



ST PETER & ST PAUL CE ACADEMY

Rise
Fourth & Succeed

All things are possible to those who believe.

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We recognise it is not only a preparation for the next stage of education, but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play. Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

School Aims

The EYFS curriculum is designed to fulfil the following aims:

Aim 1

Provide a safe, happy and healthy school which recognises and celebrates effort and success

Aim 2

Enable pupils to be excited by learning

Aim 3

Enable pupils to value and respect themselves, other cultures and beliefs and their world

Our EYFS curriculum is also designed to help our children to develop our shared **School Values** of:

Be Aspirational
Show Compassion and Empathy
Be Respectful
Build Resilience
Take Responsibility
Build Friendships

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally, ensuring that every child is included and supported in line with equality of opportunity.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know

that they are valued.

- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children to be independent and make their own choices, encouraging them to learn from mistakes. By modelling resilience and giving gentle guidance, we help them keep trying, take small risks, and grow in confidence.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (September 2025). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through 4 Guiding Principles: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development.' The Framework covers the education and care of all children including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and those whose home language is not English.

The curriculum is centered on three Prime Areas of Learning and Development:

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

Providers must also support children through four Specific Areas which strengthen the Prime Areas. These are:

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

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are closely interlinked.

All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

Active Learning through Play

At St Peter and St Paul CE Academy, we organise the day to provide a balance between the following: -

- Child Initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult Initiated Activities - practitioners provide the resources to stimulate and

consolidate learning.

- Adult Led Activities - children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.

At St Peter and St Paul CE Academy we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS class has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all Areas of Learning and Development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS Framework.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult-led activities and child-initiated play.

Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning.

All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Baseline assessment occurs within the first few weeks of the children starting in the Reception class. Initial judgments are on entry into school detailing children's Areas of Learning and Development, Characteristics of Effective Learning and Wellbeing and Involvement. In addition to initial observations, practitioners gained evidence from parental discussions and information from previous settings.

Children's literacy and mathematical learning is recorded in a variety of ways, including practical activities, work completed in books, and observational evidence. All work is acknowledged, and verbal feedback is given to support children's immediate understanding. Wherever possible, work is marked alongside the child to ensure feedback is meaningful, accessible, and supportive of their learning.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development and learning. This information is then used to complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of their Foundation Stage year. The Profile provides a summary of each child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. The information is shared with parents, carers, practitioners and teachers to support transition and inform future planning of activities in Year 1.

The EYFS Profile results are reported to the Local Authority, who in turn forward data to the

relevant Government Department.

Planning

Planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is flexible, responsive, and centred on the needs, interests, and developmental stages of the children. All planning aligns with the EYFS Statutory Framework and focuses on the Characteristics of Effective Learning. It supports learning through play, exploration, and meaningful experiences, ensuring a balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning. Learning opportunities are planned for indoors and outdoors.

Long-term planning provides an overview of the learning opportunities across the year. It sets out:

- the progression of knowledge, skills, and experiences across all EYFS areas of learning
- key celebrations, seasonal events, and curriculum themes
- whole-school priorities that the EYFS contributes to
- how continuous provision supports learning year-round

This plan ensures broad and balanced coverage while maintaining flexibility to follow children's emerging interests.

Short-term planning is informed directly by daily observations, interactions, and assessments. It details:

- targeted next steps for groups and individuals
- adult-led activities and their intended learning outcomes
- key questions and vocabulary
- opportunities within continuous provision to extend learning
- adaptations for specific children or groups

Short-term plans are reviewed frequently and adjusted as children's learning progresses.

Parents as Partners

At St Peter and St Paul Academy, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents/carers, as highlighted by the EYFS Framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Practitioners will encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with their parents/carers.

We value the role of parents/carers as children's primary educators. We encourage parents/carers to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences and enabling them to respond to children's needs and interests.

Parents/carers are kept informed of what is happening in the school/classroom through regular letters, reading records and informal chatting at the end of the day. Photographs are also uploaded onto Tapestry so that parents can find out what the children have been doing in class. Messages are also encouraged through this platform too.

A half-termly curriculum letter is sent to parents with details of what is being taught. This also gives suggestions of how parents/carers can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the classroom.

Parents are invited to attend Parent Meetings during the course of the academic year and have the opportunity to work with their children in the classroom – for example – phonics meetings and the Christingle workshop.

Another opportunity for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents/carers are the mid-year and end of year reports, where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are always welcomed and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have with a member of staff.

Induction

St Peter and St Paul provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

In the Summer term also, parents are invited into school for a welcome meeting with the headteacher and the Early Years practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the school is shared. There is also time for informal chat and for parents' questions to be answered.

Information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. Induction packs for children to complete with parents will also be given out as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child.

Before they start in school, all children are offered a series of 'Stay and Play' sessions during the Summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the classroom environment. Practitioners will also go to visit the children in their current Pre-school settings, where parents have informed us of these settings. Parents are also invited to a 'Meet the Teacher' meeting, where they can attend with their child to meet the class teacher, have a one-to-one conversation about their child's likes, dislikes, and individual needs, and take the opportunity to look around the classroom.

The aim of our induction process is to support and develop our knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Primary School as smooth as possible.

Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the classroom.

Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the staff who work in the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Headteacher and subject coordinator will carry out monitoring within the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Health and Safety

Teaching and support staff will supervise all safe use of tools and materials. General teaching requirements for health and safety apply within the EYFS.