



LONG CRENDON SCHOOL

the place to grow

EYFS Curriculum Statement

At Long Crendon School we are passionate about giving children in Foundation Stage a profoundly positive start as we steer them on their journey to the future. We aim to inspire a love for 'life-long' learning and a sense of awe and wonder about the world we live in. We place great importance on the development of children as individuals, building on prior knowledge and supporting their next steps through contextual, play-based learning opportunities that are led by the children's interests.

Intent - *Why do we teach what we teach?*

We are a welcoming village school with a community that is largely made up of working, professional parents, where pressures and time demands can often have an impact on families with busy lives. We have recognised, with changing cohorts, that some children require additional support following instructions or articulating their personal and emotional needs effectively. There is also a trend in families moving from more urban areas where children haven't necessarily had opportunities to explore natural environments and country living. Parental expectations are often high, with a focus on academic attainment; however there is a clear understanding that our school supports opportunities in all areas of the curriculum and not just on core subjects.

We have developed a flexible curriculum that adapts with our community and reflects the experiences we know our children will need in order to thrive in the years ahead. Focussing on the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, as outlined in the Development Matters Document and supporting autonomy in the way our children make decisions about their learning, we intend that children will be better equipped to manage the demands of a fast paced and ever-changing educational system.

Our **enabling environment** and caring, skilful adult interactions support the children as they make connections through their daily experiences. Using **Values-based Education** philosophy, we want to help children to reflect on their attitudes and behaviour, putting greater emphasis on their personal, social and emotional development. In addition to having high standards in language and communication, (with the importance of promoting a wide vocabulary) we aim to equip our young children with an equally high level of **emotional literacy**, which will later nurture ethical intelligence.

As a rural school, we value the importance of being outside and promote a sense of **awe** and **wonder** for our **natural environment**. We want our children to appreciate and work in harmony with nature and respect the diversity of habitats that surround us. We have developed an extensive outdoor provision that facilitates a seamless transition from inside the classroom and provides opportunities for those who thrive when they are physically active. The outdoor space incorporates areas and resources that develop imagination and creativity as well as quiet spaces where children can be still and reflective.

Implementation - *How do we teach what we teach?*

Upon entry, our priorities are in line with the recommendations outlined in the Development Matters Document, starting with high quality teaching of the **Prime Areas of Learning**. In addition we carefully observe children with reference to Ferre Leavers 'Leuven scale' which focuses on '**emotional well-being**' and '**involvement**.'

We pay great importance in developing a **relationship with the families** of the children we teach, aiming to work in partnership through daily interactive 'stay and play' sessions and providing regular opportunities to discuss children's interests, achievements and next steps in their learning. In addition, we have positive working relationships with our local feeder groups and share information to support the transition into school.

Long Crendon School supports the notion of a holistic education, exploring children's interests to provide meaningful learning opportunities. Once the children feel safe and secure and there is a sense of trust in the adults that are there to support them, we begin to develop a timetable that balances child-led learning with adult-directed activities, with an emphasis on the **Specific Areas of Learning** - in particular; focussed teaching of literacy, (phonics) and mathematics. The children's daily routines are designed around a timetable that allows for '**in the moment**' learning opportunities that are monitored by our experienced practitioners. Next steps of learning are provided through careful interactions that are contextual and relevant to the needs of the children, allowing for mistakes to be made and prior learning opportunities to be reflected upon. Children's attainment is monitored through daily briefings and support is directed in subsequent planning with a focus on individual and group interests. During the briefings we reflect on; what individuals or groups of children need to learn or are curious about, what embedded learning we have observed and what might be changed in order to extend the learning. In this way, we ensure that the children have agency over their environment and that the provision leads to depth of learning across the curriculum.

We are **passionate about reading** and extending children's vocabulary and have developed a philosophy for generating enthusiasm and confidence that aims to provide a life-long love of books. Our twice daily story times and daily quiet reading times allow for a shared interest and enjoyment of literature, including rhymes, poetry, storytelling and nonfiction, celebrating children's own choices of books and promoting the importance of developing literacy and phonic skills in order to read and write independently. In conjunction with the Letters and Sounds phonics programme, we use the '**Jolly Phonics Scheme**' to captivate children and support kinaesthetic learning through actions and songs.

When it comes to maths teaching in the early years, it's important that children begin to develop a sense of the underlying concepts and structures of maths. We follow a '**Maths Mastery**' approach in Foundation with an emphasis on studying key skills of number, calculation and shape so that pupils develop deep understanding and the acquisition of mathematical language. Through daily routines and activities we allow children the opportunity to explore mathematics in everyday context, making it relevant to their interests and demystifying the language so that maths isn't perceived as 'scary' or compartmentalised.

As well as a stimulating indoor environment, we want to inspire our children to be outside and appreciate where we live. We have developed a wonderful secure outdoor area for the children to use for imaginative play and social interaction. **Our extensive 'wild area'** allows children the **freedom to explore**, manage risk and develop self-confidence, **self-regulation** and **independence**. The area includes the following; mud kitchen and workshop, water pulley systems, 'trim-trail' obstacle course, bird hide, den-making resources,

'minibeast hotels' campfire area, planting and digging areas and a range of wild flowers and plants to explore. Reflecting on the Characteristics of Effective Learning, we are able to see children thrive, who are not always able to achieve their full potential inside the classroom.

Impact: *how do we know what pupils have learnt and how well they have learnt it?*

Our curriculum will meet the needs of our children, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, so we spend time looking at and evaluating how children are learning. This is achieved through talking to our children, parents and carers and previous settings in order to ascertain starting points and next steps to ensure progress. By reflecting on **ongoing observational assessments** our team are able to identify any gaps in attainment or target potential areas for greater depth when referencing national data. Our **strong parental engagement** allows for regular communication of achievements, next steps of learning and sensitive discussion points that help to maintain consistency. By referencing photography and videography of child-led learning outcomes, we help individuals **reflect on their experiences** in order to share with each other and their families. This is reciprocated with 'wow' moments and an **ongoing dialogue** that maintains momentum and consolidation.

Our curriculum and its delivery ensures that children **make very good progress** in all areas of the curriculum. Where there are gaps in attainment, children make rapid progress and we have a high percentage of children meeting national expectations at the end of the year. We believe our high standards of teaching support consistently good progress, through play-based learning opportunities, that are embedded in a range of contexts and led by the children's interests. Therefore, our children leave Foundation as **happy, independent and curious learners** who are better equipped to manage the demands of a fast paced and ever-changing educational system.