Our Vision for Early Years

At Loatlands Primary School, we believe every child deserves the best possible start to their education. In the Early Years, we prioritise wellbeing and positive relationships so that children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Our children are happy, excited and motivated learners. We offer a rich and challenging curriculum where children are given opportunities to explore, take risks and learn from first-hand experiences. We place great value on the outdoor environment and recognise its importance in ensuring all children thrive in our care.

Our curriculum is ambitious for all children whilst recognising that children have different starting points. Learning opportunities are planned according to children's stage of development so that all can flourish and achieve their potential.

We aim for children to become well-rounded individuals who are respectful, curious and resilient members of our community and who are well prepared for the transition into Year 1.

Partnership with Home

We recognise that parents and carers are the first educators in their children's lives and we value the strong partnerships we build with families.

We work closely with parents and carers to ensure a smooth transition into Nursery and Reception through a mixture of, Home visits, Preschool visits, Parent meetings and 'Stay and Play' sessions

We encourage parents and carers to be actively involved in their child's learning. To support this, we use the online learning journal Tapestry to share observations, photographs and learning updates with families.

Throughout the year, parents and carers are invited into school to take part in, 'Stay and Play' sessions, Parent meetings and Parent workshops

We want all families to feel confident that their child is happy, safe and well cared for in our setting. We value parental contributions to our understanding of each child's development and use this information to support our assessments and plan next steps in learning.

Strong relationships with families underpin everything we do, as we believe that relationships are the foundation of successful learning.

Our Day

Each day in the Early Years provides opportunities for children to come together as a key group (in Nursery) or a class (in reception), share experiences and celebrate their achievements.

Children feel proud, happy and secure knowing that their successes are recognised and valued.

In Nursery, the curriculum is largely centred around children's interests, with a balance between child-initiated play and adult-led learning.

In Reception, learning continues to build upon children's interests while also introducing half-termly topics and enquiry-based questions to support deeper learning and understanding.

Learning Environment

Our learning environment is carefully designed to support both adult-directed teaching and child-initiated play.

Children are provided with stimulating opportunities to explore, create, investigate, solve problems and learn through play.

We place equal importance on both indoor and outdoor environments. These spaces are carefully planned, resourced and accessed daily.

Our continuous provision is available to children every day and includes high-quality, open-ended resources that allow children to use materials in a variety of ways and provide opportunities for challenge.

Resources are displayed on open shelving so children can access them independently. This encourages autonomy, independence and choice.

Maintaining a consistent learning environment helps children to build confidence, feel secure, develop independence, revisit and practise skills

Adults enhance areas of provision based on children's interests and curriculum priorities to extend learning opportunities.

Role of Adults

High-quality interactions are central to our practice in the Early Years.

During both child-initiated and adult-led learning, adults support children through:

- modelling language
- explaining and demonstrating
- exploring ideas
- questioning and encouraging
- recalling previous learning
- narrating play
- setting challenges

Adults carefully consider the resources provided, the physical environment and the routines of the day to create meaningful learning opportunities.

Assessment is integral to teaching in the Early Years. Practitioners continually observe and assess what children know, understand and can do. They also consider children's interests and the Characteristics of Effective Learning to inform planning and next steps.

Our Early Years provision has been awarded Communication Friendly Setting Status, recognising the high-quality interactions and language-rich environments we provide for children.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Nursery and Reception together form the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

We follow the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This stage is crucial in preparing children for school readiness and lifelong learning. Children's early experiences should be happy, active, exciting and engaging.

The EYFS framework sets standards for learning, development and safeguarding to ensure children receive high-quality early education.

Areas of Learning and Development

Children develop skills, acquire knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through seven areas of learning.

Prime Areas

The prime areas are fundamental to children's development and underpin all future learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas

As children grow, the prime areas support development in four additional areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Learning experiences often develop multiple areas simultaneously.

Phonics

Phonics is a key part of learning in the Early Years and supports children's early reading and writing skills.

At Loatlands Primary School we follow the Read Write Inc. programme, which continues throughout the school.

Children explore letters and sounds through both play-based experiences and structured adult-led phonics sessions. Activities are carefully planned to support children at different stages of their phonics development and children make great progress.

Curriculum

At Loatlands Primary School, we ensure our learning environments and experiences are inviting, exciting and appropriately challenging.

Adult-directed learning is carefully planned and sequenced to build on prior knowledge and support progression.

Our Early Years curriculum is mapped from the beginning of Nursery to the end of Reception to ensure that children develop essential knowledge and skills across all seven areas of learning.

Staff tailor activities to meet each child's unique needs and developmental stage. The curriculum is flexible, allowing practitioners to respond to children's interests and extend learning opportunities.

Children learn through playing and exploring, being active, creative thinking and critical thinking.

We place great importance on developing social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, independence, cooperation as these skills support children in their future learning and their transition to Year 1.

Enhancements to areas of provision are regularly added based on children's interests and curriculum goals to further support learning and development.