



Early Years Policy

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Indicate which legislation or statutory guidance document requires this Policy	
Summary/Description:	
This document sets out the approach to Early Years Foundation Stage provision at Longford CE VC Primary School.	

Longford Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to 5. At Longford children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday and parents of children who are Summer born (born between 1st April and 31st August) may request deferred entry to begin in Reception the following year.

1.2 The Early Years education we offer is underpinned by 4 guiding principles, as laid out in the 2021 'Statutory framework guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Updated in March 2025 and statutory since September 2025:

2 Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

2.1 The curriculum of the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's learning in the following 3 prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

and in the 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and design

3 Learning and teaching style

3.1 Our policy on learning and teaching defines the features of effective learning and teaching in our school. These features apply to learning and teaching in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages 1 & 2. Learning is provided through continuous provision and adult led learning as appropriate- for example phonics. Through continuous provision children have

access to a core range of provision areas and resources throughout the day, encouraging, active learning and exploration through play, building knowledge and confidence.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

3.2 The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. This includes a robust induction programme offered to children and including parents when their children first start at school.
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school; e.g. induction visits, contact made by Foundation Stage Coordinator to pre- schools and other Early Years settings.
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

4 Inclusion in the EYFS

4.1 In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that many achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage and make typical or rapid progress to get to this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are identified as able, gifted or talented, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

4.2 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves carefully planned additional group and individual sessions, which form part of the 'Provision map' (see SEND policy).

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

- 5.1** The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage framework,' which was updated in March 2025 and became statutory in September 2025. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.
- 5.2** The Early Learning Goals prepare children to become effective learners in Key Stage One. The balance at the end of Foundation stage gradually shifts toward more adult-led learning, to help children prepare for more formal learning in Year One. Importantly, this is a 2-way process and in order to aid transition into Key Stage One, the first term of Year One has aspects of the Early Years curriculum, in particular to support children still working on the Early Learning Goals. Indeed, where possible, the principles of learning in the Early Years is carried on into Year One, throughout the year.
- 5.3** The 'EYFS framework' provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The Long term plan gives an overview of content coverage across the year. Our medium term plan is completed termly and identifies the main objectives for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. Weekly plans show details of how these objectives are taught and assessed.

Phonics is an important area of literacy. We use the Essential Letters and Sounds programme. Parents are given further information about this programme and are invited to attend phonics sessions throughout the year.

Assessment

- 6.1** The National 'baseline' assessment became statutory in Autumn 2021 and is carried out with children on a 1:1 basis by the class teacher within the first few weeks of school. It helps to inform our 'on-entry' data which is stored on 'Insight' and is analysed during October, February and July.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, in addition to some recorded learning, where appropriate. This process involves all adults working with the children and parental contributions. Some observations are planned in and focus on what a child can do during child-initiated learning. Importantly, changes to the EYFS framework highlight the need to prioritise being with the children:

"Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence." (EYFS Framework 2025)

At the end of the Foundation Stage, we complete the National Foundation Stage Profile when children are assessed as working within the 'emerging' or 'expected' levels, in relation to the Early Learning Goals. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year One.

The guidance on the statutory framework is available via the below link: [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

- 6.2** All evidence, including photographs is collated in an individual Learning Journey which tracks the progress of a child in all areas, using Tapestry. Parents have online access to Tapestry and can read and contribute to observations throughout the year. Parents can also contribute to the process by sending in, amongst other things, completed 'wow moments' from achievements at home. From 2022, the class' enquiries will be evidenced through shared floor books, showing the process of: 'engage, immerse, practise and challenge' as the steps to completing an enquiry.
- 6.3** Parents receive an annual report that offers comments on the characteristics of each child's learning. It also highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress in all 7 areas of learning. This informs parents of whether their child is emerging or expected within each goal. We complete these in June and send them to parents in July. For children who speak English as a second language, practitioners will endeavour to explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and carers.

The role of parents

- 7.1** We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:
- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
 - Individual visits to the classroom for parents and their child prior to their starting school;
 - the teacher/Foundation Stage Co-ordinator making contact with key workers, either through visits or over the phone;
 - the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school at introductory sessions in the summer;
 - inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
 - From September 2026 - online assessment in the form of 'Tapestry' that is available for parents to view and interact with throughout the year;
 - offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Foundation Stage classes;
 - encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents during the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress during the Summer term, and are offered a meeting to discuss any issues;
 - having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
 - arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
 - offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's school reading diary. We invite parents to curriculum evenings, including an autumn talk on reading and home learning, to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the Foundation Stage class.

Resources

- 8.1** We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Outdoor learning is seen as being as important as indoor learning and all year round children undertake weekly outdoor sessions in the school grounds and trips out in the local environment, in all weathers.

Monitoring and Review

- 9.1** The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Lead and the Headteacher. The work of the lead learner also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, being informed about current developments in the Foundation Stage, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the Foundation Stage in school.