



LEOMINSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at:

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundations-stage-statutory-framework-for-group-and-school-based-providers)

This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

Within the EYFS framework, there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected (DfE 2023: 1.3).

The prime areas are;

- **Communication and Language** – Listening Attention & Understanding and Speaking.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships
- **Physical Development** – Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

- **Literacy** – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.
- **Mathematics** – Number and Numerical Patterns.
- **Understanding the World** – Past & Present, People, Culture & Communities and The Natural World.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative & Expressive.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. In planning and guiding what children learn, our practitioners reflect upon the different rates at which children develop, planning activities and experiences to meet all needs and abilities. They 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;

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

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experience that interest and inspire them. We provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led whole class teaching, adult led group activities and adult led individual activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. Within our Early Years classrooms these routines may look slightly different, with adapted needs for Nursery and Reception children. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc...

Reading and story play an important part of the day and develop children's love of reading. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is encouraged to have their own book bag and will have opportunities through the week to have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult, or in Reception, Guided Reading sessions and 1:1 reading with an adult. Children all have the opportunity to read daily in Read Write Inc phonics sessions. Book corners are engaging and inviting to children providing them with a combination of topic, fiction and non-fiction books to share with their friends or read independently.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and we find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Our curriculum is built on a topic-based approach where each new topic begins with a key question to hook the children's imagination. Our topics are the same throughout our EYFS classes, but skills taught and focus are adapted depending on individual children's needs. There is also flexibility within the topics to follow children's interests and engage them further. Within our long term plan, we plan national events such as world book day, the Olympics and topics related to diversity. We book visits and experiences related to their topic and encourage visitors in to enhance their learning. This provides children with the vital real life experiences we hope will reinforce their learning.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily observations and interactions with children to inform where their learning journey should move to.

Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Leominster Primary School is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. These can range from a visit to the local library, visiting the local town or visiting Farms. We aim for a ratio of one adult to four children in Nursery and a minimum of one to seven in the Reception classes.

Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bathe a baby, or playing guitar.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a variety of areas such as writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for some of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, but also provide a different learning opportunity to inside. We have worked hard to develop our outdoor area to ensure it is "not just moving the inside out". We ensure children have the opportunity to practise their physical skills in the outdoor environment, at breaktimes and during PE. Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom area and their own tray too. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely in one place!

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. (DfE 2025: 2.1).

It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. Practitioners also work closely with parents and carers to understand each child individually.

The priority of our assessment tools is the knowledge that our practitioners have of each child. To do this, they spend time interacting with children, getting to know their likes and interests and having conversations with them.

On entry to Reception, the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed with children, within the first six weeks of them starting school. The assessment is made up of a selection of practical and iPad based tasks. It is carried out by an adult who is familiar to them and in an environment where they feel comfortable. For children who are of Nursery age, teacher assessments are carried out, within the first six weeks, and baseline judgements are reported to the Headteacher.

Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Headteacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. During pupil progress meetings, children who are not on track are highlighted and strategies to support these children are discussed and agreed. Additional interventions such as ELSA support, drawing and talking or Nurture provision may be discussed to support children further and consider their vital personal, social and emotional needs.

At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'not met' (not yet meeting the level of development) or 'met' (meeting the levels of expected development). This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Reception. Any child who we feel has the potential to exceed in a given area is also given this opportunity.

Our key message during assessment is that we, as staff, know and understand the children in our care. This is through purposeful observations, discussions with parents

and colleagues and interactions with children. The collection of evidence is up to the intuition of individual practitioners and what they require to support their needs. Next steps for children are addressed daily through observations and planned activities. They are also communicated through pupil progress meetings. Any concerns are identified quickly and communicated to parents and carers.

Role of staff and key worker

In the Reception classes, the class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Within the Nursery, each child is designated to one of our Nursery practitioners, although our Nursery Teachers oversee every child in their class. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as home visit days before children start, we offer a meet the teacher session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and other sessions for parents, such as how to support your child with phonics / reading. Display boards updated regularly to inform parents of the curriculum and what the focus of the week is so that parents can support at home. We invite Parents in for slideshows and craft days. Our open door policy refers to our approach to daily liaison with our parents. We want to ensure that parents feel that they can communicate with us directly on a daily basis.

We hold open days in the Autumn and Summer terms for all prospective parents / carers and children.

Once a Nursery child gains a place at Leominster Primary School, our Nursery staff make home visits at the beginning of the autumn term. During the same week, children and parents / carers are invited to stay and play days to help settle the new children. The week after, children start their allocated sessions. To ensure smooth transition, we are happy for parents / carers to stay with their children if there is a need.

Once a child gains a place in our Reception classes, in the summer term before Reception children are due to start, we hold a parent induction evening and offer afternoons for children to visit their new classroom along with their peers. Our Reception staff also visit their new children to be in their Nursery settings. During the first week of the Autumn term, Reception staff visit children in their home setting and invite parent / carers and children for a stay and play morning / afternoon. After visits and stay and play sessions are complete, Reception children start school. We ease transition by offering children to start for half days alongside their Nursery peers before starting full days. Children usually complete two / three half days.

Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting each term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

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 (DfE 2025: 3.1). We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2025). [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets (all staff agree to our staff acceptable use of internet and network). Members of staff do, however, use school iPads / cameras to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's books, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

Our children receive free fruit and milk from the Government scheme. Children may order school lunches, but if a child brings their own packed lunch, we encourage healthy lunches and water to be brought to school.

We take all accidents seriously and always log if a child receives any first aid treatment. Parents / Carers are seen at the end of the day with a first aid note if a child has banged their head. In some cases, Parents / Carers are also called. We have cold compresses stored in the office fridge and we have a First Aid member of staff on duty during first play and lunchtime playtimes.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting. (DfE 2025: 3.86)

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Mrs Helen Lynch (Headteacher) is the named Designated Safeguarding Lead. Mrs Rees (Headteacher) and Miss Lucy Jones (Safeguarding Manager) are the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers. All concerns are logged via My Concern and dealt with by a member of the safeguarding team.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

Safer eating

To ensure we are following safer eating guidelines, children always sit at tables when eating. This includes snack and meal times or any food tasting activities. When children are eating, there is always at least one member of staff in the room who holds a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A (DfE 2025: 3.63). This person is responsible

Child absence

We follow the whole school procedures for child absences (see separate policy). Whilst children may not be of statutory school age, we have extremely high expectations for maintaining good attendance. We ensure all absences are followed up in a timely manner and require notification from parents / carers for every absence. More information can be found in the schools attendance policy.

Date of review: September 2025

Date of next review: July 2026

Ratified by Governors on