

## Early Years Policy

This Early Years Policy includes the following:

- Our vision
- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Enabling environments
- Classroom organisation and resources
- Use of whole school resources
- Induction
- Involving parents
- Assessment and record keeping

### Our Vision

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Christian values and ensure all children are ready for their next steps.

Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children within the nursery and Reception Class.

“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.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, March 2012

The Early Years must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The Reception year is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- 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; and Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

### Aims and Principles

- Early years practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves.
- Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners must respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- Involve parents and carers.

### Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers children in the Nursery and Reception Class.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are interconnected.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical Development – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their coordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

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

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

Literacy – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.

They will have a daily phonics session of 20 minutes and will be given a reading book which will be changed on a regular basis.

Mathematics – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

Understanding the World – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, 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.

The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child- initiated activities.

The topics for the year are rotated on a two yearly basis. The planning within the EYFS starts with the long term provision plan. This gives an overview of the planned topics for the year. These topics change each half term and to support learning high quality literature is chosen from, 'Centre of Literacy in Primary Education' (CLPE) to support these topics.

On-going formative assessment and constant communication enables practitioners to reflect on pupils' self-initiated learning and interests, helping to inform the provision plan for the following day.

Short term plans (Weekly) select activities/ lessons and learning objectives from long term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly at the discretion of the teacher.

Planning should provide a clear balance between supporting those who require support and challenging the most able children. In some cases to exceed their potential, whilst recognising that an attempt to implement the more formal work before a child is ready could damage a child's disposition to learn.

By the end of the Reception year, the Numeracy and Literacy lessons will be in place in preparation for children entering Year 1.

### Enabling environments

All staff members are responsible for ensuring that the emotional environment is accepting of everyone and everyone plays an important role in supporting and extending pupils' learning and development.

In order to create an environment in which pupils feel confident to try new things, staff members will empathise with pupils, to support their emotions and to ensure that they feel valued.

Pupils will have access to a range of learning environments, including indoor and outdoor activities. The indoor environment will contain resources which are age and ability appropriate and easily accessible to all children.

Our outdoor provision incorporates the prime areas of learning, offering pupils freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active throughout the day. We recognise the positive impact that outdoor learning can have on pupils' wellbeing and development, therefore, we ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn outside throughout the day and we are working towards building forest schooling into our EY curriculum.

School rules and expectations of behaviour are consistent throughout the different learning areas and pupils are made aware of these.

### Assessment and Observations

Assessment is a key tool used within nursery and reception to help track the development of each child. Every child has their own online learning portfolio. Every member of staff within the early years completes observations, which form a crucial part of assessment. This enables the practitioners to monitor and assess children's progress as well as being an

effective planning tool to ensure that the provision reflects the needs and the interest of each individual child. The use of the online assessment tool, Tapestry, allows parents constant access to their child's diary, to which they are encouraged to contribute to their child's assessment and celebrate their achievements.

Throughout the year children are tracked termly to show their progress and development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of the Reception year all children are formally assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) where, for each separate goal, they will be judged as being, 'emerging', 'expected', or 'exceeding'.

All children will be observed weekly during both child initiated and adult led learning and all recorded observations will be included on Tapestry. Alongside this, each child will have a scrapbook, which, every week, 2 pieces of work will be included, unless a child is absent. Once recorded in scrapbooks it will be marked in accordance with the schools marking policy.

### Classroom Organisation and Resources

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

Both Early Years classes will have the following opportunities on a daily basis, if not on a daily basis, a regular basis.

Small world

Role play area

Large and small construction

Sand and water

Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books

Writing area with a range of writing resources

Computers and printer

Interactive whiteboard

Malleable materials

Musical instruments

Painting and creative equipment

Maths games and equipment

Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including a role-play gazebo, sand pit, water play, work bench, outdoor chalkboard, planting equipment and outside toys.

Both classes also have a set of boots and waterproof clothing in order to make full use of the school field and the on-site Forest Schools area.

## Use of Whole School Resources

Early Years use the hall for dance, drama, physical education and assemblies.

Use of outside field, playground, adventure playground and forest school area.

The kitchen for a range of cooking activities.

The computing resources,, which includes a chromebook trolley and iPad trolley for use in classrooms.

Large range of musical instruments.

Library.

## Induction

We understand the importance of the transition process and, therefore, we adapt our practices to support pupils settling into their new learning environment depending on each individual child's needs.

The Nursery Teacher will visit the children in their previous setting, if placed in a local setting prior to the child joining out nursery.

The Herts Transition document is used as a data collection of all new children entering St Peter's.

A transition meeting to discuss children's transition records is held between the coordinator of Nursery and the Reception teacher in July.

Also in July, a meeting is held by the Headteacher, EY Leader, nursery and Reception teacher to introduce parents/carers to the school, both of the classes procedures and curriculum. Parents/carers are given a document pack to be completed and returned to school.

When school starts in September, a further information afternoon is held, to ask further questions once the children have begun the academic year.

Through regular contact/ conversations with parents and carers, children's progress and how they are settling in can be discussed.

Reception children are introduced to the life of the wider school gently as they are ready. Playtimes are separate in the first week allowing the children to settle with their classmates in a quiet atmosphere, building to full participation in school playtimes.

The process is similar for assemblies, building up to full participation by the start of summer term. They participate in school assemblies as fully as possible and every attempt is made to ensure the children know what to expect.

On starting school, each child will have a Year 6 buddy who will take special care of them during play time and when they first arrive at school.

Transition meetings are held between EYFS staff and Year 1 staff members during the summer term.

EYFS staff members provide the relevant year 1 teacher with information regarding pupils, allowing them to accurately plan effective learning during year 1.

### Safeguarding and Welfare

Safety is paramount and St Peters has an effective Child Protection and safeguarding policy to ensure the children in our care are protected. The school is committed to provide a high-quality setting which is welcoming, safe and stimulating and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

Safety and security is a high priority and it is important that all children in our care are safe. Our requirements, as stated in the statutory framework for the EYFS 2017, are as follows:

- Promote the safety and the welfare of children in our care
- Immediate action is taken when children are ill, to promote good health and minimise risk of infection
- Pupils behaviour is managed in accordance with St Peters behaviour policy. Where required exemptions will be made in a way that is appropriate for their individual needs and stage of development
- Adults who have access to children, or look after children, are suitably vetted and trained
- - the setting is fit for purpose and the furniture and equipment is safe
- Records, policies and procedures are effectively implemented and maintained for safe and effective management of the setting
- The designated safeguarding lead is Mr Conely and the deputy safeguarding lead is Mrs Mansi.

Safety: child ratios

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all the children and ensure their safety.

### Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.

Curriculum letters are sent home weekly to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this.

Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.

Sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and observations in 'Learning Journeys' which parents are able to access and contribute from home through the use of Tapestry.

Special moments are welcomed, to be shared with us via WOW moments. We Invite parents/carers to help in other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits.

In the Autumn term, there will be an evening meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.

Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms.

We will provide an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.

Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.

The first books that children bring home to share with parents/carers will be picture books and then books with simple repetitive text and rhymes. During the year, each child will take home independent reading books that have not been shared at school and well as high frequency words to learn.

Each child may also take home a book from the school library

### **Assessment and Recording**

This is in line with the school Assessment Policy.

## Roles and Responsibilities beyond the Class Teacher

EYFS practitioner/ Teaching Assistant

A Early years practitioner is assigned to work with the nursery/ Reception class for some morning/ afternoon sessions each day. It is the Early years practitioner role to assist and support the Nursery/ Reception teacher as fully as possible. The Early years practitioner will work with individuals and groups of children under the direction of the Nursery/ Reception teacher. The Early years practitioner will be proactive in encouraging development in all areas of learning as well as aiding assessment, administration and enhancing the work space. Input and feedback to the Nursery/ Reception teacher is seen as a vital element in the education of the children.