**Introduction:**

The Foundation Stage begins at birth to the end of the Reception Year in school. At Great Linford, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. The curriculum we provide for the children in the Foundation Unit builds on their previous learning experiences from pre-schools, nursery and most importantly, at home. We aim to ensure the transition from home to school is a smooth one. We offer a rich, stimulating, safe and secure environment in which the children can learn.

**Philosophy:**

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states that “Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support that enables them to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up”

**Vision:**

We believe that every child is unique and has a right to a challenging, creative and inspiring curriculum which will harness and build on the hundred languages of children. They will be immersed in a nurturing, caring and safe environment with families, teachers and other children as co-learners. They will be given the roots to achieve to their true potential in every aspect of learning not only for their journey through Great Linford but to enable them to thrive as a lifelong learner.

We believe that building respect, responsibility and community between children, families and staff are at the core of enabling every child to become an active constructor of knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom.

**Rationale:**

**Provision and organisation:**

The Foundation Stage area has an open plan double classroom layout with access to a separate outside learning area. During the course of the day children can independently move from area to area within the Foundation Unit, making choices about the activities they are involved in.

All children are supervised at all times by a trained member of staff. Children have daily opportunities to become involved in their learning through self–initiated activities or adult focused tasks. The children are supported as active learners and are encouraged to make independent choices about their learning.

The environment within the Foundation Unit is carefully planned so all children can access a broad and balanced curriculum. The following areas of provision are provided inside; role-play area, maths area, reading area, fine motor and malleable area, creative area, construction area, writing area and phonics area. These areas are clearly defined and resources are labelled and easily accessible by the children, who are encouraged to care for the equipment and be responsible for tidying it away.

Children also have direct access to an outside area which is open all year round. Children can explore new activities and planned opportunities that are in place to extend areas of provision from inside to outside. The provision provided in the outside area enhances all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. “The outside area is often described as an area of provision but should not be viewed merely as an additional area, more as a part of the whole setting in which all other areas of provision can be set up and all areas of the curriculum covered.” Planning Children’s Play and Learning in the Foundation Stage, J. Drake, 2005

Foundation children participate in whole school assemblies from the second half of the Autumn term and take part in a Christmas performance to parents. We hold a stay and play session each half term in which the parents are invited to come along and see what work the children have been doing, they then stay and take part in activities around the unit with their child. Foundation children have access to the library, hall and cookery room throughout the year. Children have one weekly PE lesson in the hall during autumn and spring terms and one outside session a week during the summer term. Children also have a weekly session at Forest School with our trained Forest School Leader.

**Induction and Transfer prior to starting School**

We visit pre-schools and nursery settings so that the children can meet Great Linford staff in their own secure environment. These visits allow us to gain information about each child from the key workers who have observed and assessed them through their learning journey so far. This information, along with their final assessments, forms the first part of our school’s initial assessment of each child.

All children have the opportunity to visit our school to experience their new environment, take part in school routines and build relationships with staff. The visits enable parents and carers to see the secure setting in which their child will learn.

All children are visited at home prior to starting school by their class teacher and teaching assistant.

**Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage:**

Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Through carefully planned play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of their world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children are given opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Children are involved with group and individual play, some initiated by adults and some by children. Children are able to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them.

**The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

At Great Linford Primary School we use The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Development Matters bands and Early Learning Goals to guide and support our assessment and planning.

We plan and teach to the prime and specific areas of learning.

Prime Areas of Learning:

• Personal, Social and Emotional Development

• Communication & Language

• Physical Development

Specific Areas of Learning:

• Literacy

• Mathematics

• Understanding of the World

• Expressive Arts and Design

We aim to provide our pupils with a broad and stimulating range of experiences appropriate to their stage of development. Our curriculum is planned through a series of themes and topics, each of which offer experiences in all areas. Teachers plan to provide a linked series of activities over each term, week and day. Practitioners ensure that all children are encouraged to experience activities in all areas during the week, although they may not experience them each day. We plan a mixture of directed and free choice of activities. As the children become older and more mature the planning, delivery and timetable reflect their learning journey as the activities become more challenging.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

This prime area underpins all the other areas in the curriculum, giving the child skills to work effectively with others and access their learning.

Children will be:

• Supported in developing independence, self-esteem and self-respect.

• Encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions.

• Encouraged to seek help when necessary.

• Taught how to resolve conflict through negotiation.

• Able to form effective relationships with other children and adults.

• Supported to take turns and share.

• Helped to express their feelings.

• Enabled to develop an understanding of right and wrong.

**Communication and Language**

We aim to provide a stimulating environment in which communication and language skills can be nurtured and developed. Planned activities and modelling by adults will provide opportunities for children to:

• Explore and develop skills in verbal communication.

• Interact with others, effectively expressing their own thoughts and feelings.

• Experience the spoken word as a means of conveying information, sharing and receiving ideas, and as a means of gaining insight into the world of imagination.

• Develop skills in listening in order to be able to process information, respond to the ideas of others and follow instructions.

• Develop imagination and aesthetic awareness, and develop the ability to respond to their own experiences and those of others. Role play is a key feature of this learning.

**Physical Development**

Through play and structured tasks, children are supported to develop fine and gross motor control. To enhance control and coordination of large movements, children are involved in:

• Group games involving running, jumping and hopping.

• Group games involving movement followed by stopping.

• Moving in different ways to music, exploring height, speed and direction.

• Balancing activities and games.

• Using a range of hall equipment, such as climbing frame, benches and horses to apply movement skills.

• Using wheeled toys.

• Kicking, throwing and catching activities.

To enhance control and coordination of small movements, children are involved in:

• Sand and water play.

• Shaping and modelling with play dough, plasticine and clay.

• Painting, drawing and colouring using different mediums.

• Peg games and jigsaws.

• Threading.

• Cutting with scissors.

• Dressing up.

* Writing with pencils and crayons.
* Dough disco
* Writedance

To further enhance the children’s well-being, they will be involved in discussions and activities about healthy living including the need for exercise, sleep routines, hygiene and balanced diet.

**Literacy**

We teach children the skills and understanding of how to use writing to communicate their ideas to others as well as the skills to read the ideas and contributions of others.

• We use Talk for Writing in order to encourage rich language through extensive active retelling and modelling of stories. Children are then encouraged to write and invent their own versions of learnt stories.

Phonics is taught using the read write inc approach which therefore leads to rapid progress due to the structured, non negotiable approach .

**Maths**

We aim to foster enthusiasm, confidence and the development of knowledge in exploring, using and applying a broad range of mathematical concepts. To provide children with broad and varied experiences in which mathematical language, skills and concepts can be created, supported and nurtured, children are introduced to early mathematical experiences through the use of numicon in their play and everyday classroom situations. E.g. stories, songs, games and imaginative play. Children are therefore encouraged through their play experiences to:

• Enjoy using and experimenting with numbers, including numbers greater than 10.

• Develop mathematical language and the ability to reason using it.

* Sort, classify and sequence.

• Make comparisons and search for patterns.

• Select and use appropriate materials and methods.

• Recognise relationships throughout the areas of number, shape and space, measure and data handling.

• Record their ideas at a level appropriate to their stage of development.

**Understanding the World**

We aim to enable the children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make sense of the world. We provide children with first hand experiences that encourage observation, exploration, prediction, problem solving, critical thinking, decision making and discussion. We aim for children:

• To become aware of the similarities and differences between themselves and other people and to understand that all people deserve to be treated with respect.

• To comment and question about their observation of objects, materials and living things with and without aids such as magnifying glasses.

• To experiment with magnets, to observe reflection by using objects such as mirrors or shiny objects.

• To make observations of animals and plants both inside and outside.

• To join in free play with objects and materials that have different purposes and work in different ways such as torches and construction kits.

• To participate in group discussions about weather and changing seasons.

• To have experiences of structured sand and water play with opportunities to observe and predict outcomes.

• To use a wide range of materials and tools safely, such as scissors, clay, dough and plasticine to make objects.

To use construction toys to make models and vehicles and to investigate how to improve them

• To develop ICT skills in the Foundation Unit using both a computer and a range of play based technology resources, including programmable and remote control vehicles, cameras and everyday technology.

**Creative Development**

Children are taught skills and techniques in art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative role-play activities. This enables them to express their ideas and feelings and to develop their imagination.

**Exploring and Using Media and Materials**

This includes art and design based activities and provision:

• Activities allowing children to explore and make objects using a wide variety of malleable materials including: play dough, clay, plasticine etc.

• Collage activities.

• Drawing activities, including chalk, charcoal, pastels, crayons, felt pens, pencils etc.

• Painting activities, including finger painting, powder paint in shakers, spray paints, bubble painting, marble rolling etc.

• Printing activities using natural and made materials.

• Constructing using Lego, wooden blocks, Meccano, Duplo etc.

• Designing and making 3D models from recyclable materials.

As well as music based activities and provision:

• Individual free play with musical instruments.

• Group free play with musical instruments.

• Moving to music.

• Listening to music from a variety of cultures.

• Singing songs.

• Musical accompaniment to stories.

**Being Imaginative**

This is focused upon children expressing their feelings and experiences through creative mediums of their choice. This includes:

• Singing.

• Dance.

• Dressing-up.

• Role play linked to personal experience and topic themes.

• Imaginative play with dolls and small world figures.

• Acting out and expanding on stories using themselves as actors and with puppets.

**Forest Schools**

At Great Linford the Foundation children take part in Forest schools with a fully trained Forest Schools teacher. The children do this once a week and in all weathers. Forest school takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world. It uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning andaims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. Forest schools offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

**Assessment and record keeping:**

Assessment is an essential aspect of effective teaching. The assessment of each child is a continuous process. Children are assessed across all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Our assessment procedures are:

• Throughout the year evidence is collected on each child through a variety of sources, e.g. photographic images, written commentaries, mark making and pieces of work recorded by the child. This evidence is retained and kept in individual children’s books and learning records.

• All staff members make regular observations of the children in the areas of learning and undertake formative and summative assessment tasks. The outcomes of these are used to plan appropriate next-step activities.

• Observations for assessment are incorporated into our planning and activities are observed, regularly monitored and recorded.

• Observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences for the child.

• Observations are then matched to the Development Matters statements and the Early Learning Goals and are recorded on 2simple as well as on paper records.

* 2simple assessments are sent over email to parents so that they are fully involved in their children’s leaning journey.

• Foundation parents receive a report in the summer term and are offered Parent consultation meetings in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

**Partnership with Parents**

We believe that successful links between home and school are essential for our children to become successful learners.

We encourage parents to take an active part in their child’s education by:

• ensuring a smooth transition from home to school. We inform parents about school routines and learning and allow parents to ask any questions they may have about starting school

• informing them of the learning objectives/topics to be covered each term

• providing them with suggestions as to how they can be involved and what they can do to support their child’s learning

• informing them about events taking place in school via regular newsletters

• curriculum evenings, learning with child events in school and ‘parent and child’ workshops to establish learning links between home and school

• providing information, newsletters, reminders and news through a parent board visible to parents when dropping off and collecting their children

• providing a parent and child reading record book to aid communication about their child’s learning.

We do this through:

• inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;

• inviting children to visit school where they can spend time in their new class with their teacher before starting school;

• the Foundation teachers and teaching assistants visiting and liaising with local pre-schools and nurseries;

• the class teacher and teaching assistant visiting all families in their home setting prior to their child starting school;

• an induction evening informing parents of school routines and ways of preparing children for school/establishing good learning practices at home prior to starting school;

• a curriculum breakfast in the Autumn term outlining literacy and mathematics learning and ways to support children’s learning at home;

• supporting information given out with leaflets and packs;

• opportunities to visit school throughout the year and work with their child to complete learning activities on a theme and experience the learning children undertake at school;

• parent and child workshops with opportunities to develop subject skills and to work with their own child to apply the learning skills modelled; and

• providing parent information booklets and newsletters to help support and keep parents

* providing 2simple observations on a regular weekly basis for parents to read at home.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the role of the Foundation Stage Teacher/Learning Support Assistants to:

• plan creatively ensuring coverage of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) curriculum;

• assess children’s individual progress towards the Foundation Stage Profile and to develop an awareness of the achievement and progress of identified groups in class and tailor teaching and learning to meet the needs of these children;

• effectively feedback/mark children’s work enabling children to identify what they have achieved well and their next learning step and how they can achieve this;

• report to parents each term on their child’s progress;

• plan and organise an independent learning environment which promotes learning through play; indoors and outdoors;

• recognise positive behaviour and celebrate achievement through rewards;

• communicate effectively with the Foundation Stage Leader; and

• be reflective of the setting’s practices, to keep abreast of changes in the EYFS curriculum and to be innovative in and committed to adapting and improving Foundation learning and teaching.

It is the role of the Foundation Stage Leader to:

• develop the organisation and curriculum in Foundation;

• lead a team of teachers and support staff;

• advise staff on how Foundation Stage children are tracked and assessed;

• review and moderate levels of achievement and standards of assessment;

• liaise with pre-school settings and Key Stage One staff to ensure effective transitions;

• liaise with the SENCo regarding children with special educational needs;

• lead team meetings;

• attend relevant training courses;

• inform the whole staff of recent developments in Early Childhood Education;

• review and monitor planning;

• advise the Head teacher of action required (e.g. resources, standards etc.);

• maintain relationships with the LA through co-ordinators meetings and links with the early years team; and

• drive continuous reflection with regard to the effectiveness of Foundation, to identify areas for development, to include the Foundation team in this and drive through improvements.

The role of the Governing Body: At Great Linford Primary School we have a named governor for Foundation.

* He/She is invited to attend relevant school INSET and curriculum evenings.
* The Foundation governor meets annually with the subject Leader to discuss the action plan and standards within the school.
* When possible they will observe Foundation essentially to observe the policy in practice.
* The Foundation Governor will report back to the Learning and Teaching Committee on an annual basis.

**Transition to Key Stage One**

The Foundation Stage Leader works closely with Key Stage One staff, ensuring continuity and progression in the children’s development and learning. Summer term transition meetings effectively handover classes and include identifying individual and cohort learning strengths and next steps. From this a focused Year One transition curriculum is planned to meet learning needs. Individual and group barriers to learning are identified. Support already in place for individuals or groups of children in Foundation and how these should be continued or developed into Year One are agreed during summer transition meetings. Autumn transition meetings enable progress of children to be tracked prior to the whole school pupil progress meeting as well as supporting Key Stage One with appropriate extensions of the Foundation curriculum and support for individual or groups of children causing concern.

During each transition period, the Foundation Leader provides training and updates on changes to the EYFS curriculum and assessments. Year One plan independent learning activities similar to those in the Foundation area through the setting up of child initiated activities in the Key Stage One shared area. This ensures that learning through play and exploration and that a familiar ‘way of learning’ is maintained to support the children’s transition into the Key Stage One Curriculum.

Visits to Key Stage One are arranged in the summer term to help the children to familiarise themselves with new teachers, new classrooms and routines. Key stage One teachers also visit children in Foundation to see children learning in their familiar setting and Foundation children have additional visits to the Year One classes and shared areas including stories with their new teachers.

We believe that close links with Milton Keynes Early Years Team and MK schools are important as they allow us to share ideas and good practice with other professionals in the area. We encourage the Early Years team to visit our setting and to share and celebrate our achievement as we work towards an outstanding Early Years setting for our school. We attend as appropriate liaison meetings to keep abreast of current Early Years Practices and work in partnership with local schools.