

Dear Parents/Carers and Children of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Welcome to your first year at Lowton West (Early Years Foundation Stage). The following information is intended to give you a better understanding of the structure and work carried out in our Foundation Stage Classes. As parents, your support and co-operation, play a vital part in your child's education and we will be informing you of the best way to help with this. We are happy to discuss any aspect of your child's education and would encourage you to arrange an appointment with your child's class teacher.

Adults involved with Early Years Foundation Stage

In Early Years, as in every class, the efforts of a number of people, apart from the class teachers, are essential in developing each child's full potential. Our EYFS classes have the support of two highly experienced, full time teaching assistants, working in partnership with the teachers, by delivering our high quality teaching program.

Parents or volunteers from the school community also help by supporting reading, which is incredibly valuable to our children. We greatly value parent support and would welcome you into school to help if you can give us the time. (DBS check would be essential due to legal requirements).

The Year's Main Focus

Our main focus in EYFS is to provide a stimulating and enjoyable teaching and learning environment. Our teaching and learning covers the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage). This stage includes children from 0-5. Children begin Lowton West the September before their 5th birthday.

One of our main aims is for the children to settle in quickly and happily, to develop their personal and social skills, encouraging independence and responsibility.

Topics and Educational Visits

Throughout the year we will cover a broad spectrum of topics which will incorporate all areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage. These topics are dictated by your child's interests and we aim to provide a personalised curriculum with activities at the level appropriate to your child. All topics involve discovering about themselves and the environment in which they live. There will be a balance between science, history and geography based topics.

Handwriting

In EYFS, the children are introduced to different letters of the alphabet daily and they are encouraged to learn the letter **sound**, alongside the letter **name**. (more information will be sent home to clarify this).

Children are introduced to our pre-cursive handwriting when appropriate, but will have had opportunity to form letters in a variety of interesting ways first (see below). During the first term at school, we plan for many activities which will strengthen the muscles needed for writing throughout. These include; using scooters and bikes, construction building, using play dough, beads and threading and scissor skills. You can support this at home by giving your child these items to use. Once children have a good understanding of letters and their use, we then provide opportunities to practise the formation and orientation of specific letters.

At Lowton West we learn to write in many ways:



floor outside

- We draw letters in the air

- We finger paint
- We chalk on the floor outside
- We write in sand and foam
- We make letters out of play dough



- We paint with brushes and water on the walls and

Once we have acquired the appropriate fine motor control and are able to hold a pencil correctly, we learn how to write on whiteboards and paper.

Baseline

During your child's first few weeks at school, the class teacher will carry out some baseline assessments, which will become statutory for all primary schools, from Autumn 2020. The assessment is up to 20 minutes per child and can be paused and restarted as appropriate. It is an age-appropriate assessment, consisting of practical tasks, using physical resources and it assesses mathematics and literacy and communication and language. Not all areas of learning and development in the EYFS are assessed. The assessment consists of;

- **Mathematics tasks**

Early number (recognising and counting numbers)

Early calculation (adding groups of toys etc)

Mathematical language (more than, less, altogether, under, count etc)

Early understanding of pattern (red, blue, red, blue, red etc)

- **LCL tasks**

Early vocabulary (words and speech)

Phonological awareness (letter sounds and environmental sounds)

Early comprehension (understanding of the world and stories)





Phonics

During the first term in EYFS, the children are introduced to daily phonics lessons through a programme called Read, Write Inc (RWI). This teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. They learn to form each letter, spell correctly and compose their ideas for writing words, step by step. The programme follows the same daily format which supports the children in becoming familiar with routine. They learn a new sound every day and will always review any previously taught sounds. The children will become familiar with silent signals and will meet 'Fred', who likes to talk in sounds, as this helps the children to understand that words are made up of sounds, e.g. *c-a-t*. During a phonics lesson, the children will learn how to say the sound, repeat the sound at the beginning of a word using pictures to help them, read the sound and know what it looks like, write the letter in the air and on paper and then listen to Fred say the sounds in a word and try to guess the word by 'jumping in'. When the children practise writing their letter sounds, they will be taught a little rhyme/phrase to help them form the pre-cursive letters correctly.

Reading Books

In the second half of the Autumn term, the children will be sent home 2 reading books. One book will be from the school reading scheme and the other will be a library book. In EYFS, we use a variety of phonetic reading books to give the children confidence when learning how to blend letters together to read words. We begin using picture books to encourage the children to enjoy looking at the pictures, practise turning the pages in the correct order, have a go at making up their own story and predicting what they think will happen next or at the end. We also use RWI Sound Blending Books, where the children will see individual CVC words with a simple picture on a page. This will encourage the children to segment the sounds and blend them together to read one word at a time, on a single page. When the children have gained more confidence in blending, they will take home a Dandelion Launcher reading scheme book, which will contain words with only the sounds that the children have been taught and know. This is a great opportunity for you to listen to their reading and see their progression in reading.

Their progress is recorded in their reading record book, where you will find a brief comment about their reading achievements. This diary reinforces home/school relationships, as parents are encouraged to write their personal comments in this book, regarding the child's reading. Books will be changed once a week but we encourage that they are returned to school every day, as we do listen to children read during the week. ***It is our school policy and an expectation that you will also hear your child read at least 3 times during the week and comment about their reading, in their reading record. We give weekly rewards for this!***

The school library book, is for you and your child to enjoy together and for them to listen to you reading. Reading to children is the best way of encouraging them to love books and reading.

Book Bags

Parents are encouraged to use a school book bag, which is embroidered with the school emblem. This enables the children to safely carry their books home and back to school again, hopefully preventing anything getting lost and it leaves their other hand free to carry their water bottle

or their lunch box. The book bag is also the place to find school letters. Please check the bags on a daily basis for any communication from school. Whilst in school, the children are responsible for emptying their bags, e.g. their snack, books and any letters or money to hand in to the teacher, but they will be supported in doing this during the first term.

Homework

The most important support you can give your child at home is by spending time with them looking at their homework. As well as their reading book, we will also send home work that the children may attempt to do independently or you can complete together. The work will reflect what your child has been learning in class and will either be a maths, reading or writing based activity. We will also set simple spellings on '**Spelling Shed**' every week from Autumn 2.

Independence

We spend a great deal of time, encouraging your child to be independent in all they do. Your child will find this easier in school, if you have spent time preparing them before they begin.

Try encouraging them to;

- Recognise their name by sight
- Dress and undress
- Use a knife and fork correctly and independently
- To use a toilet independently
- To put on a coat
- To tidy up after themselves

Leaving your child whilst they are part time

Due to the current pandemic and when we receive further guidance, dates for when this will happen, will be forwarded to you in the near future.

Our aim is for every child to enter school, on their own. A big journey begins with a little step! An independent child becomes an independent learner, a vital stage in their development. To support this, we have a daily routine with regard to leaving your child each morning, when they start at Lowton West.

- The school bell rings at 8.45am and the gates are opened.
On their first day, you are welcome to come into school with your child, through the side gate. You can come into the reception classroom, help your child find their peg where they can hang up their coat and their name card to self-register, you can then encourage them to choose an activity to play at. After about 5-10 minutes, we encourage you to leave your child with us until you return to collect them at lunch time - 11.55am. The collection point will be through the side gate and around to the back of the building, where you can wait on the playground. Your child will be sent out to you by the class teacher or the teaching assistant.
If your child is part time in the afternoon, the gate will be opened at 1.10pm, this will allow the remainder of the Infant children to be collected from the playground after their lunch break and be back in class, to allow a safe transition of your child into their classroom. Your child can then be collected at the end of the school day at 3.05pm.

- On the second day of part time and until further notice, we encourage you to leave your child at the Year 1 door (through the side gate). An adult who is familiar to your child, this could be the class teacher or teaching assistant, will be there for any children who are still a little reluctant to leave parents! End of the session collection will remain the same.
- This morning routine will continue this way, until the children are more confident with coming into school through the Year 1 door. Once this is a smooth and easy transition during the morning routine, parents will be encouraged to leave children at the side gate. However, there will always been adults there to support any children that are unsettled or upset.
- Once your child starts school full time, they will continue to enter school at the side gate from 8.45am and can be collected at the back of school, at the end of the school day at 3.05pm.
- Should your child rush into school without their belongings, please pass them to a member of staff on the gate or to the school office, who will ensure they get to the correct classroom. In the case of lost items of uniform, please pass on a message via the school office or through a note to the class teacher. ***We strongly request that all uniform is clearly labelled and checked regularly. These items include; jumpers, cardigans, shirts/polo shirts, skirts, trousers, pinafores, shoes, PE short, t-shirts, pumps, coats, hats, scarves, water bottles.***
- Home time collection will always be the same. If for any reason, you are unable to collect your child from school, you must inform school of who it will be. You will be asked to complete an 'end of day collection' sheet before your child starts school and it should list, any person who you give permission, to collect your child from school.

Outdoor Play



A major aspect of EYFS curriculum, is the emphasis on outdoor play. We do this in ALL weathers as we are lucky to have an outdoor area that is partially covered, so if we do experience particularly bad weather, we are still fortunate enough to be able to use our outdoor area. We go outside on a daily basis, so we ask that you ensure your child brings appropriate clothing to school, e.g. a coat, hat, sun hat, sunglasses. During the hot, sunny weather we ask that you send in sun cream, clearly labelled with your child's name. We recommend that this is applied once before school and that your child knows how to do it themselves, so that

they can apply it again at lunch time.

Seesaw

This is an online learning journal that we use at Lowton West and it helps staff and families to celebrate children's learning and development. Seesaw builds a very special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through the early years and primary education. We use photos, videos and diary entries to build up a story of your child and how they are growing and developing. All information held on Seesaw is stored securely and nothing is shared without teacher approval. Parents are able to view online their child's progress and how much fun they're having, whilst also uploading their own comments, photos or videos. This allows staff

in the early years, to see and celebrate your child's achievements out of school. This can help to build a shared understanding of how your child can reach their full potential.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

This is a statutory (necessary government requirement) EYFS document that all schools must follow. Reception staff will continually assess your child against the criteria set with the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This profile consists of 3 prime areas of learning and 4 specific areas of learning.

3 Prime Areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development (friendships, interactions)
- Communication and language asking questions, talking, responding, writing)
- Physical development (using equipment, toys, pens, brushes, climbing, balancing etc)



4 Specific Areas:

- Literacy (reading, writing, talking, communication)
- Mathematics (understanding numbers, calculating, shapes, measuring, size)
- Understanding the world (science and nature, ourselves, animals, places, people)
- Expressive arts and design (drawing, painting, printing, making, building, moulding, constructing, designing, developing, colour mixing, understanding materials etc)

