

*'Shine like stars in the world.'*  
*Philippians 2:15*



## **St Paul's CE Primary School**

### **Foundation Stage Policy**

#### **Our Vision**

Our school is one family, united in love and deeply rooted in our Christian values, where together on life's journey we flourish, striving for excellence in all that we do. Inspired by the transformation of St Paul, and enlightened by the glory of God, we will shine like stars to make the world a better place.

#### **Our Core Values**

*Love, Forgiveness, Faith, Friendship, Hope and Peace.*

The EYFS applies to children from birth to five years. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage from the 'Development Matters in the Early Years foundation Stage' (EYFS).

*This year, we have become an Early Adopter, therefore we are following the Early Adopter's Framework.*

## **1. The Early Years Foundation (EYFS) Principles**

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- A unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with Teaching and Support from Adults
- Learning and Development

### A Unique Child

By having focus children every week, we celebrate the uniqueness of each child by observing and noting what the child is interested in. We are able to follow the children's individual interests and weave them into our topic-based learning. We understand the pedagogy around children's development, growth and learning and therefore recognise that children learn at varying rates and in different ways and styles. We support each child's learning journey by combining topic-based learning alongside their personal interests.

### Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. We recognise the importance of parental partnership in their children's learning and do this through our programme of focus children. We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during a 'taster session';
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- talking to parents about their child during a school visit to discuss the 'Getting to Know You' booklet before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- encouraging parents to take a role in their child's learning journey and complete observations of their child at home;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first three weeks of term;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;

- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through newsletters, correspondence, weekly learning and through the website.

### Enabling Environments

We understand that an environment, indoor or outdoor, should be well-organised, well-resourced, stimulating and relevant to all children's cultures and communities. The environment plays a vital role in the children's development. We observe the children and their interests and use this to plan next steps in the children's learning using our 'In the moment planning'.

### Learning and Development

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways. We value all areas of learning and ensure that our planning and teaching recognises this. We want the children to feel secure and to achieve, and, by understanding the different needs and interests of the children, we plan opportunities that are playful and challenging.

Our curriculum helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals as we enable children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. Learning is supported through indoor and outdoor areas and focusses on the children's interests. We identify progress and next steps through observations and planning.

## **2. Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The three characteristics of effective learning describe factors that play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to year 1. The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all 7 areas of learning and development. They represent processes rather than outcomes.

1. *Playing and Exploring* - 'Finding out and exploring' is concerned with the child's open-ended hands-on experiences, which result from innate curiosity. These experiences provide raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds out. 'Using what they know in their play' describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.
2. *Active Learning* - 'Being involved and concentrating' describes the intensity of attention that arises from children engaged in following a line of interest in their activities. 'Keeping on trying' refers to: the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties and is an element of purposeful control which supports resilience. 'Enjoying achieving what they set out to do' builds on the intrinsic motivation that supports long-term success. It refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, rather than relying on the approval of others.
3. *Creating and Thinking Critically* - 'Having their own ideas' covers the critical area of creativity – generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these. 'Using what they already know to learn new things' refers to the

way children use narrative and scientific modes of thought to: develop and link concepts; find meaning in sequence, cause and effect; find meaning in the intentions of others. 'Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways' involves children in: approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways; making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks; planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies.

### **3. Philosophy**

At St Paul's we aim to educate and help children to reach their full potential by providing a happy and caring environment where children are stimulated and valued as individuals. We believe that children learn most effectively through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children and materials in a safe and nurturing environment which meets their individual needs and interests.

This policy is linked with the school policy and guidelines on equal opportunities, behaviour and teaching and learning.

It is based firmly on the policy of parents as partners in the education process and especially in the crucial transition from home to school. As soon as the new intake cohort has been identified by the admissions process parents are contacted and information is sent to them. A meeting is arranged for all prospective Reception parents, and children are invited into school for a taster session where they spend a morning or an afternoon with their parents and future peers in their Reception classroom, with their new teacher. At the beginning of the autumn term the class teacher and the TA will spend time with each child 1:1 in school as they continue to build a relationship with the child and their parent/s as they partake in a school visit before they begin Reception.

## **2 Ethos**

In the Reception year we aim to give children opportunities to express themselves through discussion, story, rhyme, rhythm, music, drama and imaginative play and to provide a positive self image and respect for others. We aim to encourage children to develop their social, emotional and physical skills and to extend their knowledge about themselves and the world around them.

## **3 Quality**

We believe that children learn actively through play and first-hand experience. Children are given opportunities to explore, to discover, to solve problems, to make choices and decisions through various activities and to become as independent as possible. We encourage imaginative and manipulative play. We take care to ensure a safe environment in the classroom, outside and around the school.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors (which work alongside each other), that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

### **4. Inclusion in the Foundation Stage**

## ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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At St Paul's we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best through personalised learning. We do this by taking into account our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion).

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children.

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;
- having focus children to support planning around their interests and needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively and independently;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- allowing activities to be child initiated to further the children's learning;
- monitoring children's progress and providing support as necessary.

### 5. Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is designed to provide a firm foundation for the teaching of the National Curriculum and Religious Education in Key Stage 1 which takes place between the ages of 5 and 7. It is expressed in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage under the following headings:

Prime areas:

- *Personal, social and emotional development*
- *Communication and language*
- *Physical development*

Specific areas:

- *Literacy*
- *Mathematics*
- *Understanding the world*
- *Expressive Arts and Design*

At St Paul's we aim to provide a curriculum which meets the needs of all children and stimulates learning in all areas, encouraging social, emotional and intellectual development. Within this framework we aim to remain alert and responsive to the individual differences in the abilities and interests of each child.

Work in and outside of the classroom promotes interactions and activities which are designed to develop children's self-esteem and positive feelings towards learning. Children are given opportunities to develop oral and linguistic skills, mathematical concepts, musical, artistic and dramatic skills and physical co-ordination in gross and fine motor skills. All aspects of their development are equally important to us as our aim is to develop the child as a whole.

## ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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Much of our working day is based on integrated activities, both indoors and outdoors, which are valuable in promoting children's knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. They also allow children to work collaboratively as well as independently and help them to develop intellectual and social skills.

Throughout the Foundation Stage the children's learning journey is documented in their own personal learning journal on Tapestry. Parents are encouraged to add to their child's online learning journal to increase the relationship between home and school.

More information about the areas of learning can be found by downloading the EYFS Framework available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

### **6. Observations, Assessments, Planning and the Foundation Stage Profile**

In the process of treating each child as an individual we feel it is important to begin the education process in school with as much relevant information on each child as we are able to acquire, and then from that starting point carefully to monitor and record his or her progress through the early years of schooling.

Initially, the school may receive a report on each child from their pre-school setting which details the child's achievements over the seven areas of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The Reception Baseline Assessment, issued by the Standards and Testing Agency, is completed within the first six weeks of the child starting. The teachers use both the pre-school report and the assessment to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. The information from the assessments is shared with parents at the parental consultation evening in October.

RM Integris is used as an EYFS planning and assessment tool, monitoring progress and attainment throughout the year.

The results are discussed with parents at each consultation evening and are then passed on to the Year 1 teacher for the following year.

Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in July each year.

We plan weekly through all seven areas. Lots of learning is cross-curricular and to inform our planning for the following week. It is based on ongoing assessment, children's areas of interest and topics. We also have long and medium plans and progression of skills to ensure coverage and progression but these do change according to the needs of the children.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, summative and formative assessment; this involves professional opinions and assessment from all adults working with the child. The observations inform our planning and each child's EYFS Profile. Children in Reception should be working within 40-60 months Development Matters; however, this varies according to their prior learning, experiences, age and stage of development.

At the end of the Reception year, each child will be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The main purpose of the profile assessment at the end of the EYFS is to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between

EYFS and year 1 teachers. This supports year 1 teachers when understanding and learning about each child's stage of development and learning needs and will help them to plan the year 1 curriculum to meet the needs of all children. The EYFS profile is also used to inform parents about their child's development. Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved the expected level for the ELGs in the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. We will record each child's level of development against the Early Learning Goals as emerging or expected.

## **7. The role of the Key person.**

At our school the class teacher acts as the 'Key Person' to all children, supported by the EYFS team.

The role of staff includes:

- keeping records of the children's developmental progress,
- observing the children and analyse the information gathered through observation.
- contributing observations to the online learning journals and passing on information to the class teacher in preparation of sharing information with parents.
- Purposeful adult interactions to support and extend children's learning and continue to build safe and secure relationships

## **8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity**

A range of cultures, faiths and traditions will be taught in Reception across the areas of learning and our topics: Diwali; Chinese New Year; Bonfire Night; Christmas; Easter; Mothering Sunday; Pancake Day; Buddhism.

## **9. Staff Supervision**

In accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023, staff supervision is a requirement for providers under Section 3 – The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, Clauses 3.22 and 3.23, as follows:

*3.22. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.*

*3.23. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:*

- *discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns*
- *identify solutions to address issues as they arise*
- *receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness*

Supervision is an essential part of the effective working relationship between a member of staff and the Senior Leadership Team at St Paul's. The meetings are a two-way discussion between a member of staff

**ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

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and the EYFS Coordinator and to be effective each person must take equal responsibility for ensuring effective communication and recognition of the value of supervision meetings for both parties. All staff are provided with a regular supervision (1-1) meeting with the EYFS Coordinator at least once every term which is booked in advance at an agreed time - the meeting may sometimes be a group supervision meeting. This is in addition to regular staff appraisal and other opportunities for staff training. (Adhoc meetings as and when required).

A separate EYFS Supervision policy has been written.

## **10. Policy review**

The Foundation Stage policy will be reviewed on an annual basis during the Autumn Term.

Reviewed by Clare Cresswell and Athena Patsalis	Autumn Term 2023		
Next Revision (Please highlight as appropriate)	Annual	Bi-annual	Tri- annual
To be reviewed	Autumn Term 2024		