

LONG WITTENHAM PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Working together to aid the transition and to give parents a real choice

You have a Choice!

Children may start school in the September after their 4th birthday as a "rising 5" or parents may decide to delay their child's starting school until later in the academic year or even until the term after they are 5 to give them more time in a pre-school setting. You can also decide whether you wish your child to attend school part-time to begin with.

These choices mean that you can decide what is right for your child which is clearly very important, however, we recognise that this extra choice can often provide parents with a bit of a dilemma.

This leaflet sets out some helpful tips and useful information which we hope will assist you with making these choices and we will work with you to assist in any way we can.

So how do we aid the transition?

- During the last term before children start school in the September, Pre-School take the children to school once a week for a visit to get the children comfortable with the school surroundings and routine.
- Pre-School offers five mornings a week, and 2 full days (8:45am-3:00pm) allowing you the option to increase your child's sessions in preparation for starting school.
- Pre-School children join events at the Primary School such as the Easter Party, Harvest Festival and Christmas Play dress rehearsal and Pre-School children play on the school playground once a week allowing Pre-School children to spend time at the Primary School and to get comfortable with the new surroundings. The Primary School and Pre-School also organise joint Forest School sessions which the children love.
- The Foundation Stage Teacher will visit you in your home before your child starts school to get to know you and your child and to discuss any concerns you have and parents and children are invited to Primary School before they start.

"The Pre-School children who visit once a week usually make a very smooth transition. Even greater integration will mean an almost seamless transition whenever parents decide their child is ready to take their next step." (LW Primary School)

"It is lovely to see the children settle in so quickly to life at school and our visits and regular activities with school really help with the settling in process" (Vicky Archer, LW Pre-School)

So, what is best for your child?

This is a difficult question to answer! Each child's personal, social, emotional and educational development is different. They all have different strengths and ways of learning.

There is a mountain of learning for children to climb from those first steps out of the home environment when they start Pre-School to starting "big school" and each child will climb the mountain in a different direction, at a different pace and with different climbing gear!. As well as academic progression, it is the start of a child's growing independence, social learning and discovery.

The goal of both Pre-School and the School is to ensure that every child continues to be interested, excited and motivated to learn and key to this is that your child is in a setting that is appropriate for their maturity and in which they are happy.

Quite often, your gut reaction is the right one as you know your child best.

What effect will my choice have on my child's learning?

The partnership between Pre-School and School has been established to ensure that whichever environment you decide is best for your 4 year-old your child will receive seamless learning experiences and opportunities for example:

- Both settings follow the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 5 years old.
- To ensure continuity and progression, the Pre-School Manager and Foundation Stage Teacher meet each term to discuss curriculum planning, shared activities and transition arrangements.
- We seamlessly monitor children's progress using the Department for Education's EYFS Profile and Development Matters.
- We do joint activities which means that if you decide to delay your child's school start date then they will get to see their friends before being reunited when they start school later in the year.

Will I lose my child's place at school if s/he doesn't start in September?

No. Once allocated by Oxfordshire County Council your child's place at Primary School remains open from their 4th birthday for the whole academic year. However, if you delay entry to the following academic year (when your child becomes a Year One pupil) your child's place is not secure and you will have to re-apply.

Key Facts about Long Wittenham Pre-School

- Ofsted "Good" rating.
- No more than 24 children per session (2014/15).
- Cater for 2 – 5 year olds.
- 6 experienced members of staff, 4 who are fully qualified members.
- Adult:child ratio is 1:8 for over 3 year-olds.
- Key-worker system enables flexible learning opportunities and ensures each child is observed and supported continuously.
- Whole group and small group activities, some with age/ability differentiation. A good balance of child initiated and adult led play.
- Range of indoor and outdoor opportunities and experiences, from music, art and ICT to nature rambles and fun in our enclosed outdoor area.
- Forest School every Thursday morning
- Lots of outside trips to school's playground, the park and around the village and surrounding countryside
- Lunch club each day (other than a Thursday) from 12-1pm.
- Regular outings and activities.

Key Facts about Long Wittenham Primary School

- Ofsted "Good" rating.
- We have four classes in total with up to 24 children in Key Stage 1 in each class.
- Mars Class Mars comprises Foundation and Year One children (age 4-6).
- 1 qualified teacher and 1 teaching assistant.
- Adult:child ratio is 1:15
- Foundation children will take part in differentiated activities linked to the six areas of learning to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Range of indoor and outdoor activities with own outdoor area for learning and Forest School session once a week in Paradise Wood.
- Child initiated and teacher led free flow play both indoors and outdoors, will feature strongly for Foundation Year children. With appropriate planning and adult specialist support these sessions will run alongside the taught curriculum for Year One.
- Children will be encouraged to become independent learners and develop interpersonal skills from teacher led structured group work and child initiated play.
- We encourage older children to become RICH (Resilient, Independent, Caring and Hard Working) learners.

So what questions should you ask yourself?

- Is my child ready for a more structured day with free-flow play from the September after s/he turns 4 or would s/he benefit from a couple more terms or another year of supported "free play" at Pre-School?
- Is my child ready for more independence?
- Will my child miss his/her older friends who will be moving to Primary School in September or will s/he be happy to see them occasionally and be reunited in a couple of terms or a year later?
- Is my child ready for Primary School but perhaps not full time? Would my child benefit from starting Primary School on a part-time basis and perhaps a couple of sessions at Pre-School too?

In conclusion

This is a difficult decision but we are here to help!

The aim of both settings in Long Wittenham is that every child experiences the best possible transition from home into Pre-School and onto the more structured environment of a school classroom at a pace that is right for the individual child.

Whatever your decision, the information in this leaflet should reassure you of the integrated curriculum of the Pre-School and Primary School in the village, leaving you free to think of your 4-year old's individual personal, social and emotional needs, before deciding when is the right time for them to make the most of the move into Reception at Primary School.

It goes without saying that your Pre-School and Primary School practitioners will be more than happy to discuss any questions, worries or concerns with you.

Each year we arrange a meeting for all parents with the Foundation Stage Teacher and Vicky Archer, Pre-School Manager, to discuss these issues.

Please contact:

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