

LYNCH HILL SCHOOL PRIMARY ACADEMY

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, 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 developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document 2017, which is available to download at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

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, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

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

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

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- **Understanding the World** – People and communities, The world and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing in order to extend their play and broaden learning opportunities. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending the learning where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year one. At Lynch Hill, we take the transition of children seriously and understand that little acts can make a big difference. We aim to support children through visits to their new year group, time meeting the year group adults and informing children about the exciting learning they will do in year one.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class or group. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still and verbalizing learning.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there are always opportunities for children to share books with peers and adults. In addition to this, there are a range of high quality stories which we use to enhance or plan and address important themes throughout the academic year. Every child is expected to have their own book bag and has the opportunity to borrow stories from the EYFS book boxes each day.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. The Nursery teachers and the Reception teachers plan together within their year groups to ensure the classes are covering similar topics and evenly covering the curriculum. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events e.g. the Olympics. Every term, staff plan the next topics, books and arrange any visitors that will enhance the learning. This will be communicated to parents in a curriculum map.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Although class teachers are responsible for planning for their children, the Nursery staff team and the Reception staff team plan together as much as possible to ensure that all adult input is acted upon as much as possible.

Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Lynch Hill is given a priority, even in the Early Years. We

believe that it is essential to enriching the curriculum. We aim to ensure that in the Summer term, the Nursery will either visit a local farm or be visited by a petting zoo. The Reception year group visit Bucklebury Farm.

Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bath a baby, painting mehndi patterns on hands or playing guitar.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults assess the play being established by the children and whilst maintaining safe levels of staffing in each area, move to where they can support and extend play.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. In Nursery, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. In addition to utilizing the outdoor areas, the Nursery and Reception children, also engage in physical play during their lunchtimes (Extended Nusery and Recpetion only), P.E. and occasional extra sessions on the KS1 playground.

Each child has their own labelled peg and drawer in their classroom or group. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely in one place!

Assessment, observations and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual Learning Journey. We are very proud of our Learning Journeys: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead.

Parents have access to the Learning Journeys which are stored in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to contribute through the use of our WOW cards. WOW cards are where significant events that happen at home can be recorded, they are available from all the teachers or key workers and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff. The Learning Journey is given to parents when their child enters Year 1 or leaves our setting.

On entry to Nursery we carry out baseline assessments for each child. These assessments are updated half termly. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Reception.

If Nursery key workers feel that a child is not working at the expected level for Speaking and this is not improving despite additional support, they may suggest that parents take their child to a local Speech and Language Drop In Clinic for an assessment. This assessment may result in further additional support for the child. Reception teachers may feel that children require support in Speaking. This may be related to their social communication, speech sound production or both. If this is the case, we may ask for parental permission to refer the child to our Community Language Team for an informal assessment. This may result in further support.

In both Nursery and Reception, the key workers and teachers are expected to meet the learning needs of the child within the possibilities of the mainstream school. To document and track the effectiveness of the support we provide, the children will be written an Individual Education Plan (IEP). It is important that these are shared and signed by parents each time they are written and reviewed.

Role of staff and key worker

The nursery operates a key worker system. There are five groups and each child will be taught by their key worker for their adult led carpet times at the beginning and end of each day.

In Reception, the class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

There are occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a Meet the Teacher session at the beginning of the school year and offer other sessions for parents, such as our stay and play sessions in the Nursery.

When a child gains a place at Lynch Hill School Nursery, we arrange a home visit. These visits usually take place at the beginning of the Autumn term and involve two members of the nursery team visiting the children at home. This allows us to meet children in the environment where they are most comfortable. Staff attend homes in pairs so that one person is able to spend time with the child and the other is able to answer any questions parents may have. On these home visits, we will ask parents to complete a thirty-month screening check. This will help us to identify children who may need additional support in some areas and allow us to be prepared for their start in Nursery in addition to being able to sign post parents to further support.

When children start at Lynch Hill School Reception, rather than conduct a home visit, the teachers try to visit the children in their current nursery. This allows us to seek information from the previous setting about their learning as well as providing us with an opportunity to meet the children and see how they interact with the learning environment.

In addition to home visits and Nursery visits, we also ask parents to attend a session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents. We give each family as much information as possible on this day encourage questions. On the child's first session in Nursery, we ask parents to arrive at a particular time which will be after the adult led carpet session has finished. This allows us to offer support to new children and their parents and settle the children successfully.

On children's first day in Reception, we encourage parents and carers to come in and help their child to find their peg. We then ask parents to say goodbye to their children as quickly as possible as so many people in the corridor can be overwhelming for the children

Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting in the Autumn and Spring terms. In addition to this, teachers are available most mornings and afternoons until 5pm to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

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 (2017 sections 3.4 – 3.15)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRA_MEWORK_2017.pdf and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the EYFS.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This is in line with the Lynch Hill School Safeguarding Policy. Members of staff do, however, use school Learn Pads and cameras to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These

photographs are used in children's learning journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial home school agreement packs.

We are a healthy school and due to some serious allergies amongst the children, a nut-free school. Our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme. We ask that when we have class parties and other events when children are allowed to bring in food from home, that they are provided with health, nut-free snacks. These might be bread sticks, rice cakes or more exotic fruits such as grapes or a pineapple.

Our staff model good eating habits by eating alongside the children when possible. Those children who stay for lunch, in Nursery and all Reception children have the choice of a school lunch or bringing in their own packed lunch. We have a kitchen in the Nursery and Reception which no child is allowed to enter and is secured with a gate or door.

We take all accidents seriously and always log if a child bangs their head. We also call or text home if there is a visible mark on the child. We have cold compresses stored in the Nursery and Reception freezers.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves!) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Some children prefer to be changed into their own clothes rather than the spare clothes we keep in school. We ask that if this is the case, that parents send children in with a change of clothes in their book bag. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Mrs. Gillian Coffey OBE, Executive Head Teacher, is the named Designated Safeguarding Officer and all concerns are discussed with her as necessary.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.