met or if they have exceeded the ELG (EYFS Profile).

Teaching staff will also report on the Characteristics of Learning. The judgements are made on a “best fit” approach and the children do not need to have mastered all elements of the Early Learning Goal.

The Early Learning Goals for communication and language and literacy are assessed in terms of English competency.

Home School Partnerships

At St Leo’s and Southmead, we use an online system called Tapestry to record and store all observations and assessments relating to each child. This is a safe and secure system and one that enables families to access their child’s learning journey at any time. It also enables parents to be regularly informed about their child’s progress. They can share it with their child, family and friends at home and also post any comments and photographs of their own, helping to create a fully holistic view of the child and strengthen the parent partnership.

Parents are children’s very first educators and as parents you will know your child better than anyone. We aim to foster close home school links to enable us to provide the very best start for your child.

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's Learning Journeys by sending in photographs, pictures or notes to tell us about the child's achievements at home. Reading books and other activities are sent home when the children are ready and we expect these children to read every night.

Home link books are sent home on a weekly basis, sometimes with some Learning tasks. These are designed to encourage discussion at home. The Home link books are returned to school each week and used for language and communication activities where the children will share their books with their Key Worker and peers. Parents are regularly informed about their child's progress. This can be through informal chats at the end of the school day or communication through reading records, Dojo and Tapestry.

There are also opportunities for more formal discussions which take place twice a year at parent evenings. There is a formal report at the end of the academic year for both Nursery and Reception children.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

The school prides itself on being inclusive and there is a wealth of expertise which is drawn upon to ensure all children have access to a curriculum that suits their needs and allows them to reach their full potential. We work with a range of professionals to ensure that we are offering the very best practice and are flexible and adaptable in our approach to ensure that each child is given the very best start to their school life. Our school welcomes children from all nationalities, cultures and religions and aims to

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provide equal opportunities for all children, regardless of gender, ability or cultural background. Every member of St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Nursery and Primary School is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, ethnic origin, race, age, gender, sexuality and/or disability.

Resources

Children in the EYFS class have access to all the school resources, which are labelled and stored in appropriate areas within school. However, within the EYFS class there are also specialised Early Years resources which are accessible to the children on a daily basis. Children have access to all of these resources during play and self chosen activities.

Audits of these resources are carried out yearly by the Early Years Lead to ensure quality resources are available.

The policy was agreed by all staff and Governors in September 2023 and will be reviewed in line with school development priorities.

Headteacher _____ Date _____

Chair of Governors _____ Date _____