

Policy title	Early Years Policy
Written by	Assistant Principal
Policy owner	Principal

Status	Finalised
Summary of change	Updated based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundations Stage effective from 1 September 2025

Approval date	January 2026
Approval authority	Principal
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1. Aims

As set out in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage' 2025. We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- **Partnership working** between staff and with parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Our vision and aims at Lindfield Primary Academy are as follows:

We strive to ensure that every child has access to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which prepares them for now and for the future.

- To ensure quality first teaching, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- To build strong collaborative partnerships with families and the local community.
- To respond to children's individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- To develop skillful communicators; who connect with others through language and play, ensuring that they play in a vocabulary rich environment.
- To ensure that every child is included and supported to become independent, resilient, self-assured learners who thrive and reach their full potential.
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2. Key Principles

We aim to ensure a consistent approach where parents, carers, teachers and practitioners work together to give children the best possible start. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework which sets standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well; and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school and stimulates the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for good future progress through school and life. All children at Lindfield work within this framework.

Four key principles shape our practice:

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 take into consideration the starting points and needs of our pupils as they begin their learning journey and understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.

Settling in and Transition

We get to know the new children and families before they start school. In the summer term, staff visit nurseries and talk to the children in a familiar setting. We hold an introductory meeting with new parents and this is followed by story times and a 'taster session' for the children to get to know their teachers, explore their new environment and meet other children. In September, the staff make home visits; this is a chance for the parents to talk about their child's needs and interests. The start of the term is staggered to allow children to visit in smaller groups, giving them time to familiarise themselves with their teacher, their classmates and their new environment, whilst learning the new routines.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage/Special Educational Needs

All children and their families are included and valued. Children are treated as individuals and have access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their full potential and planning is in response to the observed needs of all groups and abilities.

Pupils' needs are identified before starting school and monitored closely throughout. Nursery visits and communication with parents through home visits ensures early identification of need that is carefully considered and planned for to ensure a positive transition into school life. Progress is measured and tracked to ensure children keep up with their peers wherever possible rather than having to catch up.

Staff promote children's learning by developing a deep understanding of their individual needs and children particularly benefit from their modelling and support. In the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that they make good progress from their starting points.

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
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary

Positive Relationships:

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

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise that a 'secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right and recognise that

good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.’
(Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025).

We foster positive relationships with parents through:

- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Comprehensive settling in and transition programmes. In September we visit children and families and have a half hour chat to ascertain the children’s individual needs and interests.
- Arranging a range of activities such as special occasion celebrations
- Inviting all parents/carers to a ‘six weeks in’ meeting to discuss learning in class and support at home
- Arranging for children to have a staggered start to school, over the first two weeks so that the teacher can welcome each child individually to our academy;
- Providing parents/carers and opportunity to celebrate their child’s learning and development by completing “Heroes at Home” which allow us to celebrate and share the children’s out of school achievements.
- By providing a quiet and confidential area where parents/carers are able to discuss any concerns between children, the academy and parents/carers
- Encouraging parents/carers to attend workshops around the curriculum and supporting at home.
- The Academy website which includes information about what we are learning each term. The Academy Newsletter is also shared on the website
- Providing an online platform (Seesaw) so parents are regularly informed of, and can contribute to, their child’s learning throughout the week
- Holding ‘Reading Pop in sessions’ for parents to attend and read with their child in the classroom.
- Inviting parents to open afternoons as an informal opportunity to talk and look at learning journals.
- Two scheduled consultation evenings are held each year. Parents are given written feedback outlining children’s achievements and next steps in advance of these meetings. The parents’ comments are included in the child’s Learning Journal and are used to inform planning and provision
- Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of Reception

Enabling Environments:

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up to provide development within all areas. Our purpose-built outdoor area is undercover so it can be used all year round. It provides opportunity for physical development in our ‘bike and scooter’ zone as well as opportunities for messy play, role play, reading and construction. Our classrooms are set up with zones that promote the 7 areas of learning. Children are given ‘sticker jobs’ across the week to ensure they are making the most of the learning opportunities and practising the skills they have been taught through their carpet time inputs, alongside opportunities for choice and challenge. Staff spend time in the environment enhancing the provision and developing children’s communication skills, whilst targeting support to ensure children are working towards their learning targets.



Learning and Development:

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At Lindfield, we understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning. Learning is often play based with increasing challenge and expectations as the year progresses. 'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults.' (*Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025*).



3. Curriculum



Our ambitious curriculum is underpinned by the eight values of Uniqueness, Perseverance, Independence, Enthusiasm, Teamwork, Success, Celebration and Respect.

It provides a play-based and experiential learning environment, combined with focused teaching, to ensure children make rapid progress before moving onto Year 1. Children engage in planned, focused activities within the inside and outside areas, as well as self-initiated and free flow activities. The learning experiences are linked to the seven areas of learning and development within the EYFS. Children benefit from meaningful learning across the curriculum and staff plan resourcefully for opportunities for communication, sustained shared thinking and physical challenge to build on existing skills considering the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Rich first hand experiences (inside, outdoors, visitors and school trips) widen experiences, awe and wonderment. Opportunities are provided to encourage exploratory learning and creative thinking, including problem solving. New vocabulary and concepts through reading excites and engages all learners, which includes staff modelling standard English and asking high quality questions.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. Three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in the Specific Areas of Learning.

Weekly and Termly Curriculum planning is in place to promote a wide and diverse curriculum where children are challenged with new experiences. It is made up of a range of broad themes and based on our core books and rhymes. These are also often linked to seasonal changes whilst being flexible to respond to observed needs and current interests.

Our planning identifies intended learning, with outcomes and termly end points, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working beyond. We observe and monitor progress with these skills and report these to parents.

Every day, all children have opportunities to develop the characteristics of effective learning as follows:

- **Playing and exploring**- To find out and explore, to play with what they know, to be willing to 'have a go'
- **Active learning**- To be motivated, active learners, to be involved and concentrate, to keep trying and not give up, to enjoy achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and thinking critically**- To have their own ideas, to make links, to choose their own way to do things and be independent

4. 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.' (*Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025*).

We undertake the Baseline Statutory Assessments in line with 2025 reception baseline assessment: assessment and reporting arrangements within the first 6 weeks of a pupil starting reception. The EYFS profile is completed for each child in the final term of the academic year. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development to achieve GLD, staff draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement.

'Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process.' (*Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025*). Staff understand children's interests and what they know and can do, and then shape the teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. This also informs an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

5. Home Learning

At Lindfield, we understand the impact of high-quality liaison between home and school and strive to ensure that our pupils are keen to learn at every opportunity. For this reason, we believe that the extension of learning out of the classroom, including the provision of home learning, is a vital addition to a child's learning. In the Reception classes, once the children are settled and familiar with routines, phonics videos and supporting activities are sent home via our online learning platform, Seesaw. This platform is also used to provide parents with weekly updates of the learning that has taken place and share observations of the children accessing the learning. Regular reading is encouraged at home and this is recorded in a Home School Diary. The diary also acts a communication book between parents and staff.

6. Pupil Premium

We ensure that we quickly identify children who are entitled to Pupil Premium. Through baseline assessment we ascertain how we can further support through resources, expertise or intervention. Progress is rigorously monitored and tracked and next steps are shared with parents.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare

'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.' (*Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025*)

At Lindfield all children have the right to feel safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage the children to take risks in a safe learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children within Early Years. We ensure that our current practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our team works collaboratively to;

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

See Safeguarding Children Policy: Safeguarding Children in Education and Child Protection Policy.

8. Oral Health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, by talking to the children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Opportunities to promote good oral health are also incorporated into the environment and role play areas.

9. Safer Eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

Responsibility to share allergy information with our food provider, Chartwells lies with the parent.

We make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time.

10. Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as spare clothes
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance children’s privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

11. Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate in the EYFS building and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Read in conjunction with:

Safeguarding policy

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025)

EYFS Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact Overview

Good Behaviour Policy