



Leigh Academy  
**Bearsted**



# **Leigh Academy Bearsted Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Reviewed: August 2025  
To be reviewed by: August 2026**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years.

At Leigh Academy Bearsted we have one nursery class and two reception classes.

Our nursery class has 26 available places per day, and children are offered a place a term after their third birthday. We have intakes in September and January, depending on the availability of spaces.

Whilst we are adjoined to the rest of Leigh Academy Bearsted, attendance at our nursery does not guarantee a reception place and parents/carers must reapply for a school place.

Each reception class has a full time teacher and at least one Teaching Assistant (TA). To ensure best practice and continuity our foundation stage classes work closely together to collaborate on planning, activities and learning experiences for our EYFS children.

## **Aims**

At Leigh Academy Bearsted we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and motivated lifelong learners.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills, such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally to achieve their full potential. We offer a range of learning opportunities for children across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, both within our purpose built nursery and Reception classrooms, and also our outdoor environment, which includes a garden, playground and trim trail area.

## **Our Curriculum**

At Leigh Academy Bearsted we ensure that the educational programmes are well planned and resourced to have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. They provide interesting and exciting experiences that meet the needs of all children. Planning is based on a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve.

We implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework as set by the Department for Education. This sets standards to ensure all children learn and develop well and is followed by both our Nursery and Reception classes. More information about the current EYFS Framework can be found [here](#).

### **The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

## **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as a consistent use of conferencing, to develop a positive attitude to learning in our children.

## **Positive relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Within the EYFS we place high importance on building a secure relationship between our staff and our families in order to enable a two-way discussion about your child's progress and what can be done to best support the development of each individual child.

## **Enabling environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Our foundation stage has one nursery classroom, two reception classrooms, a large outdoor classroom which the reception classes share and a separate outdoor classroom for the nursery children. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn effectively and

safely. There are a variety of areas within our provision where the children can be active, or be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

### **Learning and development**

Through observations and conferencing we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning activities and experiences to extend their learning.

### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

There are also **four specific areas** of learning:

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

### **Our Approach**

At Leigh Academy Bearsted we support and enhance children's learning and development holistically through play based activities and explorations. We review all aspects of learning and development and ensure a flexible approach is maintained, which responds quickly to children's learning and developmental needs. We develop tailor-made activities and in the moment planning based on observations which draw on our children's needs and interests. This is promoted through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities both indoors and outdoors.

We deliver our EYFS curriculum through the framework of the Primary Years Programme as part of the IB (International Baccalaureate). Through this approach to learning we are able to develop children's inquiry skills and questioning about the world around them. This helps to create confident, capable global learners who have a love of learning.

## **Play**

Learning through play and discovery underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children, as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace.

Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them, and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

## **Inclusion**

Our whole school ethos embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for *all* children. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is identified we will liaise with the Principal, Early Years Lead, and SENCO where necessary, as well as seeking advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist.

## **Assessment**

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers, and through talking to and fully immersing ourselves in co-play with the children. Every child in

Nursery and Reception has a 'Learning Journal' which they take complete ownership of. These journals are used to capture the 'wow' work and experiences that are meaningful to our children, and that can talk proudly about.

At the start of both Nursery and Reception children are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play, as well as through more formative assessments. Throughout the Foundation Stage two parent/guardian meetings will take place to ensure that parents are aware of their child's progress and achievements, as well as their next steps. A written report will then be provided at the end of the academic year.

### **Transitions**

At Leigh Academy Bearsted we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Once a child's place has been accepted, a member of the EYFS staff will be in touch to arrange a transition call. This provides an opportunity for parents/carers to share important information about their child(ren) and any concerns or questions that they may have. This is also a valuable opportunity for our staff to begin to build a relationship with both parents/carers as well as our young pupils.

When a child first starts at Leigh Academy Bearsted they will have a stay & play session to allow them to familiarise themselves with the setting and staff. It is during this time that we will work with the family to discuss any specific needs a child may have or how we can support them settling into school life. If a child has additional needs that may need further support, transition may be gradual and a transition plan will be put in place for September. This will be planned with the EYFS Lead and reviewed regularly. We withhold the right to make the final decision as to when children start full-time if it's in the best interests of the child, but we will always take into consideration the views of the parent(s)/carers.

### **Health & Safety and Safeguarding**

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 the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance](#) and we adhere to the [Leigh Academy](#)

## [Bearsted Early Years Child Protection Policy 2025-26](#)

We encourage a healthy lifestyle within our setting and our children are able to receive free milk until they turn 5 years old. All children have access to fresh water and free fruit from the Government fruit scheme daily. Children have the option of a cooked school dinner or to bring in a healthy packed lunch. Please see our '[Healthy Eating & Nutrition](#)' policy for further details.

The Nursery and Reception areas have their own toilets, and we teach children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and self-care.

Throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food and regularly encourage the children to access and prepare their own snacks during the sessions.

### **Partnership with Parents**

We acknowledge parents as primary educators and encourage parental involvement throughout a child's time at Leigh Academy Bearsted. We seek to build strong home links in order to enhance and extend children's learning both within the school environment and in their home. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting.

We encourage parents to play an active role in their child's time at Leigh Academy Bearsted, and with this in mind we run an initial 'play and stay' session which gives our parents the opportunity to explore life in the school. You will then be offered regular opportunities to contribute to your child's learning journey, through such things as sharing 'wow moments' from home and engaging in 'book looks' and online learning via our Google Classroom platform.