

# St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

part of the wider Christus Trust, Multi Academy Trust



## *Mission Statement*

*Loving and learning together, with Jesus*

## EYFS Policy

Policy Ref No	CUR028
Date of Policy	March 2026
Review Date	March 2027

## PURPOSE

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. [DfE 2012]

At St. Peter's, we provide a rich and broad curriculum that develops the children's knowledge and skills, inspiring them through a journey of creativity, discovery and curiosity where everyone is equally respected and valued, equipping the children as independent, resilient, life-long learners.

## AIMS

### Our Curriculum Intent

In EYFS, we use Development Matters to develop the children's knowledge and skills in line with the school's vision for a knowledge and skills-based curriculum.

We inspire **Creativity** through the careful planning and delivery of a wide range of adult initiated activities and child led enhanced provision, involving the children in the planning process giving them ownership of their learning.

We encourage **Discovery** through implementing a creative curriculum which allows young children to learn new skills and experiences through practical, hands-on, exploration play.

We foster a **Curiosity** by providing the children with resources that inspire them to ask questions which are then skilfully developed and explored together with the adults in the setting.

We develop **Independence** by ensuring that children learn how to help themselves, and we provide the scaffolds and the practice necessary to master new skills.

We instil **Resilience** ensuring children are prepared to persevere and stay involved in their learning, even when the process is challenging. We give them the opportunity to revisit skills introduced in a more independent way.

We work closely with parents and carers enabling them to support their children's learning and ensuring that the transition from home or preschool to school is as smooth as possible.

We ensure quality, consistency and equality of opportunity in the setting ensuring each child is included, supported and reaches their full potential.

As a result, the children Respect and Value their place at St. Peter's and develop good learning behaviours, enabling them to be enthusiastic, independent, lifelong learners.

## DEFINITIONS

**The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Class teachers

Planning and Teaching

Assessments - baseline, formative and EYFS Profile

Ensure effective deployment of learning support assistants

Organisation of resources

Liase with EYFS team, Year 1 teachers, Headteacher and outside agencies.

Attend meetings

Displays and marking

Keep up to date with developments related to the EYFS statutory framework and associated guidance.

Learning Support Assistants

Support individuals and groups of children in learning/extend play

Give feedback to class teachers

Liase with EYFS team

Prepare resources - including setting up of outdoor area.

Support interventions

Prepare and practise flashcards

Contribute to the annotation of the children's Learning Journals

### Phase Leader

Liase with EYFS team/Headteacher/staff

Lead development of EYFS

Manage EYFS budget/order resources

Review policy

Review/monitor EYFS practice keeping up to date with new developments

## PROCEDURES/PRACTICE

### ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

At St. Peter's, there are two parallel Reception classes each consisting of 30 children divided equally by a range of factors including age and gender. All children are invited for a brief visit in the summer term before they begin school. After an initial induction period, the children attend school full time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

At St Peter's, we adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, which sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five.

The four guiding principles are as follows:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their

learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

## **Implementation**

The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, actively learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. Play is flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child.

We provide a careful balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, both inside and outside the classroom. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which support them in discovering, exploring, investigating, developing their own interests and making sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to enable children to apply newly acquired knowledge and demonstrate their developing skills and understanding.

## **CURRICULUM**

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2025.

The EYFS curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning, all closely interlinked.

Three prime areas:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

And four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas:

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

## **Teaching and Learning**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff 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 and a smooth transition into Year 1.

### **Communication and Language**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. We ensure a language-rich environment in which high-quality conversations are facilitated by staff to develop children's language skills.

Children are read to frequently and are actively engaged in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems. This provides extensive opportunities to use and embed new vocabulary in a range of contexts and enables children to thrive.

Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and through sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

The children are encouraged to develop competence in speaking and listening and to become independent readers and writers.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development.

Children are encouraged to learn how to work, play and co-operate with others in a variety of contexts. Children are expected to be sensitive to others' needs and feelings. They are taught to respect both people and property. Opportunities are given for them to develop sharing and turn taking.

Children are supported to understand and talk about their own and others' feelings. They are supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, and have confidence in their own abilities.

They are given opportunities to explore new learning and are encouraged to use their own ideas to problem solve.

Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Support is given where required but great emphasis is placed on independence in dressing and undressing and managing their own personal hygiene.

### **Physical Development**

We aim to develop the children's physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments.

The children use a range of small and large equipment. They are taught how to hold, care for and use safely a range of tools such as scissors, pencils, paint brushes and split pins. They use constructional

and malleable materials either to achieve a given task or to develop their own ideas of space and shape.

Children become familiar with the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and begin to develop an understanding of what it means to be healthy.

### **Literacy**

We believe that it is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading.

The children are offered a rich diet of stories, songs, rhymes and poems and make up class and group stories. From early on, the children are encouraged to select from a variety of books, including information, fiction and reading scheme books, to share at home with parents. We use Little Wandle, a systematic synthetic phonics programme, as a means to teach children to read. The children participate in daily phonics sessions where they acquire and embed these skills through a variety of games and activities. They are given flashcards with graphemes, decodable words and tricky words to practise at home.

We encourage children to become confident writers through emergent writing, which develops by using phonics and their sight vocabulary. They have access to sound cards and word cards which aid them in their writing.

### **Mathematics**

We believe that developing a strong grounding in numbers is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.

The classroom is structured so that opportunities for counting are part of the daily routine. The focus is on achievement through practical activities and on using and understanding language to develop a deep understanding of the numbers to ten, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.

In addition, our curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. We aim to develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, the desire to 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

### **Understanding the World**

Our Understanding the World curriculum aims to guide children to make sense of their physical world and their community. We provide a foundation for children's learning in history, geography and science so they can better understand the environment, other people and both natural and manmade things.

Through the use of stories and explorative play we provide opportunities and encourage the children to deepen their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

As a Roman Catholic School, St Peter's has a specific policy and guidelines for the teaching of Religious Education. The framework for the lessons is set out by the "Religious Education Directory". Children are included and involved in whole school and key stage assemblies and masses as

appropriate. As well as celebrating special events and festivals from the Catholic faith the children are invited and encouraged to explore and learn about festivals from other religions and cultures.

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

We give the children regular opportunities to engage with the arts, thus developing their imagination, their ability to communicate, and to express ideas and feelings in a creative way using a variety of media and materials and suitable tools.

They are given opportunities to explore sound, colour, texture, shape, form and space. They listen to different types of music and some of this is used as a basis for imaginative dance and play. The role play area changes from one imaginative focus to another so that the children can act out a variety of different roles.

Through carefully planned experiences children develop their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts, interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

### **Planning**

Our Long-Term Plan consists of the Development Statements, taken from the non-statutory guidance material Development Matters in the EYFS, detailing how the requirements of the EYFS will be implemented. The statements are flexible and the order of teaching will depend on our own internal Baseline Assessments and the needs of the children. The plan also shows the half-termly topics that will provide a focus for the children's learning.

The EYFS team meet together to ensure the weekly plans reflect the changing individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, in order to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

At St Peter's, assessments are made in line with the school assessment policy. Teachers use effective assessment for learning to ensure planning is based on prior attainment. Effective verbal feedback is used to move pupils' learning on within lessons.

Assessment in EYFS is ongoing, formative and embedded in daily practice. We assess through observations of children during adult-directed tasks, child-initiated learning and play. These observations are recorded in a variety of formats and gathered together to build a complete picture of each child's progress and achievement against the Early Learning Goals. This information is used to complete the EYFS Profile in the summer term. Assessment is part of everyday practice and is not seen by the child as a test. Child-initiated activity is highly valued as a form of assessment, alongside adult-directed tasks. Teachers and Learning Support Assistants work with groups, assess children's understanding and observe the activities that children choose independently.

Each child has a Learning Journey in which observations, photographs, annotated pieces of work and any other relevant assessment information are kept.

### **Impact**

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools and trust colleagues, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS Profile data is submitted to the local authority.

### **RESOURCES**

Children have access to a wide range of resources available both in the classroom and in the outdoor environment to support the children's learning and development in all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Classroom resources are clearly labelled to encourage the children's independence.

Resources are regularly replenished and supplemented according to the needs and interests of the cohort.

### **PARENT PARTNERSHIP**

Fostering good relations between home and school is vital for a child to reach their full potential and to be successful in their school career.

Parents are invited to an induction meeting in the summer term before their child begins school where information and expectations for the induction process are shared.

In the early days, teaching staff will be available at the beginning and end of the day for any concerns or queries that the parents may have.

Parents receive regular information about what their child has been doing in school, as well as any forthcoming events, via the website, along with homework and other ways they can support their child's learning at home.

During the year, parents have the opportunity to meet with the class teacher during both 1-1 parent teacher meetings, where their child's individual progress can be discussed, and at workshops which cover and give insight into specific areas of the curriculum.

At the end of the year a report is produced giving parents an overall view of their child's achievements. Parents are invited to make an appointment to discuss any concerns they may have.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY, SAFEGUARDING AND INCLUSION**

Please refer to separate policies.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- Regular physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Toothbrushing
- Sensible amounts of 'screen time'
- Having a good sleep routine
- Being a safe pedestrian

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of this policy**

This is the responsibility of the EYFS lead. The policy will be regularly monitored and any necessary changes will be reported to the Curriculum Committee.