

# Lower Kersal Primary School

## Early Years foundation stage policy

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## **Introduction**

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

## **Aims & Objectives**

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:**

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

### **A Unique Child**

In the Foundation Stage, 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, at varying rates. We use praise and encouragement, as well as achievement assemblies and 'Show and Tell' to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best.

We meet the needs of all our children through various ways including planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests. We also ensure that children have many opportunities to master skills for the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) and learn skills for the Exceeding Early Learning Goals.

### **Positive Relationships**

In the Foundation Stage, we aim to develop caring, respectful relationships with the children and their families. There are regular opportunities for parents to talk to staff about their child's "Learning Journey" informally before and after school. Nursery and Reception parents also have the opportunity each half term to come in and discuss their child's targets.

## **Enabling Environments**

In the Foundation Stage we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Nursery and Reception environments are set up in learning zones, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Nursery and Reception share an outdoor area, which has a positive impact on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. Children's interests and needs underpin the Foundation Stage planning. We follow a topic-based approach and plan using skills from the Development Matters aspects of the EYFS. Robust assessment ensures that future planning reflects identified needs.

## **Teaching and learning**

### **Curriculum**

At Lower Kersal Primary school, we recognise that every child is unique. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We want our children to be independent and self-motivated learners, encouraging the children to adapt their work, think critically and take risks with their learning.

### **Our EYFS Curriculum**

- is distinctive, innovative and strategically planned with the individual pupils in mind
- is reviewed in the light of national developments, new thinking and research and development
- introduces challenging, engaging and real life problems
- strives to encourage and develop a love of learning
- let's learning happen within a child centred approach
- ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning at every stage of development and in every area of the EYFS curriculum
- ensures all areas of learning are regarded with the same level of importance and are interlinked in learning
- includes fundamental British values to teach children a sense of self and belonging; enabling them to learn and stay true to the values that make people good human beings
- ensures that children learn to live together peacefully, with each of them playing a valuable role in the multi-cultural world in which they live

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and included in the curriculum taught. There are three prime areas, which are seen to underpin all of the basics and support the other more specific areas of the curriculum.

### **The Prime Areas of Learning and Development**

#### **1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school and the local community in order to make links stronger. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. This enables children to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

## 2. Physical Development

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources. Children are also taught PE discretely by a specialist PE teacher.

## 3. Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. We focus on developing children's competence in speaking and listening with an aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through show and tell, speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions, saying rhymes, and singing songs together.

## **The Specific Areas of Learning and Development**

### 4. Literacy

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, daily phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and cursive letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and stories are read daily to the pupils to encourage an enjoyment of reading.

### 5. Mathematics

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and by using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Pre-number work is covered through Nursery rhymes and number activities. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

### 6. Understanding of the World

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology such as iPads and simple recording equipment.

### 7. Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Through regular observations, we will discover children's interests and assess what children know. Also fundamental to our practice is to assess how children learn and it is our duty to report to parents their children's individual dispositions and attitudes to learning. This will be assessed using the Characteristics of Effective Learning which are:

### Playing and exploring – engagement

Children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'.

### Active learning – motivation

Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.

### Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

## **Phonics**

The ability to read is within the reach of every child. The most direct route to reading for the vast majority of children is through systematically taught, 'synthetic phonics'. At Lower Kersal, we follow a 'phonics first' approach to reading, where children learn to decode (read) and encode (spell) printed words quickly and fluently by blending and segmenting letter sounds. Our teaching and learning follows the progression of 'Read Write Inc' curriculum.

The Read Write Inc curriculum will teach children to:

- apply the skill of blending phonemes to read words.
- segment words in their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- learn that blending and segmenting words are reversible processes
- read high frequency words that do not conform to regular phonic patterns.
- read texts and words that are within their phonic capabilities as early as possible.
- spell effortlessly so that all their resources can be directed towards composing their writing.

Teaching of Read Write Inc will:

- be pitched at the correct level for each child, ensuring every child is sufficiently challenged while able to make clear progress;
- excite and stimulate children through active learning in which they enjoy achieving and progressing;
- uses phonics, reading and writing skills together to connect and support each of these aspects;
- encourages consistency of teaching and learning across the school in this area;
- accelerates children's literacy learning leading to improvements in attainment, both in relation to the Phonics Screening Check and throughout the school.

Children are assessed throughout every lesson through teacher observation and each half-term, a formal assessment is completed to check individual children's ability to recognise and say each sound and blend and say real and nonsense words. This assessment is then used to place children in groups with other children at a similar stage to them.

In the Reception class, children receive a daily 30 minutes Read Write Inc session. In Nursery, children begin their read write inc journey in the **Spring term.**

## **Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in the EYFS are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

- **Long Term Planning:** We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage.
- **Medium Term Planning:** We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.
- **Short Term Planning:** We identify specific learning objectives and plan activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. Planning reflects and supports the characteristics of effective learning and the different ways children learn: play and exploration, active learning and creative and critical thinking.

### **Direct Teaching**

At specific times in the day the children will take part in an activity that is teacher led. These sessions include daily phonics lessons, daily reading and daily maths/counting experiences, as well as teaching new skills to support their learning within the classroom environment and also in the outdoor environment. In Reception, guided reading sessions take place on a weekly basis. All direct taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and, in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

### **Learning Through Play**

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Children learn best from activities and experiences that they have initiated and play with peers is important for children's development. We carefully plan our environment and provide opportunities to reflect these interests to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that children also have the opportunity to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching. Constant opportunities are provided for children to be able to make their own decisions and choices in order that they can become independent, confident and happy learners as soon as is possible for each individual child. Some children will need gentle encouragement in this step as they become comfortable in their new setting.

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children at Lower Kersal soon grasp the school and classroom rules we have in our Foundation Stage. They see the high expectations we have in every aspect of our day and delight in trying to meet these. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support this process enhances children's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress**

Assessment is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children's learning and development. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each

child's level of development. These can be through observations, photographic evidence, examples of work and conversations with parents. Assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during continuous provision when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and adapt any future learning.

Observations are taken using the Target Tracker App, which allows staff to take photos, videos and to make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying. From such observations, we can ascertain what the next steps are for each child. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents on an almost daily basis. This is a two-way process whereby parents may input observations of their own, add comments to post and like observations they can view. As it is an app based 'Online Learning Journey', it is highly accessible as parents can access on mobile phones, tablets as well as on computers.

On entry to Reception a baseline assessment is carried out for each child and at the end of each term assessments are collated to track how well the children are progressing. Opportunities for a Parent Teacher meeting are provided in the Spring term to provide information about children's progress and to discuss the children's learning, to talk about children's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps. These form the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school. On-going teacher assessments are undertaken in line with the Foundation Stage Profile and these form the basis for the end of year report to parents.

## **Safeguarding**

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance. Our school has rigorous Safeguarding and welfare policy and procedures that are used to identify anyone at risk or harm of radicalisation that sets out clear procedures for reporting any concerns. See our Schools Safeguarding Children Policy and Child Protection Procedures available on the school's website.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to teach children that, in society as in a classroom, there is a need for boundaries, rules and limits to which we all need to adhere to help us stay safe. We aim to teach children to be consciously aware of their feelings and the feelings of others and how to manage their own behaviour by identifying behavioural issues and using them as a teaching moment. We also aim to teach our children to take risks whilst learning how to recognise and avoid hazards. Should accidents occur an emergency contact form is completed for all children on entry into school, which includes medical, personal and social details. Other than minor cuts and bruises, all accidents on school premises are recorded in the School Accident Book and parents are informed.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Lower Kersal Primary School is an inclusive school which offers a broad, balanced and creative curriculum which aims to encourage all children to achieve their full potential, including children with SEND. We give consideration to whether a child may have a special educational need (SEN) or disability which requires specialist support. If a child's progress in any prime or specific area of learning gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the SENCO and the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Further details can be found in the following whole school policies:

- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy and Information Report
- The Accessibility Plan
- The Equality Opportunities Policy
- The Equality Scheme

## **Speech and language/Wellcomm**

At Lower Kersal, we believe that speech, language and communication skills are vital for all children. Without these skills they will not reach their full potential. All members of staff know that they have a very important role to play in supporting all children's speech and language development, and identifying when they might be having difficulty.

At Lower Kersal, we commission a speech therapist, who works with our school every other week for a day. Children with speech and language difficulties may receive intervention in small groups with the class teacher or a teaching assistant to work towards individual targets. Some children, usually with more severe speech and language difficulties, are referred to the Speech and Language Service and children will be offered appointments to be seen in clinic.

In the EYFS, we use the WellComm Toolkit. This is a Speech and Language Toolkit for Screening and Intervention in the Early Years. This plays a crucial role in identifying children with potential language difficulties and offers a range of customised intervention activities to help support their language development.

### **Why do we use WellComm?**

- To identify children in need of referral or support
- To provide tailored intervention strategies for all children
- To assess children's communication skills on entry to nursery and school
- To measure progress throughout

Children are screened and assessed on a termly basis and the results are used to put children in to ability groups. The children then receive quality sessions which are pitched to progress and enhance children's speech and communication skills.

## **Working with parents and carers**

The school recognises the huge importance of establishing effective relationships with parents and carers in ensuring the children achieve their full potential. Parental involvement is actively encouraged. Parents are very welcome to chat to staff prior to the start of the school day or at the end of the school day giving them opportunities to discuss any concerns with staff. Staff ensure that parents are well informed about the curriculum their child is experiencing through Target Tracker, notes, letters, half termly newsletters, notice boards and the school Twitter page. Staff take the opportunity at the end of the day to talk to parents about significant achievements or any concerns.

Throughout the year, parents are invited in to the classrooms to attend half termly drop ins, giving them an opportunity to look at their child's books. Each term, we report to parents about their child's progress and development.

## **Transition**

For information on how we support children transitioning into our Early Years and from our Early Year stage to KS1 please refer to our Transition Policy.