



Early Years Policy

Date Agreed by Governors: _____

Review Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Chair of Governors)

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)

Implementation Statement

Our Early Years provision values each child as a unique individual. Through positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents and a carefully planned environment all our children are enabled to succeed and flourish as independent learners.

Our curriculum is delivered through planned purposeful play with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities covering all 7 areas of learning. Knowledge, skills and processes are taught directly and then time is provided for the children to consolidate their learning through our continuous and enhanced provision.

Opportunities to develop children's characteristics of learning are embedded throughout Reception and Pre-school as the children develop and learn in different ways.

Assessments play an important part in helping both parents and practitioners recognise children's progress and identify their next steps in learning, hence giving our children a strong start to their educational journey.

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences within their play.
- To enable each child, through encouragement, open ended questioning and high expectations, to develop, to the full, both socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development through the use of continuous provision that is thought provoking and challenging.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.
- To develop strong links with home working closely with parents and carers.

The Curriculum

The Pre-school and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, to download at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

This clearly defines what we teach.

The EYFS framework includes three prime areas which underpin four specific areas.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Moving and Handling and Health and Self care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures

- **Understanding the World** – People and communities, The world and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Pre-school and Reception teachers plan activities within the Pre-school and Reception classrooms with these in mind and use them as part of the assessment process.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. The adult’s role is to model, demonstrate, observe and question what the child is doing during self-initiated play in order to move their learning forward. Adult directed tasks are differentiated and planned weekly based on ongoing assessments.

Continuous and Enhanced Provision Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years curriculum. In both Pre-school and Reception the classrooms and outdoor provision have specific designated areas where resources are clearly labelled. Each area takes into account the unique child, enabling environments, positive relationships and learning and development. Through the planning of ‘Common Play Behaviours’ within each area the children are able to practise skills, build upon experiences and revisit prior learning at their own level and pace. This play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, select resources independently and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play from emergent through to high level play behaviours. This is developed further in Reception through the planning of weekly challenges. This also informs future planning and adult focused tasks.

Direct Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for the children in the form of whole class teaching and adult led group activities that are differentiated to meet the individual needs. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge that can then be transferred and developed within their play.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Pre-school and Reception classes. However both have a weekly allocated PE slot in the hall.

Pre-school

Within a three hour session we have two short whole class carpet times, focusing on Letters and Sounds, numbers and counting, story work etc.

Reception

We have daily Letters and Sounds sessions and Number sessions that are differentiated. Alongside this we also have two whole class carpet sessions. One is the introduction for the adult directed task for the day and the other relates to either topic work, PSE, singing and music or story time.

Also Reception have a weekly ICT session for the use of class iPads.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find stories are a great way to fire the imagination. We have a two year book cycle in Pre-school and a one year cycle in Reception. (Detailed long

term plans can be found on our school website, along with half termly book plans including a variety of home/school tasks.)

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with both the children and staff to inform future learning opportunities. Although class teachers are responsible for writing plans, the EYFS plan as a team, with Teachers and LSAs all being involved.

Visits and visitors

Throughout the year external visits and walks using our local community are planned as part of the child's learning experience. Parental support is paramount as our ratio is one adult to two children in Pre-school and one adult to five children in Reception. Risk assessments are completed prior to the trip (Refer to the Health and Safety Policy).

Also visitors are welcome from within school or the wider community. As part of our partnership with parents Family Learning weeks are held every term. This enables the parents to visit our setting and work with their child on a range of activities, from Letters and Sounds, to creative activities.

As part of our Pram and Tots Club on a Friday the Pre-school children join in with the toddlers and parents in a weekly singing session, focusing on Nursery Rhymes. Parents are invited to partake in this session, learning pre-literacy skills.

Assessment, observations and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual profile. These profiles consist of children's work, photos and observations recorded on 2Simple which create a detailed picture of the child. This information is cross referenced using an adapted version St Helens' Tracker to ascertain the child's achievements and their next steps for learning. These are shared and discussed with the Nursery and Reception teams in informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meetings as these next steps inform planning for the next day and the week ahead. Parents have access to the portfolios which are stored in the classroom. They are encouraged to contribute through the use of our Home School tasks which are sent out fortnightly. The portfolio is given to parents when their child enters Year 1 or leaves our setting.

On entry to Pre-school we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the EYFS Team Leader and Headteacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning via Insight. Termly pupil progress meetings are held to discuss specific children's attainment with a particular focus on attendance and children on Pupil Premium. GLD and APS are also tracked.

Termly Parents' Evenings are held both in Reception and the Pre-school. Parents are provided with the opportunity to look at their child's profile and discuss any issues with the class teachers. Prior to these meetings parents are provided with their child's data which forms the basis for the discussion during the meeting and their child's next steps will be provided in order for the parents to support them with their learning at home. Attendance and homework is also recorded.

An annual written report will be sent home near the end of the Summer Term. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed further in the final Parents' Evening in Reception at the parent's request.

Role of staff and key worker

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that the child becomes familiar with the setting and build up a positive relationship with both the child and their parents/carers.

The LSAs are assigned to a specific class within either Pre-school or Reception and from strong relationships with each pupil and their parents/carers.

All the relevant staff are present during induction meetings, school and home visits.

Partnership with parents and carers

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

We have many different processes as part of the child's induction into either Pre-school or Reception. These are as follows:

Pre-school

- A home visit made by the Pre-school staff.
- An induction meeting for all parents to get to meet the staff.
- Stay and play hour sessions in Pre-school.
- A staggered intake starting with a 2 hour session.

Reception

- An induction meeting for all parents to get to meet the staff.
- A Pre-school/Nursery visit by the Reception staff.
- Stay and play hour sessions in Reception.
- A staggered intake starting with three half days and then increasing the length of the day over the first week.
- Letters and Sounds and Mathematics workshops.

In Pre-school the children are provided with an 'I am going to Pre-school booklet' which they share with their parents. In Reception booklets on 'All About Me' are given out for both parents and the children to complete which are then shared with the rest of the staff and children. Pre-school and Reception prospectuses are handed out outlining the curriculum and school procedures.

Health & safety and safeguarding

We operate in accordance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

Daily risk assessments are completed both internally and externally by a staff member. Toilets in Pre-school are checked between the two sessions and during lunchtime by the midday supervisors in Reception. (Please refer to the school Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy).

The Deputy Headteacher, is the named Designated Child Protection Officer and all concerns are discussed with her.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.