



School Policy for **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

A curriculum for the foundation stage seeks to provide learning opportunities based on first hand experiences. It covers a wide-ranging framework which will be met by a structured and varied curriculum which understands how children in the foundation stage learn; particularly through play, discussion and practical activities. Children are encouraged to make choices which will expand as well as enrich their own individual interests.

Aims

- To provide a broad and ambitious curriculum which provides a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.

- To provide opportunities for children to learn and develop skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding in order to equip them for the transition towards Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

- To provide a partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.

- To provide children with a safe, secure and trustworthy environment which ensures their welfare and wellbeing, thus enabling them to develop confidence as individuals.

- To provide equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

There are four overarching principles that shape the practice in Early Years. These are

- 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.

Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning that shape our educational programmes in early years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

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

Children must also be supported in four specific areas, though which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

Communication and Language The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. It involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development 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. 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.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for other; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics involves developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding 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.

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. 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 Art and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and material, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Each area of learning and development will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. As children grow older and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Organisation

The class teacher is responsible for each child in the Foundation Stage. The class teacher and teaching assistant work closely together to meet the needs of all the children in their care. There is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated or freely chosen activities delivered through indoor and outdoor provisions.

Settling in

Children should feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents. They should see other adults as a source of authority, trust and support.

In order to accomplish this, various strategies are put in place.

Where possible, the Foundation Stage teacher and teaching assistant will visit new children at the play group, or in their pre-school setting. By doing so, the children are meeting the teacher and teaching assistant within an environment which is already familiar and in which they are relaxed, happy and confident.

The school arranges induction days for the children to spend time in their new classroom, getting to know the school, other children, staff and daily routines. The children receive a welcome pack containing information for parents about their child starting school and activities for the child to complete at home.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are unhappy or anxious. Our settling in procedures aim to help children to feel comfortable, confident, and above all, look forward to coming to school.

Behaviour

Children play and learn most effectively in an environment where everyone knows what is expected of them and where they are free to develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

In order to achieve this, all adults provide a positive model for children. Desirable behaviour such as kindness, helpfulness and willingness to share are always praised and, where appropriate, rewarded.

When children behave in an unacceptable way, reasons are made clear by means of explanation rather than personal blame. Children are never sent out of the classroom as a result of misbehaviour. Instead, it is made clear that it is the behaviour, not the child that is unwelcome.

Please read in conjunction with the schools Behaviour Policy.

Equal Opportunities and children with addition needs

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, no child in the EYFS class will be discriminated against or disadvantaged because of their ethnicity, culture, religion, family background, special educational needs and disability, gender or ability. We provide a safe and supportive learning environment at our school, where the contribution of all children is valued. We also employ a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's experiences, interests, skills and learning needs.

Please refer to the schools SEND policy.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.

Reception aged children will complete a baseline assessment within the first six weeks of starting school. In the final term of reception, the teacher will complete the Early Years Profile. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals. Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to key stage 1.

Safety

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. The safety of children is of paramount importance. In order to ensure the safety of both children and adults, all children are supervised by adults at all times and are always within sight of an adult. Equipment is cleaned and checked regularly and any broken items repaired or discarded. Fire doors are never obstructed. Fire drills take place regularly with all children aware of procedures. All dangerous materials such as medicines and cleaning products are stored out of children's reach.

If a parent/carer fails to collect a child at the appointed time, the school will telephone the parent/carer and if no reply is received the child will be cared for in the after-school club. At St Peter's the school diary gives details of who is collecting a child or whether they are at the after-school club (Busy Bodies).

Please read in conjunction with the schools safeguarding policy.

Selecting equipment and toys

Equipment and toys encourage children to explore and develop new skills and concepts and are always appropriate to the ages and stages of the children. They offer challenges to developing physical, social, personal and intellectual skills and feature positive images of people from a range of ethnic and cultural groups, with and without disabilities.

All equipment enables children to develop individual potential and conforms to all relevant safety regulations.

All the resources and areas are checked on a daily basis. An outside audit sheet is completed daily. Risk assessments are completed accordingly.

Mobile phones and cameras/recording devices

To ensure the safety and welfare of the children in our care this policy outlines the protocols for the use of personal mobile phones/devices and cameras in the EYFS setting at St Peter's CE Academy:

- Personal mobile phones, cameras and video recording equipment cannot be used when in the presence of children on school premises.
- All mobile phones must be stored securely out of reach within the setting during contact time with children. (This includes staff, visitors, parents, volunteers and students).
- No parent is permitted to use their mobile phone or use its camera facility whilst inside school buildings around the grounds when children are present.
- Mobile phones must not be used in any teaching area within the setting or within the bathroom area.
- Personal mobiles, cameras or video recorders should not be used to record classroom activities. School equipment only should be used.
- All telephone contact with Parents/Carers should be made on the school telephone.
- During group outings, staff may carry their own phones in their bags but they should only be used in emergencies.

This policy is subject to review in the light of further developments and initiatives.

September 2022

Review date September 2023