



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Agreed at FGB February 2021

Review date: February 2022

SCHOOL ETHOS and VISION

'Learn to love, and love to learn'

Our school is an integral part of our village and everyone within this community is valued and nurtured as part of our school family and God's family. Christian teaching and values are at the heart of all we do, to ensure that we develop well-motivated, independent, happy children who aspire to achieve their best in all they do, respecting and valuing themselves and others.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in Toy Box Pre-School and Reception class.

At Long Sutton School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, giving them a strong foundation for future learning. As outlined in the EYFS, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and endeavour to provide the support that enables them to fulfill their potential academically, socially and emotionally. In the early stages, children develop quickly and the child's experiences have a huge impact on future life chances. Therefore, we believe that the Foundation Stage makes a crucial contribution to ensuring that all children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We are committed to providing a happy, caring and fun environment.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS (2017) and the four guiding principles that shape practice:

- 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/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways (see “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.9) 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.

We give our children opportunities to rehearse recent learning and to express themselves through play. We want them to feel a sense of achievement for themselves, developing their self-esteem and motivation to keep trying new things and develop their resilience as a learner.

Children develop and learn in different ways, therefore when planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on practice to develop key characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

We provide an exciting, challenging curriculum through a rich variety of teaching and learning experiences based on observations of children as they learn and play.

We believe that the learning should be a mix of child initiated and adult-led activity responding to each child's emerging needs and interests, as well as providing them with challenge from their own starting points.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3). They support children's learning in all other areas and are known as the prime areas. The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention; Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Moving and Handling; Self care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making relationships; Managing feelings and behaviour; Self-confidence and self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in school and society. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** – Reading; Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers; Space, shape and measures
- **Understanding the World** – People and communities, The world; Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and using media and materials; Being imaginative

We provide the children with a range of rich and meaningful first-hand experiences in which to explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

In the early years, we plan the children's learning around their own interests, using 'in the moment' planning in Toy Box and Thinking and Talking floor books in Reception, catching the children's ideas and thinking, and skilfully developing these through active learning and play. The children have a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds' as well as exploring and learning aspects of Mathematics and English. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those planned by adults. We focus on developing the children's 'Learning Muscles' – reflection, collaboration and resilience to enable them to be independent, life-long learners. This is done through the use of 'Wise Owl', 'Team Ant' and 'Tough Tortoise', characters that go right through the school's teaching and learning.

The quality of our teaching and learning enables the children to become resilient, capable, confident and self-assured, promoting 'school readiness', thus giving the children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The outdoor environment is also a very special part of the Foundation Stage curriculum at Long Sutton Primary School and we create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free flow between the inside and out. As such it is carefully planned for and available each day, with a well-resourced available play space.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning, using this to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways: significant children's achievements are collated in their 'learning journeys' and shared with parents.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. We create a safe and secure environment, and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks, with stringent policies, procedures and risk assessments and documentation to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of children in our care in numerous ways by encouraging physical activity, use of the outdoors, healthy eating and cooking.

We have set procedures for when a child becomes ill or has an accident.

Transition into the Reception class

The Early Years Foundation Stage emphasises the importance of learning through play. The transfer from pre-school to school is a big event in a child's life and the EYFS ensures that the provision in school meets the needs of young children. Those children from Toy Box will already be very familiar with the school setting, the classroom and staff as the two classes work closely together but we still feel it is important for the children to have a formal transition.

This begins in the Summer term during which time children visit the Reception class taking part in story times, play times and a half day play experience. This gives the children an opportunity to become familiar with their new learning environment, where they can meet their new teachers and peers. It also gives the Foundation staff time to get to know the children and to begin to assess their learning needs. We also visit the children in their pre-school setting and talk with their teachers/carers about what they like to learn and how they like to learn. By the time the children start school in September they are very familiar with the school environment and their teachers. When the children first start school they are given a Buddy from the upper part of the school to help them at lunchtimes and playtimes.

Inclusion

We at Long Sutton School believe that each pupil has individual and unique needs. We acknowledge that a significant proportion of pupils will have special educational needs (SEN) at some time in their school career. Many of these pupils may require help throughout their time in school, while others may need a little extra support for a short period to help them overcome more temporary needs. If these pupils are to achieve their full potential, we must recognise this and plan accordingly. We aim to provide all pupils with strategies for dealing with their needs in a supportive environment, and to give them meaningful access to the National Curriculum. We also aim to provide an accessible environment, in order to be as fully inclusive as possible.

Through our transition meetings we discuss each and every child's individual needs. If required, or parents wish for a school entry plan to support their child's specific needs as they enter school, we hold a meeting with the pre-school carers, parents, outside agencies and our school staff. From this, a plan is set up for the child's start to school which is monitored through their first year and continues as necessary. The school's Local Offer can be found on the website or a copy requested, this details the support provided and answer key questions. For further information please speak to the SENCo via the school office. Also see the SEND Policy.

Starting school

During their first week in school, the children attend school for the morning and lunch time only. This will enable them to get used to the environment and being with the other children in a school setting again after the Summer holidays. We intend that the majority of children will then go full time but for some children this may not be appropriate. This will be a joint decision between the parents and the school.

Partnership with parents and the wider context

Parents are a child's first educator and at Long Sutton School we value this by building trusting relationships with parents as soon as their child enters school. Soon after a child is offered a place the school will send out information to parents about the start to school. This includes dates for transition, general information about the school, data sheets, a universal free school meal form and the term dates. Parents are then invited to the school as part of the transition sessions to meet the Head Teacher, class teacher and teaching assistant, look around the school, ask questions and share information about their child. Once children start school, parents are invited to meet with the class teacher in the first few weeks of school to talk about how their child has settled into school. Also, during the first term we meet with parents to inform them of the curriculum and assessment processes. We hold workshops in phonics so that parents can support their child during the early stages of learning to read and write.

We work closely with all other services and organisations in order to meet the needs of children and at times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. We also have well developed community links to enrich the experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the church and community to our school.