



“Learn, *sparkle* & shine...”

St. Peter's C.E. Primary School - Farnworth

Early Years Education Curriculum Policy

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Early Years Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.”

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2021

Our Intent and Aims

At St. Peter's the Early Years Foundation Stage department is very much part of the whole school and is viewed as the valuable starting point for all our children. We believe that an outstanding Early Years education is essential as it is a distinctive stage in its own right and a firm foundation for future learning and developing.

Within our Early Years setting we aim to:

- Make the transition from home/nursery to school a secure and happy experience.
- Give every child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to their school life within a safe and secure environment.
- Offer a broad and rich curriculum which is broadly based and appropriate to the development of the individual child.
- Establish solid foundations and foster a deep love of learning.
- Enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- To provide a safe, secure environment where children are encouraged develop independence within a nurturing and supportive atmosphere.
- Offer a structure for learning from a range of starting points and provide unlimited opportunities for development. Ensuring each child feels valued, and has the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Ensure that every child makes good progress and **no child is left behind**.
- Help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements by experiencing success and developing their confidence to work towards personal goals.
- Support children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Support children's communication skills and extend their vocabulary, so they feel confident to play and learning.
- To promote and enhance the spiritual, moral and cultural development of each child.
- To work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure we build strong relationships to ensure all children 'Learn, Sparkle & Shine' and **no child is left behind**.
- To ensure equal opportunity of access to all aspects of the curriculum, providing for of any special needs the child may have (in partnership with the Local Education Authority)

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Implementation

Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St. Peter's our Early Years department, has two full-time Reception classes within one unit, with 30 children in each class. Each Reception class has a class teacher and a class teaching assistant. We also have 2 additional teaching assistants who are shared between both classes to support the teaching and learning through our indoor continuous provision and our outdoor learning. They support the development of children's **Personal, Social and Emotional** development through building relationships and modelling sharing and cooperation skills.

To ensure best practice and continuity, our foundation stage classes work closely together, they share planning, continuous provision and an outdoor learning environment.

The Early Years Curriculum

Our Reception class follows the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework document. This framework defines what we teach and we use the Development Matters guidance to support our curriculum and planning.

The EYFS framework includes **seven areas of learning and development**, all of which are seen as important and interconnected.

Three of the areas are referred to as the Prime areas.

'These are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving' (Early Years Framework 2021)

At St. Peter's we plan to provide a range of learning experiences. We offer opportunities which will enrich development towards achieving the 17 Early Learning Goals and help us to observe the 3 learning characteristics.

The PRIME AREAS are:

Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-regulation Managing Self Building Relationships
Physical Development	Fine Motor Gross Motor

(Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2021)

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Our EYFS use the **WellComm** toolkit to screen and assess the speech and language of children to support the progression and development of children's communication skills. This is through small group and individual interventions for targeted children. Interventions are by our Communication Champion/ Learning mentor/ teaching assistant. The Big Book of Ideas are used to ensure appropriate activities are set and these activities can be shared with the child's parents too.

We also work in partnership with **a Traded Speech & Language Therapist** who provide a universal intervention package for Reception. We use the 'Reception Narrative' programme to develop the children's listening and attention skills through narrative and their understanding of Who, Where, When and 'What happened next' questioning. At the start of the year a Speech and Language Therapist screens all Reception aged pupils. This information is used to target children's language needs. The Speech & Language therapist works collaboratively with the teachers and communication champion to provide programmes, advice and strategies to best support the communication needs of the child.

Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) is an evidence-based oral language intervention for children in Reception who need support with their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading. It is delivered over 20 weeks by our Communication Champion/learning mentor in groups of six children. Language Screen, an online assessment tool, is used to support practitioners to decide which children need support in their oral language. These results will guide practitioner's own knowledge of the children to decide which children need this intervention.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Throughout EYFS we ensure children have play opportunities to develop their fine motor skills to support holding a pencil correctly ready for writing. They have indoor, PE and outdoor opportunities to support the development of gross motor skills. We have a climbing tower in our outdoor area.

We deliver Brush bus twice weekly, so the children have the opportunity to brush their teeth in school. We have a yearly visit from the Oral Health team which is shared on Tapestry and Parents are encouraged through tapestry to register at a dentist and visit regularly.

The **Prime areas** are strengthened and applied through the further four areas which are referred to as the Specific areas.

The Specific AREAS are:

Literacy	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers Numerical patterns
Understanding the World	Past and present People, Culture and Communities
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with materials Being imaginative and expressive

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Our teaching of synthetic phonics is based on the **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds scheme**. Children in Reception take part in daily phonics sessions using this rigorous programme. Children's home reading books match their phonic ability which enables them to practise and apply the skills they learned in school.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

We enrich the Early Years framework with our 'St. Peter's' curriculum by providing a wide variety of enriching experiences, WOW topic starter that enrich and supports children's development, including special events and celebrations, memorable experiences, and themed planning.

'It is the role of the setting to help children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.'

Overarching principles of the EYFS Curriculum

The **Four guiding principles** support our practice in early years.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- 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 a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

Characteristic of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the '**Characteristics of Effective Learning**' which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring**- children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning**- children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

Our learning characteristics characters (Cbeebies) also support children to understand how they learn and supports children with identifying which learning characteristics they need to develop further. These are displayed in the classroom and shared with the children.

Learning through Play – Learning Activities.

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn through continuous provision. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences. They practise and build upon ideas, and learn about the importance of self-regulation.

Our Reception provision and outdoor area is set up with areas of learning. Each learning area has cross-curricular resources, which children can access independently throughout the day.

Continuous provision provides children with stimulating, active learning activities which encourages creative and critical thinking alongside other children, as well as independently. The children communicate with others as they play, investigate, socialise and solve problems. Children are able to practice skills, revisit prior learning, to enable them to build upon previous learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Our learning through play activities allows our children the opportunity to pursue their own interest, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to negotiate, communicate, and ask questions. Our practitioners take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, communicating and questioning. Our outdoor learning provision is of equal importance and offers children 'a range of experiences' through our outdoor learning sheds.

We aim to offer free flow access to our outdoor learning areas throughout the school day. The children wear outdoor vests when accessing the outdoor learning provision.

At St. Peter's we deliver learning through, purposeful planned play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led, guided group and child-initiated activities to meet the 7 areas of learning.

Teaching

We ensure there is a balance of child- initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult-led learning activities, throughout the day. Throughout the day children select their own child-initiated learning activities; where we provide quality interaction between the adult and child. Our practitioner responds to each child's needs and interests, guiding their development through supportive and positive interactions.

There are daily set routines we follow throughout the day. Children are taught in a variety of ways; including whole class learning, small group learning, pairs and individually learning. There are timetabled times when the children come together for whole class learning opportunities, for example maths, literacy, phonics, stories and topic themed learning inputs. These support the children's learning, develop their communication skills, listening & attention skills, confidence and allow them to learn to take turns and answer questions when working as a group.

Whole class reading and storytime are key parts of the day. We wish for our children to develop of lifelong love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We ensure there are always time to read a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision and in our reading corner.

In Reception every child is provided with their own book bag and will receive a 'reading' book within their reading pack weekly. In school they also have the opportunity to share their reading book with an adult on a one to one basis. They also have the opportunity to select a book for enjoyment from the school library on a weekly basis, from our 'Secret Library'.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We recognise that our EYFS learning provision plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development and learning, and a part of our daily practice. Through child and group **observations**, we **assess** the children's interests, stages of learning & development and learning needs, and these observations are used to inform future planning, and next steps, which feeds into our weekly **planning**.

We use tapestry and the children's learning journals to record the children's '**wow moments**' and learning achievements. Tapestry also allows parent/carers involvement as they are also able to share their child's achievement at home. Parents are able to communicate through tapestry and share photos or videos of their child's achievements or WOW moments.

At St. Peter's, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests, learning and discuss next steps to ensure learning meets the needs of the children, to ensure '**no child is left behind**'. Our ongoing observations inform the practitioner if the child is working 'on track' therefore meeting expected levels of development or 'not on track' therefore not yet reaching the expected levels of development. This informs the practitioner if the child is working within their age related expectations. We use our own St. Peter's EYFS trackers to assess the children's progress termly. Children 'not on track' (our VIP children) are supported through professional discussion, interventions and planning to support their learning and progress.

Within the first 6 weeks of our children **starting Reception**, staff administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) with every child.

In the final term in Reception and no later than 30th June the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. This is a summary of every child's development of learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) is completed. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher to make a best fit judgement. This assessment is shared with parents/carers and the Year One team.

Planning:

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the basis for planning in our Reception classes (Foundation Stage). The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are supported by the Development Matters Statements, a non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We have an EYFS curriculum map which shares half termly 'starter themes', however planning remains flexible so that practitioners can respond to the needs, achievements and interests, experiences, celebrating, events and prior learning of the children.

Planning is differentiated in order to meet the needs of all learners. It also considers children with special educational needs, communication difficulties to ensure they progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage we give all children the opportunity to achieve their best.

In addition, we plan weekly Literacy, Mathematics and topic based learning (UofW, Ex.Arts, Phy.Dev, PSED & C&L)

Curriculum coverage is monitored termly.

Parent Partnership

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home. We therefore work very closely with our parents/carers to ensure they are involved in their child's education. We share our weekly newsletter sharing 'What we will be learning this week in Reception class?' and how they can support their child or embed learning at home.

We ensure that parents/ carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, through online learning journeys, grade checks and parents evening meetings.

Parent 'Stay & Learn'

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers.

We understand the importance of parents/carers partnership and we value parents/ carers involvement. We provide, parent 'Stay & Learn' sessions throughout the year, where parents /carers have the opportunity to participate and observe their child's learning. EYFS practitioners model key teaching and learning experiences (these are suggested by the parents) and parents/carers have the opportunity to learn alongside their child.

We offer workshops meetings (reading & phonics) to provide parents/carers with an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years Curriculum, model strategies in which they can support their child's learning at home.

Our in-take meeting in June, provides an opportunity for our new families/carers to meet and talk to their child's class teacher and ask questions.

1. The Early Years Lead & EYFS teachers meet parents/carers to share our Early Years curriculum, our aims and expectations.
2. An Early Year's information pack is shared with parents/carers via email.
3. In July we offer a **Stay and Learn** session which encourages parents/carers to visit their child's new classroom and meet staff with their child. This session is to reassure our new children, so they feel happy and safe within their new learning environment. They have the opportunity to play alongside their parent/carer and new staff. This will reassure our new children in preparation for September.
4. We provide a tapestry new intake account without new parents so we can share photos, information and communicate with our new parents/guardians in preparation for September.
5. October, all parents are sent an induction questionnaire (Autumn 2) asking them to evaluate our transition and induction process.

Staff ensure that parents/carers are well informed about their child's curriculum through tapestry, weekly newsletters, curriculum booklets, phonics expectations booklet, individual reading diary, class blog, social media, parent/carer 'stay & learn' sessions and homework activities. Parents/carers are encouraged to approach staff at the earliest opportunity if they are at all concerned about any aspect of their child's school life.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important to us that all children in our school are 'safe'.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We aim to create an EYFS provision which is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously and any concerns, will be reported to the Designate Safe guarding leads. Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy which is available for parents to read.

For further information refer to our other policies

Impact

At St. Peter's we feel the children leave Reception class, showing 'Year 1 readiness' with the tools to prepare them for the experiences ahead in the Year 1 curriculum. We aim of our children to be independent learners and confident within the Prime and the Specific areas of learning and achieve the Early Learning Goals. This is evident in the EYFSP and the rate of progress the children make during their time in EYFS.

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