



LEOMINSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL 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, which is available to download at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.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 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 it where possible.

By the summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experience 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. 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 etc...

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 is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is encouraged to have their own book bag and will have opportunities through the week to have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult, or in Reception, Guided Reading sessions and 1:1 reading with an adult.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and we find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Therefore we begin each half term with a set topic. The two Nursery classes are the same and all three Reception classes are the same. The rest of the half term, topics are based on children's interests, although in our long term plan we plan some national events such as world book day, the Olympics and topics related to Diversity. We book visits related to their topic and encourage visitors in to enhance their learning.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where their learning journey should move to.

Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Leominster Primary School is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. These can range from a visit to the local library, visiting the local town or visiting Farms. We aim for a ratio of one adult to four children in Nursery and a minimum of one to six in the Reception classes.

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, 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 outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for some of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. In Nursery, physical activities are set up outside. The Reception classes tend to have more physical play during break time, P.E. and occasional extra sessions. Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom area and Nursery children have a tray. 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 portfolio. We are very proud of our portfolios: 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 and throughout the day. These next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead. Staff have their own iPad which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. Staff are becoming confident in using tapestry to support this.

On entry to Nursery and Reception (within the first 6 weeks), we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Deputy Head showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. 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. Every term, once assessment data is submitted to the Deputy Head, Pupil progress meetings are held to discuss where each individual child is at, where they need to be and what support we need to give the pupils to achieve. We have Learning Mentors to support children with Personal, Social and Emotional Needs.

Role of staff and key worker

In the Reception classes, the class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Within the Nursery, each child is designated to one of our Nursery practitioners, although our Nursery Teachers oversee every child in their class. 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 rare 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 parenting workshops and other sessions for parents, such as how to support your child with phonics / reading. Display boards updated regularly to inform parents of the curriculum and what the focus of the week is so that parents can support at home. We invite Parents in for slideshows and craft days. Our open door policy refers to our approach to daily liaison with our parents. We want to ensure that parents feel that they can communicate with us directly on a daily basis.

The Nursery classes hold open days in the Summer Term for all prospective parents / carers and children. Once a Nursery child gains a place at Leominster Primary School, our Nursery staff make home visits at the beginning of the autumn term. During the same week, children and parents / carers are invited to stay and play days to help settle the new children. The week after, children start their allocated sessions. To ensure smooth transition, we are happy for Parents / carers to stay with their children if there is a need. Once a child gains a place in our Reception classes, in the summer term before Reception children are due to start, we hold a parent induction day and offer mornings for children to visit their new classroom. Our Reception staff also visit their new children to be in their Nursery setting. During the first week of the autumn term, Reception staff visit children in their home setting and invite parent / carers and children for a stay and play morning / afternoon. Towards the end of the first week, Reception children start school, but we stagger their start day, offering summer birthday children to start first and then autumn and spring birthdays. Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting each term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings 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 (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

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. (all staff agree to our staff acceptable use of internet and network) Members of staff do, however, use school iPads / cameras to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, 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 starter packs.

Our children receive free fruit and milk from the Government scheme. Children may order school lunches, but if a child brings their own packed lunch, we encourage healthy lunches and non-fizzy drinks to be brought to school.

We take all accidents seriously and always log and phone home immediately if a child bangs their head. We have cold compresses stored in the Office Fridge and we have a First Aid member of staff on duty during first play and lunchtime playtimes.

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.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Mrs Helen Lynch, Deputy Head teacher, is the named Designated Safeguarding Lead and Miss Louise Price, Family Support Manager is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer. All concerns are discussed with either.

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

Date of review: June 2017

Date of next review: June 2018

Ratified by Governors on 11th July 2017