

Longlands Primary School

Early Years Policy



<i>Last reviewed on:</i>	<i>01/09/2026</i>
<i>Next review due by:</i>	<i>01/09/2027</i>



Early Years Policy

Statutory Requirements: This policy must be read in conjunction with the EYFS Statutory Framework, The National Curriculum, other DFE and LA documentation.

Status: Recommended

Early Years Core Purpose Statement- Our Intent

At Longlands we value play and recognise that it is through play that children learn best. We value each individual child and ensure that all children make progress from their starting points. We believe that 'every second counts' and any opportunity to enhance learning should be maximised. We endeavour to achieve a carefully balanced curriculum whereby children have many opportunities to take part in adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Our aims are to:

- Promote the social, emotional, cultural, physical, spiritual and intellectual development of the learner
- Enable access to well-planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors
- Support children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- Provide children with a meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners
- Develop a partnership with the family which extends the individual child's learning and experience
- Provide breadth, depth and balance across the 7 areas of learning with planning which will differentiate for individual needs
- Ensure continuity of experience and a smooth transition to Year 1

The Curriculum

The Reception classes use the 2026 Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bfb1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf



Which guides our curriculum design. All subject progression of skills documents include the Development Matters Statements and Early learning Goals. All teacher focussed learning is based on topics and core books but we also take into account children's interests and weave these into our curriculum design.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

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. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude towards learning.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with children and their families.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the child's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and Development

Our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. Wherever possible children have access to equipment in order to enable them to become independent learners. Children also have access to outdoor areas which reflect the 7 areas of learning.



Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development, which are separated into three prime areas and four specific areas. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. (See appendix 1) We value play as being 'a child's work' and ensure that children have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and take control of their learning, whilst also being mindful of each individual child's learning needs.

Prime Areas

Communication and Language Development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, form positive relationships and develop respect for others, develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, understand appropriate behaviour in groups, and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical Development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Specific areas:

These areas are dependent on learning in the prime areas. The specific learning cannot easily take place without the prime being secure.

Literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. There are 2 strands to this area of learning.



Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the nursery and reception teachers plan with these in mind. The characteristics 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:

1. **Playing and Exploring**- children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
2. **Active Learning**- children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements
3. **Creating and Thinking Critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. All adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Inclusion

This section should be read alongside the Inclusion Policy



We believe that our Early Years environments should meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. We meet these needs through:

- *Early identification and tracking*
- *Setting suitable learning challenges*
- *Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs*
- *Overcoming potential barriers to learning assessment for individuals and groups of pupils*

We aim to ensure that pupils:

- *Take responsibility for their own actions and learning*
- *Are taught in groupings that allow them to experience success e.g. mixed ability, peer support*
- *Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping*
- *Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles*
- *Have challenging targets that enable them to succeed*
- *Are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs*

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 and we adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a government scheme. The school lunches are very healthy and we are a 'Healthy School'.

Each reception classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we give children cooking experiences to learn about healthy food.



Assessment Arrangements

For specific assessment procedures see appendix 2

Throughout the reception year children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Accurate assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to do this we gather information from a range of sources; observations of children in play, conversations with parent/carers, gaining information from previous settings, work samples, photographic evidence and by talking to the children. Every child in reception has an 'All About Me Book' in which we collate our observations and keep samples of children's work.

Termly summative assessment using Pupil Asset then takes place whereby we monitor and track individual and cohort's progress and attainment and ensure any gaps in learning are planned for.

Termly moderation meetings occur with the Early Years Team and other local schools wherever possible to ensure accuracy in assessments.

Outdoor Play

See appendix 3

We understand that children learn in different ways. Learning outside gives children the opportunity to learn whilst moving around as well as being in large groups and taking part in dynamic play situations.

We have outdoor play in order to:

- *Extend all areas of the curriculum by using outdoor equipment*
- *Give children the opportunity to experiment with larger equipment*
- *Promote positive body image as children discover how to use their bodies and control their movements and thus develop their gross motor skills (which are generally developed before fine motor skills)*
- *Give the opportunity to acquire and practise specific skills such as using bats and balls, kicking, throwing and catching balls*
- *Encourage children to enjoy freedom of movement*



- Give first-hand experience of gardening, weather changes, study of natural habitats and of living creatures
- Allow children to exercise all muscles
- Offer unique chances to take part in a wide range of social situations
- Appreciate the sensation of fresh air, breezes, sunshine, snow and rain as part of learning about life
- Develop independent dressing
- Develop stamina, fitness and promote good health

Resourcing

As we believe play is the key to thinking and learning, the resources are selected to create a stimulating playful experience. As the outside area is just as important as the classroom, careful thought goes into resourcing this area as well. The resources are kept in labelled drawers and boxes and Reception has large sheds for storing outside equipment.

Transitions

At Longlands we recognise that starting school has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To ensure we alleviate any worry or stress as much as possible we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing change.

Information regarding curriculum and procedures is shared with parent/carers prior to children starting in their new class. Home visits will be carried out for all reception children. This gives children the security of meeting their teacher in a safe, secure, familiar environment which helps with the settling in process. The children and their parent/carers are also invited to visit their class teacher at school and see their classroom.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Maintain an overview of the Early Years and support the employment of quality staff
- Oversee that appropriate checks are carried out on people working with children; ensure that adults have the appropriate qualifications, training, skills



and knowledge; ensure that specific requirements for adult to child ratios are adhered to

Headteacher

- *Oversee and ensure quality of provision, curriculum and teaching*
- *Provide resources, equipment and adequate indoor and outdoor environments, within reasonable and competing budgetary constraints*
- *Ensure reporting arrangements are adhered to*
- *Ensure appropriate checks are carried out people working with children, that adults have the appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and oversee the specific requirements for adult to child ratio*

Deputy Headteacher/ Early Years Lead

- *Moderate assessment procedures and report end of foundation stage levels*
- *Observe lessons, and ensure that teaching and learning are of high quality, and that underperformance is supported and challenged*
- *Develop a team-working ethos*
- *Support team members when dealing with challenging scenarios such as poor behaviour, or interactions with parents where there are difficult family circumstances*
- *Responsible for overall quality of provision*

Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants

- *Safeguard and promote children's welfare – Promote good health, prevent the spread of infection and take appropriate action when children are ill; manage behaviour effectively*
- *Provide a suitable environment and equipment - outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys must be safe and suitable for their purpose*
- *Provide effective systems to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met; promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice for every child*
- *Make regular ongoing observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests, and needs, and use these to plan further learning experiences.*
- *Provide effective communication to parents/carers*



- *Plan and organise play and educational activities appropriate to the individual child*
- *Provide formal feedback to parents at Parent/Carer conferences and a written summative report*

Monitoring and Evaluation

- *EY initial and termly assessment analysed to demonstrate progress and identify any groups falling behind*
- *Section on School Improvement Plan updated yearly in consultation with SLT*
- *EY profile results – moderation meetings with class teachers*
- *Annual Report to Governors alongside a designated Early Years Governor Role.*
- *Reception team to review and revisit policy to ensure implementation*
- *This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required*



Appendix 1: Planning Expectations

All planning will:

- *Provide coverage of all 7 areas of the EYFS providing children with opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding required to meet the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage*
- *Clearly allocate roles and responsibilities of staff members throughout the day within specific timings*
- *Make explicit links to areas of the EYFS profile being addressed by particular activities*
- *Plan activities linked under an umbrella 'topic' spanning one or several weeks*
- *Directly reflect the interests of the children within the specific cohort*
- *Explicitly plan for indoor and outdoor learning opportunities*
- *Ensure practitioners have directed time to observe children's progress*



Appendix 2: Assessment Procedures

- *An initial baseline assessment is made of each child through observation and discussion with parents within the first 6 weeks of starting in the setting. Staff complete the statutory baseline assessment alongside their own initial assessment of the children which is recorded on Brom Com*
- *Every child's progress to be tracked and recorded in their All About Me/Learning Journey books*
- *Daily assessments will be made through short observations by all members of staff in the Early Years setting*
- *Photos, work samples and observations will be collected and annotated with EYFS age bands or Early Learning Goals from both 'Child Initiated' and 'Adult Focussed' activities*
- *Children will reflect on their learning and next steps through 1:1 discussions of photos and work kept in All About Me/Learning Journey' books – comments noted should be direct quotes from children*
- *Additional evidence such as phonic checks, guided reading notes and number assessments are kept in a separate folder*
- *A summative judgement will be made at the end of the Reception Year against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as a summary of the ongoing formative assessment*



Appendix 3: Outside Classroom Provision

- *Outside classroom provision will be regularly assessed to meet all safety requirements*
- *Outside classroom provision must be planned in collaboration - all practitioners who have responsibility for children learning in the space should be involved in the teams weekly planning meetings*
- *Regular risk assessments will be conducted by the staff team*
- *Outside provision will reflect all 7 areas of the EYFS curriculum and will promote the importance of learning through play as being the main principle underpinning the EYFS*
- *The activities planned for in the outside space will recognise the way children learn though spontaneous play as well as through adult support allowing them to develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally*
- *Planning for experiences in the outdoor space will be explicit and reflect the balance of child initiated and adult directed activities*
- *Practitioners should keep in mind the children's entitlement to choose to learn in the outside space – ensuring they manage the issues involved in terms of ratios, safety, equality of opportunity and level of challenge and engagement with adults that the children require*
- *The EY practitioners' main roles in order of priority in the outside space should be to:*
 1. *Ensure children's safety*
 2. *Observe and reflect on spontaneous play*
 3. *Build on observations to plan and resource the area to support and extend learning*
 4. *Extend children's language and communication*
 5. *Support specific areas of learning (Adult Focussed activities)*
- *Adult- Child Interactions in the outside space aim to develop 'shared thinking' through adults; being aware of children's interests, working with children to develop an idea or skill, getting involved in the thinking process with them,*



building positive trusting relationships and showing a genuine interest by offering encouragement, asking open questions and helping them make connections in their learning.