

# Ss Peter and Paul RC Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*Date updated: September 2016*  
*Review Date: September 2017*

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years.

In our school we have two part-time nursery classes and one full-time reception class. Each nursery class has 26 places and children are offered a place in the September following their third birthday.

Children in their immediate pre-school year are entitled to a whole year Early Learning and Childcare. Children in their ante pre-school year are entitled to a place in the school term following their third birthday as follows

| <u>Month of Birth</u> | <u>Entitled to a place from</u>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| March to August       | September – after the Summer holidays; children may start once they have reached the age of three |
| September to December | January – after the Christmas holidays  |
| January to December   | April - after the Easter holidays   |

In Nursery there is one full-time teacher and one full-time nursery nurse. As attendance to our nursery classes is on a part time basis this allows places for 52 children in five three hour daily sessions, or twelve and a half hours per child per week. Each nursery child starting in September is guaranteed a minimum of three terms attendance either on a morning or afternoon session before they are due to enter full time school.

Our Reception class has a full time teacher and a full-time teaching assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity our foundation stage classes work closely together.

## Aims

At Ss Peter and Paul RC Primary School we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a 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 by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the

opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school

## **The Curriculum**

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

### **The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Enabling environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

### **Learning and development**

Our foundation stage has a nursery and a reception classroom on separate sites both with an outdoor classroom. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** area of learning:

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

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

At SS Peter and Paul RC Primary Foundation Stage all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

### **Play**

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. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the nursery and reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics 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.

### **Inclusion**

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

## **Assessment**

Throughout nursery and reception the child's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in nursery and reception has a 'Learning Journal' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work.

Children are assessed during the first 6 weeks of school against all of the EYFS learning statements to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning.

Our children's knowledge, skills and understanding are tracked throughout the foundation stage and assessed against the ELG's at the end of reception to establish an end of foundation stage achievement and learning profile for each child in preparedness for their transition to key stage one. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum. There remains a statutory obligation to report the children's achievements in all areas of learning.

## **Transitions**

At Sts Peter and Paul RC Primary we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Both Nursery and Reception hold a meeting in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. In nursery all parents are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school. This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. In the summer term reception children have the opportunity to meet with their teachers in their classroom on two occasions, once with their parents and once on their own to help them prepare for their new experiences.

At the beginning of the school year new nursery children are given staggered entry times to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment. In reception there is a one week settling in period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full time..

At the end of Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on several occasions prior to starting Year one. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

During children's time in nursery and reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children in both nursery and reception make use of the some whole school facilities, such as the hall, ICT suite and yard for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they start school. Throughout the reception year, when children are ready they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies, pastoral care groups, attending mass in church and to using the infant playground.

## **Community Links**

The foundation stage classes enrich learning and encourage strong links with the local area through local visits to the Post Office, Lidl, Boldon Lane Library, Blue Reef Aquarium, Sand Haven Beach, White House Farm and by inviting in members of the local community during our annual topic on people who help us.

## **Partnership with Parents**

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer termly social 'stay and play' sessions to our parents to give them the opportunity to share their child's learning environment, have time to talk informally with the practitioners and to meet other parents. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We provide every child in nursery and reception with a 'Home/School Diary'. The purpose of these books is so that teachers can provide information on children's experiences in school and parents can share information about their child's experiences and achievements outside school. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of the child in for everyone.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. In nursery all parents are invited to join in with a range of activities from supporting phonics activities, sharing a story book at home, to teddy bears picnics in school. In reception parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities.

At Hook Lane we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. 'Learning Journeys' are folders collecting evidence of the child's learning throughout the school year. They are an opportunity for all to celebrate the children's progress and achievements, and to share areas for further development. Children, parents and staff all have the opportunity to contribute. With these Learning Journeys parents receive information about their child's assessment at baseline and their end of the year assessment. Formal parents meeting are offered termly, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journals. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

### **Health & safety and safeguarding**

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 follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school. Our Nursery children receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children are eligible for free school meals.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food