

Lower Kersal Primary School



Early Years foundation stage policy

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1. Introduction

At Lower Kersal, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. We are committed to providing a safe, secure, nurturing and stimulating environment where all children can learn, develop and thrive. We recognise that children's experiences in the early years have a significant impact on their future life chances and we work in partnership with families to support every child to reach their full potential, in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework.

Department for Education (2025) Early Years Foundation Stage
Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers. London: DfE.

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 learning environment and development for the children to experience as they begin their educational 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.
- Recognise and value each child's strengths, assess their individual needs, and support them to make good progress.
- Develop strong partnerships with parents and carers to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Provide a caring, inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the needs of all children, including those with additional needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is underpinned by four guiding principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we recognise that every child is a unique and competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates.

We foster positive attitudes towards learning through encouragement, praise and the celebration of achievements. We provide all children with opportunities to succeed and reach their full potential.

Our planning builds upon children's existing knowledge, skills, experiences and interests, ensuring that learning is meaningful and engaging. We provide opportunities for children to develop and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that positive relationships are fundamental to children's wellbeing, learning and development. We strive to build caring, respectful and supportive relationships with all children and their families.

We value parents and carers as children's first educators and work in close partnership with them throughout their child's EYFS journey. Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about their child's learning and development and are kept informed through informal discussions, parents' evenings and end-of-year reports.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a crucial role in supporting and extending children's learning and development. Through careful observation and assessment, we identify children's interests, strengths and next steps in learning and use this information to plan challenging and engaging experiences.

Our Nursery and Reception learning environments are organised to promote independence, enabling children to access resources and equipment confidently. Children benefit from a shared outdoor learning area that provides rich opportunities to explore, investigate, be physically active and develop their curiosity about the world around them.

We ensure that both indoor and outdoor environments support learning across all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum. Children's interests and individual needs are central to our planning. We follow a topic-based approach and use the Development Matters guidance to support curriculum planning and progression. Ongoing assessment informs future planning to ensure learning experiences meet the needs of all children and support continued progress.

2. Teaching and learning

Curriculum

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we recognise that every child is unique. We understand that children develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates. We aim to develop independent, resilient and motivated learners who think critically, solve problems creatively and take risks in their learning.

Our EYFS Curriculum

- is distinctive, innovative and strategically planned with the needs of individual children at its heart;
- is regularly reviewed in the light of national developments, educational research and best practice;
- introduces children to engaging, challenging and real-life experiences and problems;
- fosters curiosity, creativity and lifelong love of learning;
- promotes learning through a child-centred approach that values children's interests and experiences;
- ensures that high-quality resources and equipment are readily available to support learning across all areas of the curriculum;
- values all areas of learning equally and promotes meaningful links between them;
- incorporates Fundamental British Values, helping children develop a sense of self, belonging and respect for others;
- supports children in understanding and valuing diversity, enabling them to become positive members of a multicultural society.

The EYFS framework identifies seven areas of learning and development. All areas are important and inter-connected. Three Prime Areas underpin children's learning and development and support progress in the Specific Areas.

The Prime Areas of Learning and Development

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We foster strong relationships between home, school and the wider community to support children's wellbeing and development. Children are encouraged to develop independence, resilience and self-confidence through making choices, taking responsibility and engaging positively with others.

Through play, discussion and adult support, children learn to share, cooperate, take turns and show respect for others. They develop an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, enabling them to build positive relationships and a strong sense of self.

2. Physical Development

Children are provided with daily opportunities to develop both their fine and gross motor skills through a wide range of indoor and outdoor experiences. They learn to move confidently, safely and with increasing control and coordination.

We support children in developing an understanding of healthy lifestyles, including the importance of physical activity, healthy eating and self-care. Through carefully planned activities and access to high-quality resources, children develop the physical skills needed for future learning and independence.

3. Communication and Language

Communication and Language underpins all areas of learning and development. We place a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking, listening and vocabulary skills through high-quality interactions, storytelling, shared reading, songs, rhymes and meaningful conversations.

Children are encouraged to express their ideas, thoughts and experiences through discussion, role play and imaginative play. Adults model rich language and extend children's vocabulary through questioning, explanation and sustained shared thinking, helping children become confident communicators.

The Specific Areas of Learning and Development

4. Literacy

Reading lies at the heart of our curriculum. We provide a language-rich environment where children develop a love of books, stories and reading from the very beginning of their school journey.

Children have access to a wide range of high-quality texts and opportunities for mark-making, writing and reading both indoors and outdoors. Through daily phonics teaching, shared reading and adult-led literacy activities, children develop the knowledge and skills needed to become successful readers and writers.

Pre-writing activities support the development of pencil control, letter formation and handwriting skills. Children are encouraged to write for a range of purposes appropriate to their stage of development. Stories are shared daily to foster enjoyment, comprehension and vocabulary development.

5. Mathematics

We aim to develop children's mathematical understanding through practical, engaging and meaningful experiences. Children are encouraged to explore, investigate and solve problems while developing confidence in using mathematical language.

Learning includes opportunities to develop number sense, counting skills, subitising, pattern recognition and an understanding of shape, space and measure. Through carefully planned activities and mathematical discussion, children build secure foundations for future mathematical learning.

6. Understanding of the World

Children are encouraged to explore and make sense of the world around them through first-hand experiences, investigation and enquiry.

They learn about people, communities, cultures and traditions, as well as the natural world and changes over time. Opportunities are provided for children to observe, question, experiment and solve problems, helping them develop curiosity and an understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

7. Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for children to explore and express their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a wide range of creative experiences.

Children engage in art, music, dance, role play, imaginative play, design and technology activities that encourage creativity, self-expression and confidence. They are supported in exploring different materials, techniques and ways of representing their ideas.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Through ongoing observation and assessment, practitioners identify children's interests, strengths and next steps in learning. In addition to assessing what children learn, we also consider how children learn and develop positive attitudes towards learning.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are central to our practice:

Playing and exploring – engagement

Children investigate and experience things, explore their environment and are willing to have a go.

Active learning – motivation

Children concentrate, persevere when faced with challenges and experience satisfaction from their achievements.

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Children develop their own ideas, make links between experiences, solve problems and develop strategies for achieving their goals.

Phonics

We believe that every child can learn to read successfully. Reading is a fundamental life skill and is central to our curriculum.

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we follow a 'phonics first' approach, teaching children to decode (read) and encode (spell) words through systematic synthetic phonics. Our teaching follows the progression of the Read Write Inc. programme.

The Read Write Inc. programme teaches children to:

- apply the skill of blending phonemes to read words;
- segment words into phonemes in order to spell accurately;
- understand that blending and segmenting are reversible processes;
- read common exception words that do not follow regular phonic patterns;
- read books matched closely to their phonic knowledge and ability;
- develop fluent reading and accurate spelling skills.

Our teaching ensures that:

- learning is matched to each child's stage of development;
- children are appropriately challenged and supported to make strong progress;
- phonics, reading and writing are taught in a connected and meaningful way;
- consistency is maintained across the school;
- children develop the knowledge and skills needed to become confident readers and writers.

Children are formally assessed each half term to monitor their phonic knowledge and application. Assessment outcomes are used to ensure that children receive teaching appropriate to their stage of development.

In Reception, children participate in a daily 40-minute Read Write Inc. session. Nursery children begin their Read Write Inc. journey during the Spring Term.

Planning

Effective planning ensures that learning is purposeful, engaging, progressive and responsive to children's needs. Learning builds on what children already know and can do and is informed by ongoing observation and assessment. All EYFS practitioners contribute to the planning process to ensure a shared understanding of children's development and next steps.

Planning takes place at three levels:

- **Long Term Planning:** Long-term planning provides the overall structure of the curriculum. Topics, themes and key learning experiences are mapped across the academic year to ensure broad and balanced coverage of the EYFS curriculum.
- **Medium Term Planning:** Medium-term planning identifies key learning opportunities, curriculum links and intended outcomes for each topic or theme. It ensures progression across all areas of learning and development.
- **Short Term Planning:** Short-term planning focuses on children's current interests, needs and next steps. Practitioners plan daily and weekly experiences, learning opportunities, adult interactions and provision enhancements that support progress and engagement.

Direct Teaching

Children take part in carefully planned adult-led sessions throughout the day, including daily phonics, reading and mathematics sessions. Direct teaching introduces new knowledge, skills and concepts and supports children in applying their learning within both the indoor and outdoor environments. Planning is reviewed and adapted regularly in response to assessment information, ensuring that learning remains relevant, appropriately challenging and responsive to children's individual needs.

Learning Through Play

Play is fundamental to children's learning and development. Through play, children explore ideas, develop their understanding of the world and build essential skills across all areas of learning.

We carefully plan our learning environments to reflect children's interests and to provide opportunities for exploration, investigation and discovery. Children are encouraged to make choices, follow their interests and become increasingly independent learners.

Through play, children develop creativity, problem-solving skills, communication and social understanding. They learn to collaborate, negotiate, take risks and persevere when faced with challenges.

Adults play a vital role in supporting and extending children's learning. Through high-quality interactions, questioning, modelling and sustained shared thinking, practitioners help children make connections, deepen their understanding and move their learning forward.

Children have access to a wide range of resources that they can use independently and creatively, enabling them to take ownership of their learning and develop confidence as capable learners.

3. Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It enables practitioners to understand each child's progress, identify next steps in learning and plan appropriately to support their development.

Assessment takes a variety of forms, including observations, photographic evidence, examples of children's work and discussions with parents and carers. Assessment is ongoing and takes place during both adult-led activities and child-initiated learning within continuous provision. Information gathered through assessment is used to inform future planning and ensure learning experiences meet the needs of all children.

On entry to Nursery and Reception, children complete a baseline assessment to provide an initial picture of their development and learning. Assessment information is reviewed and collated at the end of each term to monitor progress and identify any areas requiring additional support or challenge.

Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress throughout the year. Opportunities for parent-teacher meetings are provided during the Spring term to discuss children's learning, strengths, achievements, interests and next steps. Ongoing communication between home and school supports a shared understanding of each child's development.

Throughout the EYFS, practitioners make ongoing assessments based on observations and professional judgement. At the end of the Reception year, teachers complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which provides a summary of each child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals. This information forms part of the child's end-of-year report and supports a smooth transition into Key Stage 1.

4. Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and secure. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which all children feel valued and supported. Positive relationships between children, staff, parents and carers are central to promoting children's wellbeing and enabling them to thrive.

The school follows the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm and to identify and respond to any concerns regarding their welfare, including concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism. All staff receive regular safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities for reporting concerns in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Further information can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is available on the school website.

We believe it is important for children to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Through daily interactions, planned learning experiences and the wider curriculum, children are supported to understand boundaries, rules and expectations. They are encouraged to recognise and manage their feelings, develop positive relationships with others and make appropriate choices about their behaviour.

Children are also encouraged to take appropriate risks in their learning and play while developing an awareness of potential hazards and how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure a safe learning environment both indoors and outdoors.

Emergency contact information, including relevant medical and personal details, is obtained for every child on entry to the school. Any accidents or incidents occurring on the school premises are dealt with in accordance with the school's health and safety procedures. Parents and carers are informed of accidents as appropriate, and records are maintained in line with school policy.

5. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Lower Kersal Primary School is an inclusive school that values and supports the achievements of all children. We provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that enables every child to reach their full potential, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Practitioners work closely with parents and carers to identify and respond to children's individual needs at the earliest opportunity. Through ongoing observation and assessment, staff monitor children's progress and development across all areas of learning. Where concerns arise regarding a child's progress, development or wellbeing, these will be discussed with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and the child's parents or carers.

Where appropriate, additional support and targeted interventions will be implemented in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015). The school follows a graduated approach to supporting children with SEND through assessment, planning, implementation and review, ensuring that provision is tailored to individual needs.

We work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies where necessary to ensure that children receive appropriate support and are able to access all aspects of school life.

Further information can be found in the following school documents:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and Information Report
- Accessibility Plan
- Equality Information and Objectives Statement

6. Speech and language/Wellcomm

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we recognise that speech, language and communication skills are fundamental to children's learning, development and wellbeing. Strong communication skills enable children to access the curriculum, build positive relationships and reach their full potential. All staff play an important role in supporting children's speech, language and communication development and in identifying children who may require additional support.

The school works closely with Speech and Language Therapy services to provide specialist advice, assessment and support. Where speech, language or communication needs are identified, children may receive targeted intervention delivered by teachers or teaching assistants to support the development of specific skills and individual targets. Where appropriate, children may also be referred to external Speech and Language Therapy services for further assessment and support.

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, we use the WellComm Toolkit to support the development of children's communication and language skills. This evidence-based programme provides screening, assessment and intervention materials that help staff identify children who may require additional support and plan targeted provision to meet their needs.

The programme is used to:

- Identify children who may benefit from additional support or specialist referral.
- Assess children's speech, language and communication skills on entry to Nursery and Reception.
- Provide targeted intervention and support to meet individual needs.
- Monitor progress and inform future planning and provision.

Children's communication and language skills are assessed regularly throughout the year. Assessment information is used to identify next steps, monitor progress and provide appropriate intervention. Through high-quality teaching, targeted support and effective partnership working with families and external professionals, we aim to ensure that all children develop the communication skills they need to succeed.

7. Working with parents and carers

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators. We believe that strong partnerships between home and school are essential in supporting children's learning, development and wellbeing and in helping them to achieve their full potential.

We are committed to establishing positive and effective relationships with parents and carers from the outset. Regular communication ensures that parents are informed about their child's experiences, achievements and progress throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about their child and to discuss any questions or concerns with staff. Opportunities for informal communication are available at the beginning and end of the school day, enabling staff and parents to work together to support each child's individual needs.

Information about the curriculum and school life is shared through newsletters, letters, the school website and other communication platforms. Parents and carers are also invited to participate in a range of school events and classroom activities throughout the year, providing opportunities to celebrate and engage with their child's learning.

Formal opportunities to discuss children's progress are provided through parent-teacher meetings and written reports. At the end of the Reception year, parents receive information about their child's attainment and progress, including outcomes from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

By working collaboratively with parents and carers, we aim to create a supportive and consistent approach to learning that enables all children to thrive.

8. Transition

At Lower Kersal Primary School, we recognise that effective transition arrangements are essential in supporting children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and readiness for learning. We aim to provide a smooth and positive transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage and from Reception into Key Stage 1, ensuring that children and their families feel informed, supported and valued throughout the process.

We work closely with parents, carers and previous settings to gather information about each child and ensure that appropriate support is in place before they start school. Transition arrangements are carefully planned to help children become familiar with their new environment, routines, staff and peers, enabling them to settle quickly and confidently.

Parents and carers of children joining the school are invited to attend induction meetings and transition events, providing opportunities to meet staff, learn about school routines and expectations, and ask any questions they may have. Information is shared between home and school to ensure that children's individual needs are understood and supported from the outset.

Starting Nursery

The school works closely with local early years providers, pre-school settings and families to support a smooth transition into Nursery. Information about children's learning, development and wellbeing is shared to ensure continuity and support individual needs.

Children are given opportunities to become familiar with the Nursery environment, staff and routines before starting, helping them to settle quickly and confidently into school life.

Starting Reception

Children are given opportunities to visit their new classroom, meet staff and become familiar with the school environment before they begin Reception. Parents and carers are invited to attend transition meetings to learn about school routines and expectations. Nursery and Reception staff work closely together to share information about children's learning and development, ensuring a smooth and successful transition into Reception.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to share information about children's attainment, progress and individual needs to ensure continuity of learning. Children have opportunities to visit their new classroom and meet their Year 1 teacher before the end of the academic year, supporting a smooth and successful transition into Key Stage 1.