



Early Years Policy 2023

Policy updated September 2023 by A.Oldham

Policy review date: September 2024

Signed: *A.Oldham* (on behalf of staff)

Signed: _____ (chair of Governors)

STATEMENT OF INTENT, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Statement of intent

In the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Patrick's RC Primary School, in God's love, we play, learn, explore and grow together as friends. We continuously strive for our pupils to become independent, curious, creative and resilient learners who show respect for each other, their communities and the wider world. We believe in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development for our pupils, giving them the best possible start to their education in which Catholic values are fostered. Through our personalised and skilled teaching and learning approach, we are able to offer children a platform to be expressive, to feel valued and to feel empowered. As well as following the children's interests, our creative thematic curriculum is specifically planned for our pupils with a careful balance of whole class teaching, group work and child-initiated play to support children to reach their full potential. By establishing effective, trustworthy and supportive relationships with our pupils, children enjoy their learning whilst achieving the Early Learning Goals. We have high expectations for all our children and encourage them to develop as confident learners with high aspirations, who know how to make a positive difference and succeed in an ever-changing world.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- 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 the school and parents.
- Learning and development is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, our school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.

- Assigns each child with a key person to ensure that each child’s learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

EYFS Curriculum

Teaching in our EYFS setting at St Patrick’s is delivered in accordance with the Government’s updated *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’* (September 2023). The Statutory Framework is used in conjunction with *Development Matters (published 2017, revised 2021)* to ensure that our provision is well matched to each child’s needs.

In partnership with parents, our school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

Our EYFS curriculum is based on loose themes and an observation of children’s needs, interests and stages of development. Personalised activities in school are planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The ‘ prime ’ areas of learning and development are:	The ‘ specific ’ areas of learning and development are:
<u>Communication and language</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening, attention and understanding - Speaking 	<u>Literacy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehension - Word reading - Writing
<u>Physical development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gross motor skills - Fine motor skills 	<u>Mathematics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numbers - Numerical patterns
<u>Personal, social and emotional development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-regulation - Managing self - Building relationships 	<u>Understanding the world</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Past and present - People, culture and communities - The natural world
	<u>Expressive arts and design</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating with materials - Being imaginative and expressive

Our curriculum is enhanced by the additional supportive materials and schemes of work from Lancashire County Council, Power Maths, Charanga, TenTen and Come and See to ensure that we provide a thorough and robust curriculum.

In organising and implementing educational programmes, our school ensures that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

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

Further information regarding learning and development are set out in our school's Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping our school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development via two formal parental meetings per year and a detailed end of year report; the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

When children enter our setting, practitioners will interact and observe children to gauge a baseline picture about the child's level of achievement as well as their interests and learning styles. From this, ongoing formative assessments are used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS throughout the year. Practitioners will use this information to shape learning experiences for each child. Recorded observations will document significant moments of progress and 'wow!' moments of children, showing evidence of their own personal progress. They will be collated in each child's own personal Learning Journey.

Learning Journeys will build a progressive and personalised picture over time of a child's development whilst within our setting; practitioners will use this, alongside ongoing formative assessments to inform planning as well as termly judgements as to whether the child is 'greater depth', 'on track', 'below' or 'well below' in meeting their year group expectations. This will be documented and tracked using the schools whole school assessment system, Insight,

At St Patrick's children's learning journeys are digital and we use an online system called 'See Saw'. When children begin our school, parents receive an invitation to sign up and will be alerted when a staff member has completed and uploaded an observation. As children spend a considerable amount of their time at home with family members, they will naturally demonstrate newly acquired knowledge and skills in the home environment. In order to accurately build a picture of your child's learning and development, and plan their next steps effectively, we ask parents to contribute their child's learning journey by adding a parent observation when their child demonstrates something at home that they feel is a noteworthy achievement for them. We value input from parents and together we can build an accurate and well-rounded picture of children's learning and development.

Whilst we value that staff observations contribute to a child's learning profile, we also recognise the sheer importance of quality staff interactions with children during play. With this in mind, staff will make an informed decision about the quantity and quality of observations to ensure it doesn't take away staff from any missed opportunities with children's learning when in continuous provision.

Where children need specific targeted support, an intervention will be put in place for a period of time. Interventions are planned and tracked provision mapping and are adapted according to on-going assessment for learning.

Our EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- **Reception Baseline Assessment** – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year.
- **The EYFS Profile** – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

Our school reports EYFS Profile results to the LA when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents and SENCo, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

Our school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender.

Using our EYFS curriculum, learning is personalised in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

The Equal Opportunities Policy ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO, Peter Mooney.

The learning environment and outdoor spaces

At St Patrick's, our EYFS is made up of a two Reception classes and one large outdoor enclosed space. Our EYFS staff work together as a team to provide quality provision which enables each child to develop their talents, personalities and abilities in a safe and stimulating environment.

Our classrooms are designed to have communication friendly spaces where there is plenty of opportunities to talk, listen and communicate with adults and other children, conversations are an opportunity to learn and search together. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc.

Registration and whole class teaching time are the only times children are grouped according to which class they are. Once the whole class input has finished, children can mix between both indoor classrooms and the outdoor area.

Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We have an enclosed outdoor area and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor area which is accessible in all weathers, unless circumstances would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe. Our outdoor area is an extension of the indoor classroom, being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Learning through play

Play is essential to pupils' cognitive, imaginative, creative, emotional and social development. We aim to provide play experiences which have a balance between adult-led and child-initiated play, allowing pupils to explore their own ideas and apply what they have learnt in different situations.

Pupils will be able to explore the environments at their own pace, but are given consistent boundaries. Staff members will be actively engaged in pupils' play, either by undertaking careful observations or by joining in with the pupils in order to develop their activity.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

A thorough risk assessment is in place for the indoor and outdoor spaces.

There are two toilets available to the EYFS, there is one toilet cubicle located within each classroom. There are changing facilities located within the toilet areas containing a supply of towels, spare clothes and nappy changing equipment.

See the EYFS Teaching and Learning Policy for further information regarding the learning environment.

Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well.

Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The Lead DSL: Kathryn Bishop

The deputy DSL: Helen Hill

Other DSLs: Amy Oldham, Peter Moony, Shelly Barrowclough, Anna Collins.

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect. All safeguarding and welfare concerns are to be recorded on CPOMS.

Staff within EYFS will receive supervision in the form of 1:1 (if required/requested) and as a group once per half term; the EYFS Lead will conduct this.

Health and safety

Our school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health.

EYFS staff will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents.

Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in the school office. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

A first-aid box is located in both the Reception classrooms.

Our school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.

The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded.

Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.

The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

Our school has a Fire Evacuation Plan in place.

Staff training

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be continuously be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

Key person

In Reception at St Patrick's, the key person for the class is the class teacher and will work collaboratively with the teaching assistant to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Parental involvement

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents.

Parents are invited to 2 parents' evenings per year (Autumn and Spring); however, our school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. Parents will receive a report on their child's progress termly.

A private space will be utilised for confidential discussions between staff and parents.

Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

Parents are asked to complete admission forms, a medical form and to write a brief synopsis about their child to help the school to understand their character and personality.

Where relevant, parents are asked to complete a health care plan and/or intimate care plan alongside the teacher.

Parents are encouraged to complete home learning with their child at home. In Reception, children take home a reading book, along with green/red words, and a piece of English and/or Maths learning each week to work through with parents.

We welcome observations from parents on 'See Saw' of any wow moments children have to contribute to their child's learning journey.

Transition periods

Transition into Reception

Each year we enrol 45 children into EYFS and the children are separated into two classes. Each class is mixed ability and our transition process is thorough. Prior to beginning school, we do the following process is in place to ensure a successful transition into Reception:

In the Spring term, following the national announcement on Primary School places:

- Families are contacted via the post to welcome them to our school.
- Parents to the school are offered a home visit which will take place by the Reception teacher and another relevant professional from our school.
- The SLT members begin to contact and liaise with nurseries and child minders to acquire any key information and collect any paperwork.
- A welcome pack is sent home to families which includes relevant documentation about our school, along with any documents which need completing.

In the Summer term:

- Children are invited to a transition session in school where they can spend time in their new classroom and become familiar with their new peers and the adults who will work with them.
- Parents are invited in for a welcome meeting where there will be a short presentation and a chance to chat to the EYFS Lead and the SLT at our school. Parents will also receive a book bag for their child which contains information about our school along with some transition activities for parents to do with their child.

- A final letter is sent out to parents towards the end of the term confirming which class their child has been placed in.
- Children begin in September with two half-day sessions (one morning and one afternoon) in smaller groups and then commence full time on the third day with the full class.

Transition into Year 1

The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition to Year 1:

- In the Summer term, Reception children will take part in a whole school transition session where they will spend time in their new classroom with their new teacher and teaching assistant.
- In the final weeks of the Summer term, Reception children will begin to attend break times with KS1 to familiarise themselves with the playground and a new routine.
- Towards the end of the year, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.
- During Year 1, children will access to continuous provision and/or table top activities which will slowly reduce as the year progresses to prepare them to Year 2.

Monitoring and review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead, the governing board and the headteacher.
- Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.
- All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.