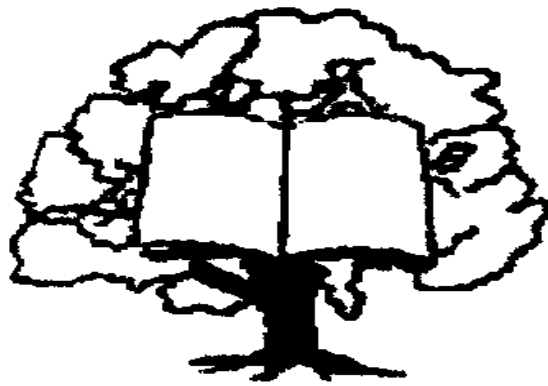


# Great Linford Primary School

## Foundation Stage Policy



Foundation Stage Manager: Eiry Cheney

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## INTRODUCTION

"The Early Years are critical in children's development. Children develop rapidly during this time - physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Foundation Stage is about developing key skills such as listening, speaking, concentration persistence and learning to work together and co-operate with other children. It is also about developing early communication, literacy and numeracy skills that will prepare young children for key stage 1 of the National Curriculum."

Margaret Hodge, M.B.E. M.P.

At Great Linford Primary School children enter school in the September after their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Foundation Stage practitioners continue and develop the learning experiences begun at home and in pre-school settings, by providing the children with opportunities to actively explore and investigate their surroundings. At Great Linford Primary School the practitioners believe that the Foundation Stage curriculum must take into account the needs of a young child, and prepare them for Key Stage 1 of National Curriculum. Young children are lively, interested and enthusiastic, and it is important that these children have access to a curriculum that is challenging, practical and based on first hand experience. How children learn is as important as what they learn.

At Great Linford Primary School we believe that the children in our care have the right to learn, the right to feel safe and the right to be respected.

This policy has been established to ensure children's learning meets their present needs successfully, as well as to ensure progression and continuity of education into Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

This policy outlines the purposes, nature, organisation and management of the Foundation Stage provision at Great Linford Primary School.

All staff have been involved in its formulation.

## A UNIQUE CHILD: PHILOSOPHY/RATIONALE

"Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured." (EYFS 2007)

It is our belief that Foundation Stage practitioners should value early childhood. The whole child is important, social, moral, emotional, intellectual and physical developments are inter-related and all need to be encouraged. We believe that young children learn best through first hand experience, especially through play, and that by creating favourable conditions for each individual child we can begin to develop their full potential. Carefully planned, structured play ensures the children encounter the learning experiences intended by the adult.

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which practitioners support young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, young children behave in different ways; sometimes their play will be responsive or boisterous, sometimes they may describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.

The role of the practitioner is crucial in:

- planning and resourcing a challenging environment;
- supporting children's learning through planned play activity;
- extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- learn how to understand the need for rules;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems

(The Early Years Foundation Stage DFES 2007)

A high quality Early Years experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success.

As the children progress through the Foundation Stage it is envisaged that most children will make a smooth transition from the structured play learning situation to a more directly delivered curriculum in early Key Stage 1 work.

This will take place gradually based on each individual child's confidence, motivation, concentration and ability.

## **ORGANISATION**

The Childcare Act 2006 provides for the EYFS learning and development requirements to comprise three elements:

- the early learning goals - the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five;
- the educational programmes - the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children;
- the assessment arrangements - the arrangements for assessing young children to ascertain their achievements.

There are six areas covered by the early learning goals and educational programmes:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- Communication, Language and Literacy;
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy;
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World;
- Physical Development;
- Creative Development.

None of these areas of Learning and Development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The curriculum for pre Key Stage 1 children will take into account the children's interests and achievements and their developing physical, intellectual, emotional and social abilities. It is planned and organised effectively to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of children's learning set out in Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION**

(based on Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2007)

These are the principles on which the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage is based.

**The EYFS is based around four Themes:**

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

Each Theme is linked to an important Principle.

The Four Principles of the EYFS are:

**A Unique Child:** Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

**Enabling Environments:** The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

**Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

Each Principle is supported by four Commitments which describe how the Principles can be put into practice,

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. At Great Linford Primary School we understand that children develop rapidly during the Early Years, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

To be effective a Foundation Stage curriculum should be carefully structured, and should contain:

- provision for the different starting points from which children develop their learning, build upon what they know and can already do;
- relevant and appropriate content that matches the different levels of young children's needs.
- planned and purposeful activity that provides opportunities for teaching and learning, both indoors and outdoors.

At Great Linford Primary School our intention is to enable all children to reach their full potential and to ensure equality of access to the Early Years Foundation Stage practice. At Great Linford Primary School we believe that no child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability gender or ability.

Children's special needs are identified and met, and regard is given to the Code of Practise for children with special educational needs.

Children's health and safety are assured within the learning environment.

We believe that there should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults, and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. The children need time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.

At Great Linford Primary School the practitioners must be able to observe and respond to children. These practitioners must be informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn, and have a clear understanding of possible next steps in their development and learning.

Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process and help them make progress in their learning.

At Great Linford Primary School we aim to provide a learning environment that is well-planned and well-organised. In order to provide the children with rich and stimulating experiences the learning environment provides the structure for teaching within which the children will explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, enabling them to learn, develop and make-good progress.

These principles require the practitioners to work in partnership with parents to support each individual child.

## **AIMS FOR THE FOUNDATION STAGE AT GREAT LINFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The practitioners aim to plan activities and experiences that help young children make progress in their development and learning. The young children in our care will have had a wide range of different experiences and will have a wide range of skills and interests when they join our setting. These children need a well planned and resourced curriculum to take their learning forward and to provide opportunities for all children to succeed in an atmosphere of care and of feeling valued.

The practitioners aim to monitor each child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage to ensure that they are making progress, and that particular difficulties in any areas of learning are identified and addressed. Monitoring each child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage ensures that all of their achievement can be celebrated.

## **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

"The EYFS is made up of six areas of Learning and Development. All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are equally important." (EYFS 2007)

All areas of Learning and Development are underpinned by the principles of the EYFS.

This curriculum for the Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

### **Personal, Social and Emotional development:**

**Dispositions and Attitudes** - is about how children become interested, excited and motivated about their learning.

**Self-confidence and Self-esteem** - is about children having a sense of their own value and understanding the need for sensitivity to significant events in their own and other people's lives.

**Making Relationships** - is about the importance of children forming good relationships with others and working alongside others companionably.

**Behaviour and Self-control** - is about how children develop a growing understanding of what is right and wrong and why, together with learning about the impact of their words and actions on themselves and others.

**Self-care** - is about how children gain a sense of self-respect and concern for their own personal hygiene and care and how they develop independence.

**Sense of Community** - is about how children understand and respect their own needs, views, cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

**Communication, Language and Literacy:**

**Language for Communication** - is about how children become communicators. Learning to listen and speak emerges out of non-verbal communication, which includes facial expression, eye contact and hand gesture. These skills develop as children interact with others, listen to and use language, extend their vocabulary and experience stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

**Language for Thinking** - is about how children learn to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and how they use talk to clarify their thinking and ideas or to refer to events they have observed or are curious about.

**Linking Sounds and Letters** - is about how children develop the ability to distinguish between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They develop understanding of the correspondence between spoken and written sounds and learn to link sounds and letters and use their knowledge to read and write simple words by sounding out and blending.

**Reading** - is about children understanding and enjoying stories, books and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, both fiction and fact, and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

**Writing** - is about how children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

**Handwriting** - is about the ways in which children's random marks, lines and drawings develop and form the basis of recognisable letters.

**Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy:**

**Numbers as Labels and for Counting** - is about how children gradually know and use numbers and counting in play, and eventually recognise and use numbers reliably, to develop mathematical ideas and to solve problems.

**Calculating** - is about how children develop an awareness of the relationship between numbers and amounts and know that numbers can be combined to be 'added together' and can be separated by 'taking away' and that two or more amounts can be compared.

**Shape, Space and Measures** - is about how through talking about shapes and quantities, and developing appropriate vocabulary, children use their knowledge to develop ideas and to solve mathematical problems.

**Knowledge and Understanding of the World:**

**Exploration and Investigation** - is about how children investigate objects and

materials and their properties, learn about change and patterns, similarities and differences, and question how and why things work.

**Designing and Making** - is about the ways in which children learn about the construction process and the tools and techniques that can be used to assemble materials creatively and safely.

**ICT** - is about how children find out about and learn how to use appropriate information technology such as computers and programmable toys that support their learning.

**Time** - is about how children find out about past and present events relevant to their own lives or those of their families.

**Place** - is about how children become aware of and interested in the natural world, and find out about their local area, knowing what they like and dislike about it.

**Communities** - is about how children begin to know about their own and other people's cultures in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences between them in a diverse society.

#### **Physical Development:**

**Movement and Space** - is about how children learn to move with confidence, imagination and safety, with an awareness of space, themselves and others.

**Health and Bodily Awareness** - is about how children learn the importance of keeping healthy and the factors that contribute to maintaining their health.

**Using Equipment and Materials** - is about the ways in which children use a range of small and large equipment.

#### **Creative Development:**

**Being Creative - Responding to Experiences, Expressing and Communicating Ideas** - is about how children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch or feel and how, as a result of these encounters, they express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.

**Exploring Media and Materials** - is about children's independent and guided exploration of and engagement with a widening range of media and materials, finding out about, thinking about and working with colour, texture, shape, space and form in two and three dimensions.

**Creating Music and Dance** - is about children's independent and guided explorations of sound, movement and music. Focusing on how sounds can be made and changed and how sounds can be recognised and repeated from a pattern, it includes ways of exploring movement, matching movements to music and singing simple songs from memory.

**Developing Imagination and Imaginative Play** - is about how children are supported to develop and build their imaginations through stories, role-plays, imaginative play, dance, music, design, and art.

## **AIMS OF THE SETTING**

At Great Linford Primary School the practitioners work together to meet the diverse needs of all the children in our care so that most will achieve and some, where appropriate, will go beyond the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

We aim to:

1. provide opportunities for the children to play, to talk, to listen, to experiment, to investigate, to develop mathematical concepts and to develop intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually;
2. give children choices;
3. give the children support to make them feel good about themselves and the choices they make, so that their sense of identity and self worth is reinforced;
4. observe, support and extend the children;
5. offer the children first-hand experiences using a variety of materials, and to develop their natural curiosity in the world around them;
6. enable children to have fun and to enjoy their time with us;
7. provide a flexible framework from which a curriculum can be developed to suit the needs of individual children in a variety of settings;
8. encourage negotiation - adults with children, children with adults and children with children;

## **OBJECTIVES**

The outcomes of the policy are to be seen in the day to day work of the school. Its success is to be judged by what children know, can do and understand; the ways in which the staff respond to children and work with them and the quality of the learning environment provided.

Thus, at Great Linford Primary School our work results in:

Children who:

- \* have a growing sense of self-esteem and self-worth;
- \* demonstrate increasing independence and the ability to show initiative;
- \* show confidence in making choices and in giving reasons for decisions and actions;
- \* use space, materials and resources both indoor and outdoor with greater confidence and control;
- \* co-operate with other children leading to instances of collaborative play as well as working independently;
- \* are confident to work with different adults and to express their ideas and preferences;
- \* have an increasing span of involvement and perseverance;
- \* are able to reason and apply knowledge in solving everyday problems;
- \* observe, explore and discover for themselves;
- \* are successfully acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes which lead towards, and go beyond Early Learning Goals.

Staff who:

- \* have a positive attitude towards young children and their families;
- \* respond to children's needs, interests and ideas with empathy and sensitivity;
- \* demonstrate enthusiasm and curiosity towards learning;
- \* recognise that observation and evaluation of children's response to their work, is an essential requirement to effective curriculum provision;
- \* hold high expectations for children's learning and behaviour;
- \* are knowledgeable about the developmental needs of young children;

- \* encourage children's independence;
- \* value both adult and child initiated activity;
- \* have clear learning intentions which ensure high standards of achievement;
- \* understand the necessary procedures to ensure each child's welfare and protection;
- \* reflect and evaluate their work to ensure continuous improvement.

An environment which:

- \* is comfortable, interesting, welcoming and secure;
- \* has clearly defined areas of provision which offer a range of learning contexts;
- \* provides first-hand experiences, good quality play opportunities, practical activities, visits and outings and a range of opportunities and purposes for speaking and listening;
- \* provides a flexible routine which offers children time to work in depth, to maintain appropriate levels of involvement and to sustain concentration;
- \* provides ready access to resources which encourage children to develop independence, to make choices and to take responsibility;
- \* ensures children's needs to develop physically, to think for themselves, to develop self-care and responsibility, to communicate and to form positive relationships are met.

## **CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION**

At Great Linford Primary School we recognise the need to ensure a secure foundation and continued educational progress for the children's transition into the National Curriculum.

To ensure that children make good progress built on their previous achievements, the following actions are undertaken:

- the child's stage of development is identified in the first weeks of settling-in and recorded as a point of entry assessment;
- the information gained and how it will be used is made known to parents;
- parents receive reports on their child's progress and attainment;
- the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes which provide a secure foundation for later learning are defined within the curriculum;
- the curriculum is organised to develop thinking, communication, physical activity, independence and responsibility, personal and social development;
- the curriculum is planned in the long, medium and short term;
- each child's initial achievements and progress are recorded and assessed regularly to ensure that progress is being made;
- staff use observation and assessment to plan the curriculum in response to each child's needs;
- staff ensure each child has access to the curriculum;
- the curriculum is organised to make sure each child's understanding and interests are taken into account.
- resources are well maintained to set a high standard of care, discipline and educational achievement;
- a range of resources are provided to meet the demands of all areas of the curriculum;
- children have well-planned and ready access to the range of space, materials and equipment available;
- regular evaluation of the curriculum and the resources implications is undertaken to identify and plan for further improvements;
- the accommodation is suitable for young children, it provides easy access to work areas, toilet and washing facilities are close at hand;
- children's health and safety are assured within the learning environment.

## **PLANNING**

We plan the Curriculum around the six areas of experience:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Language, Communication and Literacy
3. Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
4. Knowledge and Understanding of the World
5. Physical development
6. Creative development

### **Levels of Planning**

The Curriculum is planned in the long, medium and short term.

The Curriculum is organised to develop thinking, communication, physical activity, independence and responsibility, personal and social development.

### **Differentiation**

Children bring to school a wide range of experiences and capabilities. We must value these and build on this early foundation. The learning opportunities provided must show differentiation as children do not learn at similar rates or in a set pattern. For all children learning should be progressive, building on their earlier experiences.

## **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES**

"Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person." (EYFS 2007)

The admission number for the Foundation Stage class is 45. There are two teachers and two support assistants. At Great Linford Primary School the key adult for our reception class is the class teacher.

The Foundation Stage teachers will:

- provide activities which are well planned, structured and purposeful;
- encourage children to think, grow in independence and take responsibility;
- use their knowledge and skills to teach, to direct, to reinforce, to intervene

and to harness children's learning;

- provide opportunities for adult and child directed activities;
- have consistently high expectations of learning and behaviour;
- organise children in ways which are appropriate for the learning intentions;
- provide opportunities for a child to work on his or her own, and in small and larger groups;
- provide opportunities to learn through sustained involvement in concentrated activity;
- provide opportunities for first hand experiences both in and out of school, practical activities, problem solving, discussion and purposeful play.

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Practitioners must observe children and respond appropriately to help them make progress towards the early learning goals.

Assessments should be based on practitioners' observation of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities. Judgements are based on observational evidence gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts. At Great Linford Primary School we expect that all adults who interact with the child should contribute to the process, and that account will be taken of information provided by parents.

*The Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* sets out formative assessment opportunities. Practitioners should:

- make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles;
- use these observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child;
- match their observations to the expectations of the early learning goals.

At Great Linford Primary School the children are observed closely within the first half-term of entry to school and practitioners assess and record which stage of development they are working within. After the point of entry assessment is complete, parents are invited to discuss how their child has

settled at school, and how to further develop their abilities.

It should be emphasised that children's progress will be at different rates and individual achievement will vary. All children will follow a curriculum which will enable them to make progress through the stages of development as stated in the EYFS.

Throughout the children's time in the Foundation Stage, practitioners compile the Foundation Stage Profile. This is reported in detail to parents at the end of the Foundation Stage. The FSP is passed on to the next teacher.

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning and maintain free and open discussions with the class teacher.

## **TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**

At Great Linford Primary School we wish to ensure that the children make a positive transition from home to school by developing a positive partnership between home and school, taking into account the child's pre-school experiences and stage of development.

At present our induction into our Foundation Stage begins with a meeting for all interested parents. It takes place in May. At this initial meeting the Head, Foundation Stage Manager, the FS team, SENCO and office staff introduce themselves to the parents. Parents have the opportunity to talk with staff and are informed about the school in general, and in particular the aims and structure of the Foundation Stage class. We leave plenty of time for parents to ask questions and are available to talk to at the end of the meeting if anyone needs us. This meeting takes place in the evening. Parents and children are given the opportunity to visit the school during the school day.

During a three week period in June children visit the setting for one morning per week and parents are free to stay or leave their child, as they feel appropriate. Parents and children are also invited to any school event that takes place around this time e.g. the Summer barbeque, Open afternoon.

Children coming to our school have attended a variety of pre-school settings and some come to us straight from home. Wherever possible the Foundation Stage staff visit the children in their pre-school setting before they met her on their visits to school. (The majority of our children have attended "Great Linford Village Pre School " with whom we have fostered strong links.)

Records are passed on from pre-school settings, which are read and then read again after the child has been observed in their new setting. These records form part of our point of entry assessments.

In September, the cohort has a staggered start into school in small groups over

the first week of term. This admission arrangement takes account of a young child's needs for a well planned and carefully supported introduction to school life.

Transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

In the summer term the Foundation Stage practitioners prepare the children for their move by talking about the changes that have taken place since the children started school.

In the Summer term the Foundation Stage children begin to join KS1 for morning and lunchtime playtimes. They also begin to join the school for appropriate assemblies. KS1 staff visit Foundation regularly throughout the summer term.

The children visit their new class and teacher for one session before the end of the school year. Children are encouraged during the Summer term open afternoon to take their parents to meet their new teacher in their new classroom.

KS1 teachers plans activities that build on learning in the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Stage Profile and other written records are passed on and practitioners make time to chat about each individual.

## **RESOURCES**

The education of the under 5's is distinct from other phases and requires staff who are appropriately trained and qualified and for whom there is access to continued professional development.

In the Foundation Stage class at Great Linford Primary School the staff/pupil ratio is 1:15. There are two teachers and two support assistants.

The setting comprises of an indoor and an outdoor classroom. Resources are organised to promote children's knowledge skills and understanding in the six areas of learning.

Resources reflect a range of positive images including male and female, cultures and languages.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Foundation Stage teacher are:

- to plan a broad and balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum for the children in their care.
- to plan the curriculum thematically in the long, medium and short term in consultation with the team.
- to ensure the happiness and security, health and safety of the children while they are in their care.

## REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Great Linford Primary School will review and evaluate this policy by identifying strengths and areas for improvement in:

- children's responses to the curriculum;
- children's standards of achievements;
- children's personal, social, moral and cultural development;
- the extent to which provision ensures that the children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach statutory school age;
- the quality of education including teaching;
- the efficiency and effectiveness with which the available resources are managed;
- the leadership and management of the provision and how action is taken to address them.

## ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

"The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

A rich and varied environment supports the children's learning and development. It gives them confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging indoor and outdoor spaces.

The environment supports every child's learning through planned learning experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable." (EYFS 2007)

At Great Linford Primary School the environment in the Foundation Stage is planned and organised to effectively develop the children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the six areas of children's learning.

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- a secure environment and routine.

### Language, Communication and Literacy

- speaking, listening, reading, writing, library, manipulative and fine motor skills.

### Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

- practical activities and problem solving with construction equipment, games, puzzles, shapes and objects.

### Knowledge and Understanding

- exploration of natural materials, opportunities for simple investigations, opportunities to design and make models, use of ICT.

### Physical Development

- P.E. and outdoor play.

### Creative Development

- art, music, sound, role play.

The children have ready access to the range of space, materials and equipment available.