

St.Peter's C.E. Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage **Policy**

December 2019

To be reviewed: December 2020

Hope, Honesty, Compassion



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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Context

St. Peter's is a one form entry primary school that offers part-time, and some full-time, nursery places to children in our community. At St. Peter's, there are higher than average proportions of deprivation, children who speak English as an additional language and children with Special Educational Needs.

We are fortunate to have provision for 2-year-olds (Pre-nursery) as part of our early years setting and run as two separate classes: Nursery (including Pre-nursery) and our Reception class.

Our Vision for Early Years

At St. Peter's Primary School, we aim to provide every child with the skills to become a happy, independent and curious life-long learners. Through a safe, positive, caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential and feel a valued member of our school. We embrace Christian values and ensure all children begin to lay the foundations for learning that they can build on as they continue through their school life at St. Peter's.

Key Requirements of Early Years

1. "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. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.
2. 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.
3. The EYFS seeks to provide:
 - quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
 - a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly
 - partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
 - equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported
4. The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings
 - the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
 - assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)
5. The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE 2017

The guiding principles which shape our practice are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways (see “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.9) and at different rates

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

At St.Peter’s, we recognise that every child is unique. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We want our children to be independent and self-motivated learners, encouraging the children to adapt their work, think critically and take risks with their learning. The foundation stage classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available at:

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/eyfs_statutory_framework_2017

This document defines what we teach:

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and included in the curriculum taught. There are three prime areas, which are seen to underpin all of the basics and support the other more specific areas of the curriculum.

The Prime Areas of Learning and Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area focuses on making relationships, self-confidence and self-awareness, and managing feelings and behaviour. This is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all other areas of learning.

Communication and Language

This area encourages developing competence in listening and attention, and in understanding and speaking.

Physical Development

This area focuses on the child’s developing physical control, moving and handling, and health and self-care.

The Specific Areas of Learning and Development

Literacy

This focuses on reading and writing. Children are taught Early Reading (phonics) throughout the EYFS.

Mathematics

This area focuses on learning through practical activities and on using numbers and understanding shape, space and measure.

Understanding of the World

This area focuses on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their own environment, through learning about people and communities, the world and technology. It forms the foundation for later work in Science, Design and Technology, History, RE, Geography and ICT.

Expressive Arts and Design

This area focuses on the development of the child's imagination and her/his ability to communicate and express ideas and feeling in creative ways. It incorporates exploring and using media and materials. Creativity is fundamental to successful learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Through regular observations, we discover children's interests and assess what children know. Also fundamental to our practice is to assess how children learn and it is our duty to report to parents their children's individual dispositions and attitudes to learning.

This will be assessed using the Characteristics of Effective Learning which are:

Playing and exploring –engagement

Children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'.

Active learning –motivation

Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.

Creating and thinking critically –thinking

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

Through planning, teachers ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. During child initiated activities the adults' role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Such interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning.

For Phonics, we follow Letters and Sounds and adapt it to suit our children's needs.

Literacy is planned around quality texts linked to a topic theme as we find this is the best way to engage children. Topic themes link to history geography and/or science topics that children will be covering in Key Stage 1.

At St.Peter's, we define learning as *a change in long-term memory*. Because of this, EYFS topics throughout the year provide many opportunities for children to develop the early skills in 'Understanding the World' that will then be built upon in Key Stage 1. For example: in Reception, the 'Space' topic provides children with early skills that are then built upon in Year 1 within the 'Voyagers' (Neil Armstrong) topic.

At the start of each topic theme, we plan 'hooks' to provide an exciting start to the sequence of lessons.

Direct Teaching

At specific times in the day the children will take part in an activity that is teacher/practitioner led.

In Nursery these sessions include:

- Daily Phonics and Toddler Talk (Pre-nursery)
- Activities including story and mathematics
- Daily stories and singing

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In Reception these sessions include:

- Daily reading
- Daily Writing sessions/lessons
- Daily mathematics sessions/lessons
- Topic/investigation session
- Daily Phonics teaching (Toddler Talk for SEN)

All taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each class using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and, in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

Learning through Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. It is our belief that children learn best from activities and experiences that they have initiated and play with peers is important for children's development. We carefully plan the environment both inside and outside and provide opportunities within these environments to reflect these interests to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that children have the opportunity to develop a number of skills such as language, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills and to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching. Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world.

They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own at their own level and pace.

They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support this process enhances children's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. The children can also choose whether to work inside or outside during their independent learning time.

Outdoor learning

We are very fortunate to have had a new outdoor learning area built for Nursery and Reception in September 2019 as we recognise that outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development.

Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Nursery and Reception each have their own outdoor areas made up of resource pods; each pod has a range of learning opportunities.

Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child-led and adult-led learning. The outdoor area is comprehensively risk assessed and checks are completed by staff.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress

Assessment is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children's learning and development. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each child's level of understanding. These can be through observations, photographic and video evidence, examples of work and parental conversations/observations.

Assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during continuous provision when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and alter any future learning.

This year, we have started using the 'Tapestry' app as a tool to record children's learning through their play. Observations are taken using the 'Tapestry' which allows staff to take photos, videos and make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying.

From such observations we can ascertain what the next steps are for the children. We are in the process of getting this up and running with parents and are looking forward to parents/carers sharing their own observations from home using the same app.

On entry to Nursery and Reception a baseline assessment is carried out for each child and at the end of each half term in Reception reading assessments are collated to track how well the children are progressing. The reading assessments then allow the children to be grouped according to their ability. They are also assessed each term for maths, phonics and writing so that next steps can be taught and children can be grouped accordingly.

This year, the Reception class completed the NFER Baseline pilot. Assessments are carried out throughout the half-term as part of daily practice and are formally reported termly.

Parent evenings are held in the Autumn and Spring terms to provide information about children's progress to discuss the children's learning journey from Tapestry and to talk about children's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps. These form the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school. On-going teacher assessments are undertaken in line with the Foundation Stage Profile and these form the basis for the end of year written report to parents which includes information on each characteristic attainment and progress tracking follows each child through their journey of the EYFS against expected stages allowing practitioners to identify gaps and strengths and plan accordingly.

Phonics

For Phonics we follow Letters and Sounds and adapt it to suit our children's needs. In Reception, children are grouped in abilities and SEN children attend Toddler Talk sessions in the Nursery which focuses on language development.

Nursery children access Phase 1 Letters and Sounds as part of their daily Phonics session and our Pre-nursery have Toddler Talk sessions which focusses primarily on language development and confidence to talk in a small group.

Our home reading books for Reception are phonetically decodable and, where possible, link in with the new sounds being taught.

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

At St.Peter's, we value the diversity of all children at our school. We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Pre-school information, assessments and teacher observations are used to identify children who may have specific needs within the first half term following admission. Results of assessments are used to ensure that a differentiated curriculum is offered to such children to meet their needs.

Safeguarding and Children's Welfare

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance. Our school has rigorous Safeguarding and welfare policy and procedures that are used to identify anyone at risk or harm of radicalisation that sets out clear procedures for reporting any concerns.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to teach children that, in society as in a classroom, there is a need for boundaries, rules and limits which we all need to adhere to help us to stay safe. We aim to teach children to be consciously aware of their feelings and the feelings of others and how to manage their own behaviour by identifying behavioural issues and using them as a teaching moment. We also aim to teach our children to take risks whilst learning how to recognise and avoid hazards. Children with specific dietary needs are catered for by providing an agreed individual menu with parents.

Transition to Nursery

Parents of children who are offered a place in the Nursery will be invited to a short induction meeting in June at which they will be given information about their child's class, staff, uniform, general routines and curriculum. Tapestry is introduced at the meeting.

Dummies and toilet training are discussed and parents can ask for support in any areas.

Contact is made with any previous settings for any children and baseline information is gathered. Children not in a setting prior to starting nursery are visited at home by the class teacher and teaching assistant. We hold 'Stay and Play' sessions throughout the year for families that will be joining St.Peter's at each intake.

Nursery/Pre-School to Reception

Nursery and Reception teachers work closely together throughout the year and take part in joint moderations. This ensures Reception teachers develop a good understanding of Nursery children's abilities and needs before they move up.

Parents will be invited to a short induction meeting in June at which they will be given information about their child's class, staff, uniform, general routines and curriculum. Tapestry is introduced at the meeting. Parents are encouraged to begin using 'Tapestry' to share any 'wows' from the session.

In the final summer term, during transition week, the Reception children spend the morning with their new Reception teacher.

Reception to Year 1

Throughout the year, Reception children make use of the whole school facilities such as the hall, ICT suite and KS1 playground to ensure the children are confident and well prepared for moving around the main school building. Playing out with the KS1 children at playtime also prepares them for mixing with older children. Reception attends weekly celebration assemblies and other themed assemblies throughout the year. In the final summer term, during transition week, the Reception children spend the morning with their new Year 1 teacher.

Reception teachers also moderate with Year 1 teachers in the summer term which helps inform the teachers of the children's abilities and needs before they move up.

At the end of each school year, teachers meet to share information on each child with their new class teacher including their knowledge, understanding, achievements and end of year assessment data. This ensures all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

Teachers are also provided with copies of end of year reports for the children in their new class.

Little Peter's

At St.Peter's, we have identified that many children joining our setting have underdeveloped spoken language skills and a lack of exposure to high quality literature. Because of this, we have started a baby and toddler group called 'Little Peter's' which meets throughout the year to share books and songs as well as literature about how to develop children's spoken language at home. The group is targeted at parents and carers of children who will be attending St.Peter's in the future.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a key role in children's development and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with them to ensure each child reaches their full potential.

Parental involvement is actively encouraged to contribute and share information about their child's learning and development. Staff take the opportunity at the end of the day to talk to parents and carers about significant achievements or any concerns. Throughout the year, they are also invited to attend workshops that help support their child's development at home.

Equal Opportunities

Staff ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. They will be encouraged to respect similarities and differences within cultures other than their own. The school seeks to develop tolerance and concern for others.

Monitoring

The Early Years Leader, Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher are responsible for the monitoring of this policy. Areas for development will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan as necessary.