



Early Years Teaching & Learning 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

Our school aims to support each pupil's welfare, learning and developmental needs by providing:

- Quality and consistency, so that every pupil 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 pupil and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Partnership and collaboration between staff members and carers.
- Equality of opportunity, ensuring that every pupil is included and supported

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.

Educational visits and internal visitors to school are arranged in order to further expand pupils' learning experiences. Prior to a trip, a risk assessment of the space is carried out and it is ensured that the area is appropriate for the activity and pupils involved.

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.

EYFS staff deliver our EYFS curriculum through immersion in high quality teaching alongside an enriched environment. As a whole unit team, we write long term and medium-term plans, which form our curriculum newsletters for parents, using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations.

We recognise the need to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through their year in Reception and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Short focused groups are planned for Literacy and Maths, sometimes RE, and immediately follow a whole class shared input. These sessions are planned with care, meeting the needs of all children.

Children will access a daily phonics and receive a teaching input for the following sessions: Maths, Topic, RE, PSHE, Music as well as a dedicated PE slot each week which is delivered by FUNDA.

Learning strategies

- Everyone has their own learning style, and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow everyone to learn in the ways that suit them best, including through the use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic resources.
- Staff members will ask open-ended questions and challenge pupils to re-examine and extend their understanding of the world.

- Pupils' personal interests will be used as a basis to develop and extend their skills and knowledge by relating learning intentions to pupils' own life experiences.
- All pupils will be encouraged to make and modify plans as a method of ensuring that they review and reflect on their own learning.
- Evaluations of individual pupils' learning will be used to inform future planning.
- Open-ended resources will be utilised to support exploration, imagination and critical thinking, as well as providing provocations to enthuse and motivate pupils.
- In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice.
- Learning objectives and next steps will be shared with the pupils and parents; setting clear expectations for what pupils are expected to achieve.

Learning through play

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS:

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

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. Staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

MATHS

We use the Power Maths scheme of work, with other supportive materials, as a base for our planning. Staff personalise lessons and adult-led focus tasks to meet the individual learners so that all children can access the learning at their level and are challenged appropriately.

Children also learn about maths through play and their daily experiences. And the more meaningful to them and hands on it is, the better. Our setting is full of mathematical opportunities for children to explore, sort, compare, count, calculate and describe. Providing a safe environment to be creative, critical thinkers, problem solvers and to have a go.

Our objective is to ensure that all children develop firm mathematical foundations in a way that is engaging, and appropriate for their age. This means actively learning using resources and activities provided in the environment.

Concrete – Pictorial – Abstract

Mastery of mathematical concepts in the EYFS takes the following approach:

Concrete – children use concrete objects and manipulatives to help them understand what they are doing.

Pictorial – children build on this concrete approach by using pictorial representations. These representations can then be used to reason and solve problems.

Abstract – with the foundations firmly laid, children move to an abstract approach using numbers and key concepts with confidence.

Here are a few examples of how our environment promotes mathematical development:

- Sand & Water can develop mathematical concepts and language, e.g. heavy, light, empty, full, big, little.
- Malleable – dough can develop mathematical language – short, long, fat, thin. Children can make shapes of different dimensions – flat shapes, 3-d shapes.
- Imaginative play - set the table for dinner can develop counting skills. Sorting clothes into different colours, or different types of clothes, e.g. t-shirts and socks will develop knowledge of shapes and colours.
- Physical play can develop fine motor skills e.g. Sorting out a jigsaw, threading beads. Block play or playing with toy cars can help to develop sequencing according to size, colour. Playing with different sized blocks can help to develop an understanding of weight and dimensions. Tidying toys allows children to sort into different sizes and colours. It can also develop mathematical language – first, second, third, how many are blue, which is largest / smallest.
- Outdoors – Children may plant seeds this can develop understanding of time and the life cycle of plants. As the plants grow children use measures and develop mathematical language of size.
- Books & Rhymes - Enjoying stories and rhymes with a mathematical element, e.g. “One-two buckle my shoe” can develop number concepts, knowing direction that the print reads from left to right.

LITERACY

Our Literacy lessons can be based on key events in the calendar or the children’s interests but are predominantly based around our themes. Each week, teachers plan a series of lessons, adult-led activities and continuous provision enhancements which are based around a focused key text, linked to our theme. The environment is carefully planned so that there are Literacy opportunities throughout.

Writing

Making Mark making and speech provide children with powerful tools for thinking, reasoning and problem solving. Time, space and attention is given to children’s mark making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing experiences.

Throughout each day, children have opportunities for spontaneous mark making, drawing and writing in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Resources are carefully chosen, well organised and attractively presented, so that the children can decide independently how they want to represent their ideas and which medium would best suit their purpose. High value is placed upon imagination, ideas and self-expression demonstrated by the children, these are reflected by the adults and used as starting points for planning.

Scribing and handwriting

On entry to Reception children will often require much support in recording their ideas, particularly during adult-led activities. As children progress through the phonics scheme and have observed adults modelling writing, they gradually will become more confident:

1. The children then begin to write the initial sound of a word or a CVC word and adult will scribe the rest of the sentence.
2. Next more phonetically correct words are written by child along with common words, such as ‘the’.
3. Gradually children take the pencil more and more, until eventually they are writing complete phrases independently

Handwriting development in our EYFS includes a wide variety of activities planned to develop the fine motor skills required for the correct pencil grip. ‘Funky Finger’ activities may include threading, using tweezers, dough gym, spiders in jelly, cardboard weaving. The list is endless! As well as whole class sessions such as ‘Squiggle whilst we wiggle’ and ‘dough disco’.

From beginning the RWI phonics scheme, children are taught the letter formation through a mnemonic saying and take part in a daily session to practise the development of this.

See Appendix A for our writing progression map.

Reading

At St Patrick's, we are readers! We want our children to love reading. We strive to immerse children in a rich reading environment across all areas of the curriculum and give them the opportunity to explore a wide range of quality texts.

Phonics

We follow the Read Write Inc. (RWI) scheme for phonics lessons in Reception and KS1. In time RWI phonics teaches children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension. They learn to form each letter, spell correctly, and compose their ideas step-by-step.

How does RWI work?

The children are assessed and grouped according to their ability. They work in small groups with a teacher or teaching assistant to learn the sounds that they need to know. At the end of each half term, the children will be assessed again to check they have made progress and will be grouped again.

Reading:

Through RWI, the children will learn to read effortlessly so that they can put all of their energy into understanding what they are reading. The children will learn 44 sounds and the corresponding letter/letter groups using simple picture prompts. The children learn to read real and 'nonsense' words by blending sounds together. These sounds can be stretchy sounds or bouncy sounds.

Blending:

Children learn to read words by blending the letter/sounds that are in the Speed Sound sets. Children learn to read words by sound-blending (Fred Talk as we call it in phonics):

e.g. c-a-t = cat. In RWI we use pure sounds. This means removing the 'uh' from the sounds.

Shared exploration of language

At St Patrick's, we proud to say our teaching staff are ELKAN Accredited and we believe the key to success in reading is communication. Research clearly shows that the level of development in language and communication is the greatest predictor of success in later life.

Within the EYFS communication and language development is a prime area of learning. The development of a young child's communication and language comes primarily from tuning in to conversations that are meaningful to the child. The preparation for all aspects of written language develops through one to one conversation with a responsive adult. Alongside quality interactions, rich and varied experiences ensure language provides the foundation of thinking and learning.

Improving young children's vocabulary is paramount. Exploring and extending pupils' vocabulary is part of everyday teaching. Lessons are planned to enrich vocabulary and incidental opportunities are exploited. Vocabulary is discussed with the intention of building background knowledge so pupils can comprehend the content of a text.

In our EYFS classrooms key vocabulary displayed which is used, referred to and added to in partnership with the children.

On entry at St Patrick's, and at the end of each term, children are screened using WELLCOMM, a speech and language screening tool and intervention programme. Children who have shown to require further support with their speech and language, will receive the WELLCOMM intervention programme which is reviewed at the end of each half term.

Shared reading

Texts are also shared as a whole class daily as part of our story time – children also have the opportunity to vote for which book they would like to listen to.

We share books with children for many reasons: enjoying stories together, linking with personal experiences, vocabulary building, developing imagination and language, learning about books.

Listening to stories being read and reread helps children to gain insights into meaning and story structure.

Guided reading

Short group reading sessions take place daily as part of phonics sessions when the children begin to work at red group level. Texts match the phonemes pupils are learning.

Individual reading

Encouraging reading for pleasure is part of our school vision to create learners for life. All children have their own individual reading books; one phonetically decodable and one reading for pleasure book. Children select books from a wide range of genres including picture books, non-fiction information books and poetry. If needed, staff will guide pupils towards a suitable selection of a home reading book. Reading progress is monitored through half termly phonics assessments which are completed by the Reading Leader.

ICT IN EYFS

While there is no set curriculum for early years ICT, children should learn about technology and ICT as part of a number of the early learning goals (ELGs). Our EYFS setting is committed to equipping all pupils with the tools they need to lead successful and fulfilling lives. It is imperative that pupils are given the opportunity to use technology throughout their education to be equipped to meet the demands of the developing digital world. With this in mind, our school has included technology within the learning environment and is taught as part of other subject areas, where relevant, and is outlined here how ICT links to the 7 areas of learning:

Communication and language

Utilising ICT and different computer programmes allows pupils to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development

By installing and making use of interactive programmes, and using a mouse and keyboard, pupils will develop their coordination, control and movement.

Literacy

ICT opens up possibilities for cross-curricular links, including in the teaching of English and literacy. By making use of the internet, pupils will be able to access a vast range of media and materials.

Mathematics

ICT will be used to enhance pupils' experiences of learning mathematics and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measure.

Understanding the world

Pupils will be taught to use the internet to enhance their knowledge of people, places, technology and their physical environment. They will also be taught how to stay safe online.

Expressive arts and design

As part of their learning, pupils will play interactive games and access a wide range of media and materials. Pupils will be encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings on what they access online through a variety of activities, including through art, music and movement.

Personal, social and emotional development

When using technology devices within the classroom, children will learn turn-taking and build relationships with their peers as they access a wide range of ICT programmes together.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations and interactions with children we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. Throughout our setting, there are opportunities for maths, reading and writing throughout the environment, where relevant.

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. Practitioners will ensure that the environment challenges all children and is inclusive of pupils from all backgrounds and ethnicities, including children with SEND.

Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning and provides children with the opportunity to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning (see Appendix B for the full details of CoEL). Children are given the freedom to make independent choices and are encouraged to be active learners and take control of their own learning.

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.

The benefits to learning outside:

Learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons. Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness. Outside role play is deconstructed with access to logs, planks, sheets and tyres. These resources can become anything and have unlimited potential. And, of course, the outdoor environment offers more space than indoors and therefore is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement. Which is why at St Patrick's EYFS families are asked to provide their children with appropriate all-purpose clothing (Wellington boots /rainproof macs with hoods) so we can learn outside whatever the weather!

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.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

Research shows that progress will be significantly enhanced by the effective support and role models of adults within a high-quality learning environment.

Within our setting interactions between children and adults during continuous provision will look like this:

- Tuning in to what is happening or a child's thinking.
- Showing genuine interest.
- Respecting children's own decisions and choices.
- Inviting children to elaborate.
- Recapping on what has happened so far.
- Offering personal experience.
- Clarifying ideas.
- Reminding.
- Using specific praise e.g., that is a good idea because...
- Offering an alternative viewpoint.
- Speculating/ using 'I wonder if...'

The importance of each adult to support progression is crucial however, we equally understand that in times when a child is on their own independent learning journey the environment plays a significant role in development.

LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

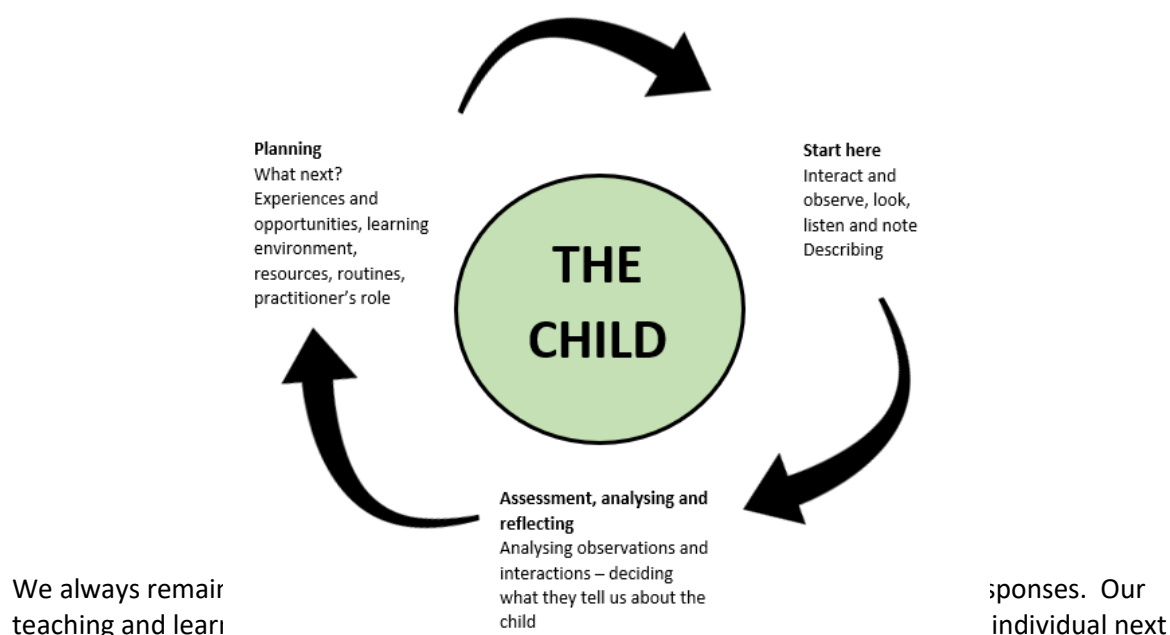
We are ambitious in our approach using a continuous cycle of observation and assessment, planning/teaching, alongside structured and systematic lessons and adult-led focused work.

Observation and responding to children's thinking inform our planning of experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment for thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we capitalise knowledge of children's interests to ensure high levels of engagement.

All adults record 'Wow!' moments – when a child does or says something that demonstrates progress or skill in a particular area. All observations are logged on See Saw. An online platform which is shared by parents who can also add observations from home. This enables us to gather a full picture of each child's development.

Observations 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.

Our continuous cycle of observation/interaction with children, assessment/reflection and planning is embedded throughout our EYFS provision:



steps and personalised learning needs are met, in the moment whilst interacting with the child and after the activity has finished. We have high expectations for all our children and encourage them to develop as confident and successful learners with high aspirations; we strive to put in place the foundations on which the children build their future learning.

A TYPICAL DAY

Our timetable allows for long uninterrupted periods of continuous provision that allow the children time to reach a deep level of involvement as they engage, play, investigate and talk. The timetable is predictable and structured the same each day to provide consistency and stability, there are occasions where timings and sessions are different such as whole school themed days, when visitors attend school, visits out and for lessons such as PE but the timetable generally we follow this structure:

8.45-9.00	Registration plus morning job and wake and shake
9.00-9.20	Whole class input (Literacy, Maths or RE)
9.20 – 10.35	Continuous provision plus adult-led focused activities
10.35-10.45	Tidy up time, sorting and organising the classroom
10.45-11.15	Phonics
11.15 – 11.30	Get ready for lunch time/Maths games/daily singing
11.30-12.30	Lunch time
12.30-12.35	Registration plus dough disco or squiggle whilst we wiggle
12.35-12.50	Whole class input (Music, Topic or PSHE)
12.50-2.45	Continuous provision plus adult-led focused activities
2.45-3.00	Tidy up time, sorting and organising the classroom
3.00-3.15	Story time/Preparations for home time

Monitoring and review

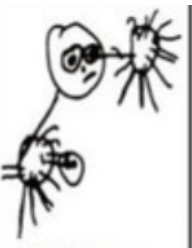



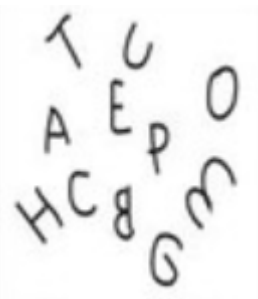

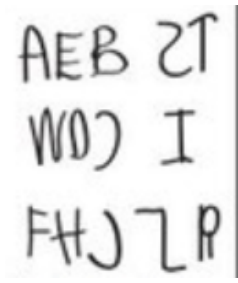
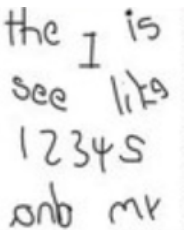
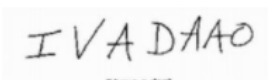


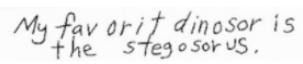
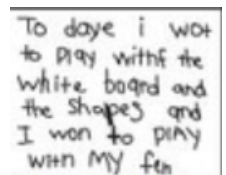
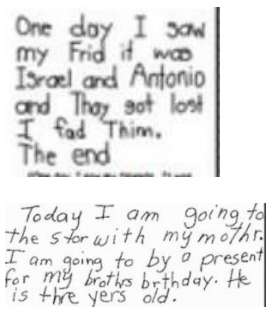
- This policy is reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead, the governing board and the headteacher.
- Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.
- All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures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

Appendix A: EYFS Writing Progression Map

WRITING SOUNDS, ORDERING SOUNDS, SENTENCE WRITING

I can write my name	I can write some recognisable letters when I write	I am working on representing some sounds in order when I sound out	I can write initial and end sounds	<p>I am starting to write cvc words</p> <p>I am starting to write some red words such as I and the</p>	<p>I can write cvc words using some digraphs.</p> <p>I am starting to write more red words such as he, she, my, you</p>	I can write simple captions lists to match a picture	I can write a simple sentence using my phonic knowledge and knowledge of red words	<p>I am starting to use a full stop.</p> <p>I can reread what I have written.</p>	<p>I am starting to use some finger spaces between my words.</p> <p>I am forming my letters correctly.</p> <p>I am starting to use capital letters.</p>	<p>My writing can be read by others.</p> <p>Some words are spelled correctly and others are phonetically plausible</p> <p>I can spell many red words</p>
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Pre-Phonemic Stage

Pictures	Random Scribbling	Scribble writing	Symbols that represent letters	Random letters	Letter Strings	Letter groups
						
Picture tells a story to convey message	Starting point at any point of paper	Progression is from left to right	Mock letters or symbols		Letter strings move from L to R and move down the page	Separated by spaces to resemble different words
Early Phonemic Stage	Letter name stage		Transitional Stage			
Environmental print	Beginning sounds Random and initial consonants	Initial and final sounds appear	Vowel sounds appear Evidence of tricky words	All syllables represented	Inventive spelling	Multiple related sentences with many words spelled correctly
						
Awareness of print, copied from surroundings	Beginning and ending letters are used to represent words		Medial sound may initially be written as a consonant. Vowels begin to appear.	A child hears beginning, middle and end sounds.	Whole sentence writing develops.	

Appendix B: EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning

Characteristics of Effective Learning		
Playing and Exploring <i>Engagement</i>	Active Learning <i>motivation</i>	Creating and Thinking Critically <i>thinking</i>
Finding out and exploring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing curiosity about objects, events and people • Using senses to explore the world around them • Engaging in open-ended activity • Showing particular interests 	Being involved and concentrating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time • Showing high levels of energy, fascination • Not easily distracted • Paying attention to details 	Having their own ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking of ideas • Finding ways to solve problems • Finding new ways to do things
Playing with what they know <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretending objects are things from their experience • Representing their experiences in play • Taking on a role in their play • Acting out experiences with other people 	Keeping on trying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting with activity when challenges occur • Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off • Bouncing back after difficulties 	Making links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making links and noticing patterns in their experience • Making predictions • Testing their ideas • Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect
Being willing to 'have a go' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating activities • Seeking challenge • Showing a 'can do' attitude • Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error 	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals • Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result • Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise 	Choosing ways to do things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal • Checking how well their activities are going • Changing strategy as needed • Reviewing how well the approach worked

Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically support children's learning across all areas.