



As a church school, our vision is for each child to have a love of learning, hope, confidence, wisdom and respect for all.

'Life in all its fullness'

John 10:10

Early Years Policy

Introduction

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – Department of Education 2021

Ethos

St Peter's Brafferton CE (VA) Primary School is committed to putting our Christian vision into action and creating an inclusive culture, where all adults working and all pupils learning in school feel valued. This policy is intended to outline how we implement the Early Years Framework which in turn will benefit our pupils, our school and our community, and will contribute positively to reaching our shared Christian Vision.

Our Christian values which support this policy, and our ethos are:

Kindness, Inclusivity and Community

Scope

This policy applies to the staff in Helperbees and Reception (children aged 2-5 within our school setting). The Early Years lead and Headteacher ensures that our policy is fulfilled within our environments.

Aims

- To provide children from the age of two to five with a happy, vibrant foundation which fosters a love of learning.
- To offer stimulating and inspiring provision where children feel safe and secure enough to take risks within their learning and play.
- To offer an enriched curriculum providing children with a wide range of new and exciting experiences.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a nurtured environment.
- To promote valuable curriculum opportunities both inside and outside.
- To have the highest expectations for all children and provide them with an unlimited opportunity for development.

- To develop the children's social and emotional wellbeing through nurturing environments, positive relationships with adults and peers, strong links with parents and carefully targeted interventions.
- We embrace Christian values to ensure that all children are ready for their next steps.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the updated 2024 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS and is supported through the non-statutory guidance – Development Matters.

Using the frameworks, the staff in our Early Years team have developed a personalised curriculum based on our setting, assessing the children against curricular goals and clearly defined knowledge and skills.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout Early Years where staff are continuously promoting the development of these skills.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different experiences, and develop strategies for choosing their own ways to do things.

Staffing and Organisation

At St Peter's Brafferton, our Early Years provision covers both pre-school (ages 2-4) and Reception aged children. Helperbees is our governor led preschool and Reception children are part of Class 1: a mixed year class with Year 1 children. The EYFS team work closely together to ensure that future transitions into Reception are smooth and the progression within provision activities is evident. There is a full-time teacher

in Class 1 supported by two teaching assistants. Helperbees is overseen by the Early Years leader and a HLTA with the overarching monitoring from the Headteacher. A team of qualified/in training Preschool Assistants also assist in the preschool.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. We plan purposeful play opportunities and present new knowledge in meaningful contexts to expand children's schemas using our curriculum and practitioner knowledge.

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. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative and inquisitive.

Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Both classrooms have enclosed outdoor areas and children are able to free flow between indoor and outdoor areas.

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.

Teaching

Within both of our Early Years settings each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Whenever possible, adult led activities are completed within provision areas or linked to the unique child's interests, providing quality first-hand learning experiences. The children are able to engage within open ended tasks, discussion opportunities during circle time developing a range of skills such as problem solving and communication.

Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Our directed adult inputs include mathematics and phonics teaching. At St Peter's Brafferton we follow the Read Write Inc. scheme for our phonics teaching. Within preschool initially we focus on oral discrimination of sounds and in the summer term, aged 3—4 children, who are preparing for Reception, will begin the Nursery

section of Read Write Inc programme. Reception children start the scheme within the first couple of weeks of starting at school and learn one sound a day to begin with, as part of a short phonics session.

Assessment

At St Peter's Brafferton School, ongoing assessment is a key tool used within Preschool and Reception to help track the progress and development of each child.

Every member of staff within the early years completes observations, which form a crucial part of assessment. We observe children throughout the day and record moments of significance on our online platform. This enables the practitioners to monitor and assess children's progress as well as being an effective planning tool to ensure that the provision reflects the needs and interests of each individual learner.

The use of our online assessment tool, Evidence Me, allows parents constant access to their child's diary, to which they are strongly encouraged and supported to contribute their own assessments and celebrate their child's achievements.

When the children enter our Early Years settings, staff complete baseline assessments to ensure that planning is targeted for every child. Within the first six weeks of starting school, Reception children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment, where Early Number and Literacy skills are assessed and reported to the government to provide insight about the development that has occurred when children leave a primary school setting.

Throughout the year children are tracked termly on our school's internal tracker to show their progress and development across the seven areas of learning. Alongside this, parents in Reception are invited to attend parent consultation appointments to discuss their child's progress. This information is then discussed in pupil progress meetings where we evaluate the impact of our practice and reflect on it to ensure every child makes rapid progress. In addition to this, we also identify the children that would benefit from targeted interventions, to ensure that those children are making progress.

In Helperbees, when a child reaches the age of two, their key worker completes a two-year progress check. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires that parents and carers must be supplied with a short-written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; and Communication and Language, when the child is aged between 24-36 months. This means that caregivers to the child are aware of any emerging needs and the progress that the child has made.

At the end of the Reception year, all children are formally assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) creating an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). This is based upon ongoing observations, written records, and parental/carer communications. This information is then communicated to parents and carers in the child's end of year report where there is opportunity for it to be discussed with the class teacher. In preparation for transition this information is then shared within the Class 1 team. The EYFSP results are reported to Local Authority, who monitor and moderate the judgments made.

Working with Parents

At St Peter's Brafferton 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. As well as the visit days and induction sessions, we have an open-door policy where parents are able to see the Early Years team most mornings before, or evenings after, school.

Throughout the year we host a variety of events in which we encourage parents or carers to attend, for example stay and plays, curriculum workshops, phonics presentations and performances such as the nativity.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. In Helperbees each adult is assigned a group of children, in Class 1 the key person is the class teacher.

The Induction Process

Staff within Helperbees offer a flexible transition, working closely with parents to settle the children into the provision. This is achieved through options such as staggered starts or stay and play sessions.

Children that enter our Reception class come from both our internal pre school provision and through external providers. Both Early Years settings work closely together to make transition into Reception a simple process. Children aged 3-4 have opportunities throughout the year to come and visit and play within the Class 1 environment. Helperbees and Class 1 also experience joint events together. The Class 1 teacher visits both the internal and external nurseries to see children within their current setting building relationships as soon as possible.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our separate Child Protection policy (on the school website).

Role of the Headteacher and senior leadership team

- Ensure this policy is followed throughout Early Years
- Conduct whole school monitoring as per the 'Assessment Strategy'
- Work collaboratively with staff to ensure current, evidence based, early years strategies are researched, reviewed and implemented where appropriate
- Be accountable to the Governors for the implementation of this policy

Role of staff members

- The staff within the Early Years settings are pivotal in providing high quality positive interactions and in the planning of the provision and learning opportunities
- Work with key worker children in Helperbees to write end of year reports (N2's), 2 year progress reports and write and develop quality adult observations and interactions
- provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum designed to encourage all children to thrive
- recognise and nurture the needs of each individual child according to ability and aptitude
- ensure that learning is progressive and continuous
- be good role models, punctual, well prepared and organised
- keep up-to-date with educational/early years issues;
- provide clear information on school procedures and pupil progress;
- have a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise;
- establish links with the local community to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life;
- work collaboratively with all involved in education to develop a shared philosophy and commonality of practice
- Foster strong relationships with children and parents

Role of the Governing Body including Link Governors.

Our Governors determine, support, and review the school policy on Early Years. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate Early Years strategies by allocating resources effectively.
- Ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support a successful early years environment
- Monitor teaching strategies in the light of Health and Safety regulations.
- Monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's early year's policies by receiving reports from subject leaders and the Head teacher's report to Governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.
- There is an allocated Early Years Link Governor who completes termly monitoring.

Role of Parents and Pupils

Parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn.

We share information with parents at the start of each term in which we outline the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school; this is also displayed on school website.

- Issuing an annual report to Reception and preschool leavers' which clearly details a child's achievements and next steps.
- Holding parent teacher consultations twice a year (Reception) and informal parent consultations in preschool if required
- Explaining to parents how they can support their children with home tasks such as phonics and number work.
- Sharing children's achievements through newsletters and Class Dojo
- We will liaise closely with parents with SEN children who will have a SEN Support Plan closely supported by the SENCO

At St Peter's Brafferton, we believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We ask parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit (not applicable to preschool)
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour at school
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general
- fulfil the requirements set out in the Home/School agreement (main school children only)
- daily engagement with a child's home/school diary (main school only)

Monitoring Processes

Pupils' work will be monitored and moderated regularly in Early Years by the curriculum leader and the Headteacher. A termly review of monitoring procedures is held with all members of the teaching staff in the form of Pupil Progress Meetings which includes discussions around our whole school provision and the impact of the interventions that are used. The Headteacher will observe each class teacher in a specified curriculum area on a regular basis. The Performance Management cycle informs learning and teaching. (See Performance Management Policy).

Extra support and guidance

In addition to the policy measures outlined in this document, a range of other support mechanisms are in place and information on these is shared with all leaders, managers, Governors, staff, volunteers, and other adults covered by this policy.

Other useful websites are:

EYFS Framework:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

Development Matters:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7_534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

Early Years Profile:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook>

Monitored by: Full Governing Body

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Review Cycle: 3 yearly