



St Paul's Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Signature of Chair of Governors:

Signature of Headteacher: Sheridan Upton

Date of Adoption: March 2024

Date of Review: March 2025

Aims- Intent

The experiences offered in the Early Years at St Paul's Primary School are designed to be exciting, inspiring and memorable. Pupils are taught a broad and balanced curriculum, which nurtures pupils' individual needs. By exposing children to a range of experiences, which broaden their understanding, it equips them with the skills needed to be confident, life-long learners, who succeed in reaching their full potential.

It is our intent to provide a high-quality curriculum tailored to suit the diverse needs of our children, which reflects our School's local context and the children's starting points. We pride ourselves on knowing our children and families well and use this knowledge to shape the curriculum that adds breadth and enrichment, adding to our children's cultural capital.

We have high aspirations for our pupils to succeed and our curriculum is carefully planned to address potential gaps in pupil's knowledge and skills. Our Early Years curriculum also incorporates the statutory requirements of the Early Years Framework (2023). By the end of Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children have made good progress and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to progress smoothly into year 1.

At St Paul's School we aim to have:

- *Children who respect the needs of others working together comfortably to share, take turns and resolve conflict.*

We aim to offer young children the social and emotional support, which they need during their first years at school, in order to enable them to adapt to their new environment and to the range of challenges that they will encounter. This environment is vital if children are to feel confident and secure enough to learn. As a Thrive school, we place high importance on social and emotional well-being of our pupils and staff. This empowers children with the foundations to build safe relationships with peers and adults alike.

- *Children who communicate clearly and confidently in a range of situations with both adults and children.*

As a school we firmly believe that effective communication in terms of speaking, listening and understanding is the basis of a successful education. We spend a lot of time talking and modelling with the children to ensure this happens. The children have weekly Helicopter Story sessions where they are encouraged to dictate their own stories which are recorded verbatim by an adult, before being acted out to the rest of the class. This oral rehearsal of storytelling has a huge impact on their language development and the vocabulary acquisition of our children. As part of the programme, the children are also exposed to high quality stories and learn to recite poems. We display key vocabulary from these texts in the class and routinely refer to them.

- *Children who are resilient and can work independently to lead their own learning.*

We aim to instil a love of learning at an early age. We plan activities for children so they have the opportunity to challenge themselves to achieve more. We provide the stepping stones they need in the early stages so that they become less reliant on adult support over time. Resources are well laid out and labelled to facilitate independent learning and high quality play and resilience is modelled by adults so that the children can begin to develop these skills themselves.

- *Children who are confident about themselves, inquisitive about the world around them and eager to participate.*

We aim to create a positive learning environment where praise and rewards are regularly given. We change the environment regularly to allow children many new experiences. We use a child-centred approach to planning and dedicate time to ensure that activities are matched to the needs and interests of the children.

- *Children who have varied and exciting indoor and outdoor play and learning opportunities involving open ended tasks.*

We use natural, open ended resources where possible indoors and outdoors, so that children can take charge of how they use resources to develop their own interests. We feel that all young children need periods of uninterrupted time in which to actively explore their environment, set their own challenges, and make their own discoveries. As an OPAL school, we believe in utilising our outdoor space to enhance learning, experiences and make them more memorable. Research shows that learning outside the classroom is more impactful on the progress that pupils make. All children in EYFS also have one term of Forest School provision with our highly skilled Forest School practitioner.

- *Children who have been immersed in stories, expanding their imagination and giving them a wealth of ideas.*

We believe that a love of reading is linked to a love of life-long learning. We use stories to introduce new concepts to children as well as to allow them to draw on their own life experiences. We have reading areas in both the inside and outside learning environments. These reading areas contain familiar stories, to encourage independent reading and to foster a love of reading. We have weekly Reading assemblies, where staff share stories that they have enjoyed themselves and we celebrate children who have shown a passion for reading during that week. As mentioned above, we also use Helicopter Stories to develop our children as storytellers.

Our EYFS curriculum has been written in accordance with the latest version of the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)' (2023).

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive. They support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Our EYFS curriculum has been developed giving **communication and language** skills a high priority. This is in line with Development Matters 2021: *"The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development."*

A high priority is also given to the teaching of **early reading**. We aim to teach children to read and develop a love of books as soon as they arrive at school, and books are used to teach topics and to enhance our whole curriculum.

We follow a systematic approach to **phonics** teaching using the Little Wandle scheme.

We underpin our curriculum with the **Personal Social and Emotional Development** of all our children. We strive to enable children to be safe, happy, confident individuals. We also encourage self-regulation as much as possible and introduce rules and boundaries through teaching, modelling good behaviour, school rules and values.

Our Curriculum is based around cross-curricular topics and each topic does not last a specific amount of time, but is based on the children's learning at the time, and the knowledge and skills needed to be taught. All the topics have resources and activities which enhance our provision in the classroom. Topics are introduced with a good quality storybook or age-appropriate non-fiction text. Using books in this way teaches children that books and reading form the basis of all learning.

Teaching and Learning

We believe the three characteristics of effective learning, as set out in Development Matters 2021, underpin successful learners. This is what we teach through our curriculum to prepare our children to be lifelong, successful learners.

These 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 achieving.

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Our curriculum is ambitious and aims to teach all children the skills and knowledge in order that they reach the seventeen Early Learning Goals described in the Early Years Foundation Stage document. We teach through a range of teaching methods including child-initiated learning, whole class teaching and group teaching. As many activities as possible are play-based; however, there is also a need for direct teacher-led activities to ensure children gain essential knowledge and skills from their teacher.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four guiding principles:

- **A unique child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

We use these principles to support us in providing the above curriculum in the following ways:

A Unique Child

We recognise that each 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 assemblies and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude towards learning.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and ensure that we take into account our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that 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.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Positive Relationships

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

All staff involved in the EYFS develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. We have good links with our neighbouring Children's Centre and visit regularly for a large part of the year. We also visit other feeder preschools in the summer term. Staff and children from preschool are also invited to school events such as the Christmas production.

Enabling Environment

At St Paul's 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. We recognise the importance of the role adults play in the development of each child. Through effective modelling, questioning and high-quality interactions they support children to progress.

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.

Getting the balance right between child-initiated play and adult led activities is very important to us.

Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. The EYFS classroom is organised to enable children to explore and learn safely and securely indoors and outdoors. As children's development allows, the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Learning and Development

Each term a topic is chosen and a medium term plan is created that reflects the needs and interests of the children at the time and is a flexible working document. The weekly plan shows the activities in more detail. The indoor and outdoor classroom are set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning.

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers. This is all completed on Tapestry (online learning journeys). All practitioners are expected to show an understanding of what the pupils know and can do and what their next steps in learning are. To ensure we meet the needs of all pupils within the setting, we adapt timetables, the environment and planning to ensure we continue to be ambitious for all pupils.

Inclusion

At St Paul's Primary School, every child matters. We have a mastery approach to teaching and learning so that we are ambitious about what all children can achieve and we believe that their ability is not 'fixed' in any area of learning.

We strive to offer 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. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In the EYFS we set challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that 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;
- providing a range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;

- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support and intervention where and when needed;
- working with other professionals, both within school and externally.

Assessment- Impact

During the first few weeks of Autumn term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a mixture of the statutory government baseline (RBA) and also through teacher observations and discreet assessments. These assessments, combined with the information obtained from the previous setting and parents/carers during transition activities, allow us to identify where each individual child is working and what specific needs they may have. In addition, it identifies patterns of attainment in the cohort, in order to tailor the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. These shapes both the knowledge and key skills planned for the term.

We assess and record each child's level of development throughout the year, tracking whether each child is 'on track' or 'not on track' to meet a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the Reception year. We make regular assessments, both formally and informally, of children's learning against our curriculum knowledge and skills taught, to judge who is on-track. This information identifies areas of need and informs future planning and possible interventions if required. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

At the end of the final term in Reception, teachers assess if a child is 'emerging' or 'expected' against each early Learning Goal in each area of learning. This dictates if they have met GLD (Good Level of Development) – this data is submitted to the local authority and is a national form of assessment. Within school, this information is shared with parents on their end of year report and also the child's next teacher.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules, consent and limits to help them understand why they are in place. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We help children learn to self-regulate and manage their emotions appropriately and Personal Social and Emotional Education is at the heart of everything we do. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through our curriculum, for example talking to children about:

- Healthy eating
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- The children also receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme.

A minimum of one member of staff in the setting has a recognised paediatric first aid qualification in line with the EYFS framework 2023.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policies, which have been written in accordance with '**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023**'.

Parents/ Carers as Partners

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. 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

welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting.

We do this through:

- ensuring parents/ carers have the opportunity to talk to staff about their children before their child starts school – this helps shape our curriculum and assessments of children;
- the children and their adult have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher in their new classroom before starting school during induction sessions;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the Summer term before their child starts school;
- termly stay and play sessions where parents are invited into school to play with their child and see the learning taking place;
- hosting phonic and reading meetings when children start school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk to their class teacher about their child's progress, work and wellbeing throughout the year;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher/ TA if there are any concerns. There are two formal meeting for parents per year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- encouraging parents to celebrate achievements by inviting them to celebration assemblies;
- having an open-door policy enabling parents to share any concerns at the earliest possible point.

Transition

Starting school provides a big change in a child's (and parents!) life, therefore we plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle well.

Our induction programme includes:

- An induction for parents held by both class teachers, so that teachers can get to know parents and carers and ask about the individual children. The teacher gives parents practical information such as: the ethos of the school, vision and values, information about equipment and uniform needed;
- Staff completing handovers with the child's previous Nursery setting;
- Induction sessions held in the summer term, so that the children can get to know the teachers and school staff with their parent present;
- Home visits offered to parents;
- A 'settling in' week when children first start school in September – children will attend school for short sessions to enable them to meet their teacher and new classmates for a half day, thus it not being too overwhelming at the same time. This quickly builds up to full days.

When children transition into Year 1, the Reception teacher spends time with the Year 1 teacher to handover the relevant welfare, academic and general information about all the children leaving the EYFS. This includes if the child achieved GLD and their characteristic for effective learning. The Year 1 teacher teaches the Reception children for a morning so the children can start to get to know them and their new classroom. For those children who require further transition opportunities, we work with them on an individual basis to meet their need, which could be further meet and greets with the new teacher, pictures of their new classroom shared with home, personalised timetable.

Updated March 2024