



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Agreed at FGB March 2023

Review date: March 2025

## **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 the Reception children in Cygnet class.

At Long Sutton School we believe that in providing high quality care and education for all children we are giving them a strong foundation for their future learning and personal development. Through providing a happy, caring and safe environment in which to play and learn, we are giving them the opportunity to develop enjoyment, engagement and motivation in learning, resilience in the face of a challenge and the confidence to have a go.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS (2021) including the four guiding principles that shape our 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates (see “the characteristics of effective learning below). Our work with children covers the education and care of all children in our provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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

In the early years, we have developed our curriculum to provide a progression of skills and knowledge alongside providing space to allow children to explore and follow their own interests. It has been designed to provide an exciting, challenging and meaningful programme containing a rich variety of teaching and learning experiences which support our children to develop key skills, knowledge and attitudes. The development of our children’s communication, language and

vocabulary is very important to us and we weave this through everything we do. We follow the key guidance in the educational programmes of study which lead to the Early Learning Goals.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected, however the three prime areas are seen as ‘particularly important for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.’ (DfE 2021: 1.4). They support children’s learning in all other areas and are known as the prime areas. The **prime areas** are:

- **communication and language**
- **physical development**
- **personal, social and emotional development**

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

- **literacy**
- **mathematics**
- **understanding the world**
- **expressive arts and design**

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.

### **Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Stage**

We believe that play is an essential ingredient to children’s learning in the foundation stage and that we should provide a mix of child initiated and adult-led activity which responds to each child’s emerging needs and interests, as well as providing them with challenge from their own starting points. We also believe that every interaction between an adult and child is an opportunity for teaching and learning. We do this through the ways in which we talk to and play with children; how we provide clear boundaries; how we encourage and support children to solve problems; and how we model new learning and attitudes to learning.

We carefully scaffold children’s learning and development through progressively sequenced teaching, guidance and support, eventually leading to independence. Specific skills and knowledge are taught in small groups where children are given multiple opportunities to try out or consolidate their new learning in play based activities.

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

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knowledge and skills that provide the right foundations 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 learn inside and outside. As such, it is carefully planned for and available each day, with a well-resourced available play space. Loose parts play is a key ingredient of all our learning but especially in our outside area.

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.

### **Assessment**

There are three formal assessment points in the EYFS: the two-year old check, Reception Baseline and the Foundation Stage Profile. During a child's time with us we use assessment to help us develop next steps for each child and to support us to check if children are on track and age related in key areas of child development. We use observations, discussions, parent information and key checks to ensure that we are providing the teaching and learning needed for every child to succeed and thrive.

### **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. We have, and regularly review, stringent policies, procedures and risk assessments to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health and well-being of children in our care in numerous ways including by encouraging physical activity, use of the outdoors, healthy eating and cooking, understanding how to keep ourselves safe.

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.

Transition 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 adults in the Reception class time to get to know the

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children and to begin to assess their learning needs. We also visit the children in their pre-school settings 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**

At Long Sutton School we believe that each pupil has individual and unique strengths and 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 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. 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.