



EYFS POLICY

At St Peter's RC Primary School we believe the Early Years Foundation Stage is a critical time for children's academic and personal development and we will strive to do all we can to ensure children get a personalised, relevant and enjoyable introduction to school life. We expect our children to make very good progress and our staff to maintain high standards in order to deliver the foundation blocks for learning. This policy therefore outlines the entitlements, procedures and structures that we have in place to enable such progress to happen for our children.

Aims:

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing confidence

The Curriculum

Our curriculum is based upon the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance (EYFS) which is based around seven Areas of Learning and three Characteristics of Effective Learning. This is outlined in the Development Matters document (non-statutory) which is available to download at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

The **areas of learning** are split into **Prime** and **Specific** areas:

Prime

Communication and Language - Listening, attention and Understanding and Speaking

Physical Development - Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills

Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Self Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships

Specific

Literacy - Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing

Mathematics - Number and Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World - Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design - Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS teachers plan activities within the classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of 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 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

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning.

The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer Term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years curriculum. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using interesting topics as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own.

They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

Teaching

It is important that teaching and learning within the EYFS reflects an understanding that children learn most effectively when they are given extended periods of uninterrupted time to explore, investigate and develop their ideas through sustained shared thinking. There should be a balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences, with increasing opportunities for more focused adult-directed teaching as children develop. However, this balance should always reflect the individual needs, interests and stages of development of the children, with some children benefiting from greater opportunities for child-initiated learning and others requiring more adult guidance and support.

To encourage children to become active, independent and confident learners, practitioners plan for children to learn in a variety of ways, including through a multisensory approach, creative and imaginative play, exploration, first-hand experiences, conversation and skilful questioning. Learning opportunities are carefully designed to support progress across all areas of learning and development while building on children's interests and prior experiences.

Each day follows a consistent routine which provides children with security, predictability and opportunities to develop independence. Within our mixed Nursery and Reception classes, teaching is carefully adapted to meet the needs of children across the EYFS age range. Children take part in whole-group, small-group and individual learning experiences, with opportunities for both shared learning and age-appropriate teaching. Throughout the day, children access a rich and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment where adults support, extend and challenge learning through purposeful interactions.

Dedicated times are set aside each day for focused teaching and group learning. These sessions may include Communication and Language, Phonics, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design, Religious Education and story times. Teaching is differentiated to ensure that all children, regardless of age or stage of development, are appropriately supported and challenged to make progress from their individual starting points.

Curriculum Planning and Progression

To meet the needs of our mixed Nursery and Reception classes, the EYFS curriculum is delivered through a carefully planned two-year rolling programme. This approach ensures that children who remain within the EYFS for more than one academic year experience a broad and varied curriculum without unnecessary repetition of topics, themes or learning experiences.

The two-year cycle has been designed to provide continuity and progression across the Nursery and Reception years. Children are introduced to key knowledge, concepts and experiences during their Nursery year and then revisit and deepen their understanding through increasingly challenging learning opportunities in Reception. This ensures that prior learning is valued and built upon, enabling children to make meaningful connections and develop greater depth of understanding.

While curriculum themes may be revisited across the two years, learning objectives, adult-led teaching and planned experiences are adapted to reflect children's age, stage of development and prior knowledge. Reception children are therefore able to extend and apply skills first encountered in Nursery, whilst Nursery children benefit from rich first experiences that prepare them for future learning.

Planning is informed by the EYFS Framework and Development Matters guidance, ensuring clear progression across all areas of learning. Practitioners use ongoing assessment to identify children's next steps and to provide appropriate challenge and support for all learners. This allows children within mixed-age classes to work towards shared themes and experiences whilst accessing learning that is matched to their individual developmental needs.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure progression, breadth, balance and continuity, enabling all children to develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics of effective learning needed for future success.

Classroom Organisation

Our Early Years learning environments are carefully organised to support the needs of all children within our mixed Nursery and Reception classes. Each classroom contains clearly defined learning areas with labelled, accessible resources that promote independence and encourage children to make choices about their learning.

To ensure consistency, equality of opportunity and a shared curriculum experience, the EYFS classrooms are designed to closely mirror one another. Both classrooms provide access to all seven areas of learning through equivalent provision and resources, enabling all children to engage in similar learning experiences regardless of the class they are in. While specific enhancements and activities may vary in response to children's interests and developmental needs, the overall learning environment, curriculum offer and expectations remain consistent across both classes.

Each classroom includes a writing area, mathematics area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction and small world area, investigation area, outdoor learning area and a carpeted teaching space. These areas are carefully planned to support progression from Nursery into Reception, allowing children to revisit familiar resources and routines while building upon previously acquired knowledge and skills. A wide range of stimulating activities and enhancements are planned and provided each day to support learning across the curriculum.

The outdoor environment is recognised as an extension of the classroom and an essential part of children's learning and development. Children have regular opportunities to access outdoor provision where they can explore, investigate and develop skills across all areas of learning. Outdoor environments in both EYFS classes mirror one another to ensure that children receive the same high-quality learning opportunities regardless of their classroom base. Provision is carefully planned to reflect the breadth of the curriculum and may include quiet areas for reading and mathematics, creative and investigative opportunities, construction activities, role play experiences, and spaces that promote communication and language development.

The outdoor areas also provide a wealth of opportunities for physical development, including climbing, balancing, running, cycling and other active play experiences. Through both indoor and outdoor provision, children are encouraged to become independent, confident and engaged learners who are able to explore, create, problem-solve and collaborate with others.

Assessment, Observations and Recording Children's Learning

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and development of children within the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing, interacting with and learning alongside children in order to understand their achievements, interests, characteristics of effective learning and next steps. Assessment informs planning and enables staff to provide learning experiences that are responsive to the needs of each child.

In our EYFS, assessment is embedded within everyday practice and is based primarily on practitioners' professional knowledge and teacher judgement. Staff gather evidence of children's learning through high-quality interactions, careful observation, conversation, adult-directed activities and child-initiated play. By prioritising direct engagement with children over extensive electronic evidence collection, practitioners are able to spend more time supporting learning, developing relationships and engaging in meaningful, sustained shared thinking.

We recognise that children demonstrate their learning in many different ways and that not all learning needs to be formally recorded. Evidence of progress is collected through a variety of approaches, including:

- Practitioner observations during adult-led and child-initiated learning.
- Professional discussions between staff.
- Children's contributions, responses and achievements during everyday learning experiences.
- Samples of work where appropriate.
- Assessment checkpoints and teacher judgements.

Literacy and Mathematics learning may be recorded in individual exercise books when practitioners feel children are developmentally ready to do so. Recorded work provides one aspect of assessment and is used alongside practitioners' ongoing observations and professional knowledge of each child.

Parents and carers play a vital role in their child's learning journey. To keep families informed about classroom experiences, weekly photographs and class updates are shared through Google Classroom. Parents and carers also have regular opportunities to speak with EYFS staff at the end of each school day and during half-termly parent consultation meetings, ensuring that information about children's development can be shared and discussed regularly.

On entry to Nursery and Reception, practitioners complete baseline assessments to establish each child's starting points. Children's progress is then monitored through ongoing formative assessment and reviewed at regular assessment checkpoints throughout the academic year, including half-termly assessments. These checkpoints enable staff to identify progress, celebrate achievements and plan next steps that support continued development across all areas of learning.

Assessment information is used collaboratively across our mixed Nursery and Reception classes to ensure continuity and progression throughout the two-year EYFS curriculum. Practitioners

build upon children's previous learning experiences and use assessment outcomes to ensure appropriate challenge and support for every child.

At the end of the Reception year, the class teacher completes the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), assessing each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals and determining whether their attainment is '**Emerging**' or '**Expected**'.

Children's attainment and progress are communicated to parents and carers through ongoing discussions, half-termly consultation meetings and end-of-year reports. The end-of-year report celebrates each child's achievements and provides information about their development and readiness for the next stage of learning.

Roles of Staff and Key Worker

Each child in EYFS will be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care.

There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting.

As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a 'Meet the Teacher' session at the beginning of the school year and offer workshops and stay and learn sessions at different times throughout the year also.

Behaviour Management

Our 'Going for Gold' behaviour policy provides:

- A consistent and fair approach to behaviour management
- Clear systems to reward good behaviour and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour.
- A system that allows children to take ownership of their behaviour and their rewards.

We will.....

1. Listen to and co-operate with each other.
2. Treat everyone with politeness, kindness and respect.
3. Work to the best of our ability.
4. Move safely and calmly around school.
5. Respect each other's property.
6. Take care of our school environment.

Principles:

- Each day is a new day.
- Each class has a behaviour chart and each day all children begin on the rainbow to demonstrate the expectation that every day, both in class and on the playground, it will be a positive one.
- Children can move up the chart for good behaviour to the rainbow and pot of gold.
- Children know that there are consequences when making inappropriate behaviour choices, and they will be moved down the chart to the umbrella (first warning), raindrop (time out) or thunderbolt (Mrs Scott).

In addition:

- Members of staff are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the assessment cycle in the EYFS and also to document any significant events. These photographs are used in class displays, on Google Classroom, Twitter and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.
- We encourage all children to start school without nappies and are unfortunately unable to accommodate any children who are not toilet trained by the time they start in Nursery/Reception (unless the child has a medical condition). We will obviously support any children struggling with this however, we may need to put in place a reduced timetable until the child is ready to come to school fully toilet trained. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves!) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets in each classroom
- Daily risk assessments of the outdoor area are conducted by Nursery Nurses and Teaching Assistants and any dangers; animal faeces, rubbish, etc are removed before children go out
- Steph Sampson (Inclusion Lead/SEND/CO) is the designated safeguarding lead and Clare Scott (Headteacher), Rebecca Anthoney (Deputy Headteacher) and Stephanie Doe (Class Teacher) are the named deputy designated safeguarding officers. All concerns are shared with them.