



Limes Farm Infants School & Nursery
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION POLICY

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1. Introduction, Aims & School Motto

At **Limes Farm Infant School & Nursery**, our school motto is "**Belong, Learn, Enjoy.**"

We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in school so they can reach their full potential. A child's experience in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) lays the vital groundwork for their future learning, well-being, and life choices. Working in close partnership with families and in full compliance with the **2026 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**, we aim to:

- Create a safe, warm, and welcoming environment where every child feels they truly **belong**.
- Ensure all children **learn** through a rich, balanced, and engaging curriculum that builds communication, critical thinking, and key life skills.
- Help children **enjoy** their early educational journey, building resilience, curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.
- Give all children a broad range of activities that will stimulate the use of language, thought, and communication to enable them to access basic skills, providing a solid foundation for lifelong learning.
- Engenders in children a sense of self-esteem and the worth of others, regardless of gender, race, disability, or special educational needs.
- Foster respect for other people's feelings, property, and surroundings, making sure every child is valued and supported.
- Value and involve parents and carers in children's learning and development, working together in close partnership.

2. Statutory Legislation & Governance Framework

This policy is strictly based on the requirements set out in the **2026 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework** published by the Department for Education (DfE). It operates alongside associated national guidance and local authority procedures.

3. Structure of the EYFS Setting

Our EYFS provision at Limes Farm Infant School & Nursery includes nursery classes (ages 3–4) and reception classes (ages 4–5):

- **Nursery Provision:** We offer part-time places (15 hours per week) and full-time places (32.5 hours per week) for 3 to 4-year-olds.
- **Reception Classes:** Children in Reception follow a full-time school timetable.

4. Overarching Principles, Curriculum & Learning Strategies

Our Early Years provision is guided by the four Overarching Principles of the EYFS:

1. **A Unique Child:** Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. **Enabling Environments:** Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from strong partnerships between practitioners and parents/carers.
4. **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn at different rates and in different ways.

4.1 Seven Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS curriculum comprises seven interrelated areas of learning and development. The Prime areas run through and underpin all learning, supporting a child's 'self', whilst the Specific areas grow out of the Prime areas to provide essential knowledge and basic skills.

Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language:** Providing a language-rich environment which supports children's interactions and their ability to both express themselves and converse with those around them is at the heart of our Early Years practice. By showing and teaching children how to talk and when to listen—by commenting, echoing, adding new vocabulary, and showing genuine interest—children's learning across all seven areas is supported.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):** By building children's confidence and educating them about their emotions, their sense of self, and supporting their social development, our children are well equipped to form healthy and happy relationships in and outside of school. Within this area, children are also taught how to look after their bodies and maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle.
- **Physical Development:** Supporting both fine and gross motor development through a range of planned physical and sensory experiences helps children's strength, coordination, and physical awareness. Children learn to develop core strength, balance, stability, and agility, taking part in weekly PE lessons.

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy:** Children are taught the links between sounds and letters through systematic synthetic phonics. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* scheme to support early reading. By developing both language comprehension and word reading, children are supported to build a lifelong love of reading. Children are also taught transcription and composition to develop early writing skills.
- **Mathematics:** Developing a comprehensive number sense so children can apply skills and problem solve is essential for mathematical excellence. Children are taught to count, recognise patterns and relationships between numbers, and use manipulatives to carry out calculations. They are also introduced to spatial reasoning, shape, pattern, measurement, and concepts of time. We use the *Master The Curriculum* scheme to support early maths.
- **Understanding the World:** Building on what they already know, children learn to explore and make sense of the world around them, their communities, and their role within society. Through stories, visitors, school trips, and enhanced provision, children's cultural, social, and technological understanding is developed.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** This area provides children with resources and opportunities to create, make, and design. They share ideas through role-play, music, movement, and dance, developing both artistic and cultural awareness.

4.2 Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways children learn and embed these three characteristics into our daily practice:

- **Playing and Exploring:** Children investigate and experience new things, showing the confidence to 'have a go'.

- **Active Learning:** Children concentrate and remain motivated, showing persistence when faced with difficulties and taking pride in their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children develop their own ideas, make connections between experiences, and test strategies to solve problems and extend their thinking.

5. Teaching and Learning

At Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery, our aim is to provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which addresses the children's social and emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.

We carefully consider and plan a progressive curriculum around engaging topics, specifically chosen to reflect the seven areas of learning and to secure the foundations for children's learning in Year 1. It takes account of children's interests and how children learn to maximise engagement and ensure progress for every child.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We create medium term plans based on a series of topics, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'next steps in learning', and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole class and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact, when appropriate, to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

6. Staff Qualifications, Development & Professional Training

We pride ourselves on maintaining a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional, and caring Early Years teachers and learning support assistants who plan and work closely together:

Training Standard / Qualification	Application Across EYFS Staff
DfE Child Development Training	Most EYFS staff have successfully completed the official Department for Education online course (Child Development Training).
First Aid & Safety Qualifications	100% of EYFS staff are First Aid trained (including Paediatric First Aid

Training Standard / Qualification	Application Across EYFS Staff
	qualifications).
Early Career Teachers (ECTs)	Reception teachers have participated in the Early Career Professional Development Programme from the DfE Education Development Trust.
Leadership Credentials (NPQ)	Both Nursery and Reception class teachers hold a National Professional Qualification (NPQ).
PRICE De-escalation Training	All staff receive regular PRICE training in de-escalation techniques and safe, non-restrictive physical intervention.
Continuous Professional Development	Staff attend regular LA adviser network meetings, Epping Forest Consortium moderation sessions, and internal INSET to keep abreast of educational developments.

7. Assessment, Progress & Record Keeping

Our assessment procedures inform ongoing planning to ensure learning addresses each child's individual trajectory:

- **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA):** Carried out within the first six weeks of children entering Reception.
- **Speech & Language Screening:** Every child in Reception completes *WellComm* assessments to monitor communication and language skills.
- **Phonics Progress Checks:** Half-termly *Little Wandle* assessments track the acquisition of phonic knowledge.
- **Daily Observational Assessment:** Evidence of learning (observations, photographs, samples of work) is recorded on ClassDojo, topic books, and maths books across child-initiated and adult-led activities.
- **Diagnostic Assessments:** Detailed diagnostic assessments are conducted for children working below age-related expectations to track small steps of progress and remove learning barriers.
- **Pupil Progress Meetings:** Termly Pupil Progress Action Planning Meetings monitor and review support implemented for children with identified concerns.
- **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP):** Completed at the end of Reception against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Teachers determine whether a child is meeting expected levels ('Expected') or working towards them ('Emerging'), reporting Profile data to the Local Authority and Year 1 teachers.

8. Behaviour, Emotional Wellbeing & Inclusion

Our relational approach to behaviour management focuses on strong relationships, connection, and restoration, fully aligned with the **LFI Behaviour and Relationships Policy (2026)** and **Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP)**:

- **Zones of Regulation:** Colour-coded tools are displayed in every classroom and

used daily to help children recognise, name, and regulate their feelings.

- **Restorative Conversations:** When unexpected or dysregulated behaviour occurs, neutral adults guide children through restorative questions (understanding feelings, impact, and repairing relationships).
- **ELSA Support:** Trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) deliver structured 1:1 and small group interventions focusing on emotional regulation, self-esteem, and social skills.
- **Calm Spaces:** Designated low-stimulus environments (such as Jens Den and the ELSA room) allow dysregulated children to reset safely under adult supervision.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** Taught in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2014). Early identification occurs via home visits, parental liaison, and external agency data. Tailored risk-reduction plans, visual schedules, and reasonable adjustments ensure full access to the curriculum (for further details, see the *LFI Special Educational Needs Policy*).

9. Safeguarding, Health & Welfare (EYFS 2026 Standards)

We strictly adhere to all welfare and safeguarding requirements set out in the 2026 EYFS Framework:

- **Safer Sleep Procedures:** Children needing sleep or rest are monitored continuously within sight and hearing. Sleeping children lie on a flat surface on their backs, without loose bedding or pillows, in temperature-controlled spaces. Active 10-minute checks are logged on official sleep records.
- **Safer Eating & Food Safety:** Detailed records of food allergies and dietary requirements are maintained. High-risk items (such as grapes and cherry tomatoes) are cut lengthwise into quarters. Staff sit alongside children to supervise mealtimes and prevent choking.
- **Vetting & Staff Checks:** Enhanced DBS and barred-list checks are completed for all staff and volunteers prior to employment or placement.

- **Screen Time & Media:** Screen use strictly adheres to DfE Early Years guidance (maximum 15 minutes per day in Nursery, and 30–60 minutes in Reception), ensuring digital media is interactive, purposeful, and supervised.
- **Attendance & Welfare Monitoring:** Attendance is monitored half-termly as a core safeguarding indicator. Irregular attendance leads to written check-ins and formal review meetings.

10. Parent Partnerships & Reports

We highly value and encourage the role of parents and carers in their children's education. We recognise that parents are the most important people in children's lives and are the people from whom children learn the most and aspire to, particularly in their early years. We know that children's development is a continuous, complex interaction of environmental and genetic factors in which the body, brain, and behaviour become more complex. For this reason, the role of parents and carers is crucial in ensuring children are successful and happy. We welcome and value contributions from parents who can provide deeper insight or knowledge into specific areas such as their career expertise, culture, or interests, broadening opportunities for our children while celebrating diversity.

We aim to form positive working relationships with all our families to ensure both parties feel supported and the best outcomes for all children are achieved. Annual events and collaborative opportunities involving families include:

- **Admissions Information Evening:** Held in the summer term prior to September, providing details about the school day, expectations, and roles, alongside an opportunity to meet the teacher and EYFS team, ask questions, and look around the classrooms.
- **Welcome Packs & Home Visits:** New intake welcome packs containing summer challenges and 'All About Me' information sheets. Home visits for new Nursery starters are conducted in the summer term by the Nursery Teacher and LSA so

Nursery can begin fully within a fortnight in September.

- **Morning Entry Routines:** Inviting parents into the classroom in the morning to read or write with their child.
- **Parent Consultations & Reports:** Parent Consultations take place in the autumn and spring terms, providing opportunities for teachers to discuss development with parents/carers. Parents receive a comprehensive written end-of-year report in the summer term summarizing achievements, identifying areas to work on, and detailing EYFS assessments.
- **Curriculum Workshops & Stay-and-Play:** Spring term workshops explaining EYFS curriculum areas and home support strategies. Regular Stay-and-Play sessions allow families to enjoy classroom activities, share Learning Journeys, and experience school life together.
- **Communication Channels:** Regular online communication via ClassDojo (a secure instant-messaging app for individual or group messaging), termly curriculum newsletters, home-school 'WOW' vouchers, and book borrowing schemes.
- **Enrichment Events:** Topic-aligned events such as reading cafés, school trips, Christmas Nativity performances, and Sports Day.

Parents and carers are warmly welcomed into school throughout the year to discuss any questions. Informal drop-in sessions can be arranged with the class teacher after school. Where necessary, the school may request a meeting to discuss concerns (e.g. behaviour or barriers to learning), working collaboratively to create support plans or contact outside agencies (such as Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, or Parent Support Advisors).

11. Transition Arrangements (Governed by LFI Transition Policy)

11.1 Transition into Nursery

- School tours are offered to all prospective parents and children.

- Parents are invited to a 'Welcome Meeting' in July where the Headteacher and Nursery Teacher present details on induction and distribute information packs.
- Prospective Nursery children attend a 1-hour 'Stay and Play' session with their parents in July.
- The Nursery Teacher and LSA offer home visits in the summer term prior to admission to ensure Nursery starts smoothly in September.
- Admissions forms are analysed to identify specific support or SEND requirements, liaising with parents or previous settings where necessary.
- Children enter Nursery on a staggered start schedule, with personalised induction plans arranged for any child requiring extended settling support. Each child receives a 'Getting Ready for Nursery' pack.

11.2 Transition from Nursery to Reception

For children moving to Reception (whether at Limes Farm Infant School & Nursery or another setting), induction arrangements are fully supported. Portfolios and records are transferred securely to receiving schools. Nursery children become familiar with the wider school through PE sessions in the hall, Christmas Nativity performances, and special assemblies.

Specific Reception transition strategies include:

- **Preschool Links:** Active communication and transition reports exchanged with local preschool settings.
- **Parents Admission Information Evening:** Held in the summer term to share practical information regarding routines, drop-off/pick-up, lunches, PE, and EYFS operations.
- **Summer 'Stay and Play':** Play-based visits for new Reception children and parents to help staff observe children and familiarise families with the environment.
- **'Meet Your Teacher' Taster Morning:** Allocated classroom visits (children only)

during the summer term to build familiarity with staff, peers, and routines. Each child is provided with a 'Getting Ready for School' pack.

- **Staggered September Intake:** Week 1: Morning attendance until 11:45 am.
Week 2: Staying for lunch until 1:15 pm. Week 3 onwards: Full-time attendance until 3:10 pm.

11.3 Transition to Year 1 ('Early Risers')

At Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery, a two-week transition programme called 'Early Risers' takes place at the end of the summer term. Children spend Week 1 with their new teacher in their familiar current classroom, and Week 2 in their new classroom with their new teacher. Parents drop off and pick up from new classrooms to build familiarity. Year 1 classrooms also implement a play-friendly 'soft start' during autumn term afternoons to ease the transition into Key Stage 1 (for full details, see the *LFI Transition Policy*).

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The EYFS Lead and Senior Leadership Team regularly monitor Foundation Stage provision through lesson observations, moderation, planning scrutiny, and data analysis. Evaluation is ongoing, with assessment continually informing planning to support future planning and school development initiatives. Early Years staff are responsible for the day-to-day running of their classes.

14. Alignment with Associated School Policies

This policy operates alongside the following approved school policies:

- **LFI Behaviour and Relationships Policy (2026)**
- **LFI Transition Policy (2026)**
- **LFI EYFS Screen Use and Digital Technology Policy**
- **LFI EYFS Safer Sleep and Spontaneous Rest Policy**
- **LFI EYFS Safer Eating and Food Safety Policy**
- **LFI EYFS Intimate and Personal Care Policy**
- **LFI Pupil Attendance Policy (2026)**
- **LFI Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **LFI First Aid and Medical Administration Policy**
- **LFI Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy**

Appendix 1. Statutory EYFS Policies and Procedures Quick-Reference

Statutory Policy or Procedure Requirement	Where Located in School Documentation
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Procedure for responding to illness & administering medicines	First Aid and Medical Administration Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking identity of visitors	Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for uncollected children and missing children	Uncollected Children & Missing Child Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns	Complaints Policy

Statutory Policy or Procedure Requirement	Where Located in School Documentation
and complaints	