

ST. PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, HESWALL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY



John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

ST. PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

firm foundations. shining bright

Matthew 16:18 "You are Peter and upon this rock I shall build my church."

OUR VISION

Like St Peter, we build upon the rock of Jesus to enable us to shine: achieving our God given potential and loving ourselves, others, the world and God.



2023 – 2024

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Committee: Standards

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning at St. Peter's C.E Primary School. This document underpins practice in all areas of provision across Early Years. It is written in light of the publication of the EYFS framework (2021) and in the context of our vision for the provision of high quality play experiences for all children.

"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 - setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. 2021)

School Vision Statement and School Values

The role of St. Peter's school staff is crucial. The staff are an important asset who have the responsibility to ensure our school vision is embedded in all that we do at St. Peter's.

'Like St. Peter, we build upon the Rock of Jesus to enable us to shine: achieving our God given potential and loving ourselves, others, the world and God.'

Our school PETERS values of PRIDE, EFFORT, TEAMWORK, EMPATHY, RESPECT and SPIRITUALITY are at the forefront of our teaching and permeate throughout school life. We feel that these core values underpin our Christian distinctiveness and that by living these values, we will be equipping our children with the skills, knowledge and understanding to make positive contributions to our school community and beyond.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to 5 years old - the end of the Foundation 2 year. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. Peter's we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life as well as preparation for the next stage of education.

At St. Peter's, children can join our Early Years at 2 ½ years old, 3 – 4 years old or the main school in the September after their 4th birthday.

Aims and Objectives

At St. Peter's we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum encompassed by the Christian ethos, which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential.

Each child is valued as an individual - teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- Provide a happy, safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development.
- Teach the early skills of reading, writing and numbers.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build strong partnerships, supporting their children and valuing their contributions.

2021The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St. Peter's we recognise that every child is an individual with different skills, abilities and talents and we understand that children develop at different rates. We aim to provide quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind. Children's dispositions and attitudes to learning are influenced by the feedback they receive from others. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards to develop a positive attitude to learning. This is embedded within our school values of Pride, Effort, Teamwork, Empathy, Respect and Spirituality.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals, all children and their families are valued and treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. We believe that all our children matter and we give them every opportunity to achieve their personal best. We do this by taking into consideration children's interests and life experiences when planning for learning and we value contributions from parents, carers and previous settings.

In the EYFS the expectations we set are realistic and challenging to meet the needs of the children. The phased induction when children join St. Peter's enables us to get to know the children discovering their personality likes, dislikes, interests, needs and school readiness. Through learning and development opportunities we plan around these needs and interests ensuring that every child is included and supported. 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 range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and styles.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively.
- Building strong positive relationships with parents and/or carers.
- Sharing information with parents and/or carers.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the children's contributions are valued and respected.
- Use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support where necessary.
- Forming close links with outside agencies in an advisory and diagnostic capacity.

Positive Relationships

We firmly believe that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Parents as partners. We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

We value parents and carers by:

- Organising a thorough induction programme to welcome children and parents into our school community. This is an opportunity to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Providing a handbook of information about joining St. Peter's and encouraging the completion of the data collection forms, all about me booklets and electronic permission forms.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby they can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have any news or information about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Providing weekly newsletters with information about what has happened during the week entitled 'What we have done in this week...' to provide regular communication. This newsletter also outlines activities which could be undertaken at home to support. We call this our home learning.
- The use of the APP 'SeeSaw' to share photographs of children's learning experiences in school. Parents' are encouraged to add comments to this.
- Sharing children's achievements through the annual 'celebration' afternoon and evening; an opportunity to look at a child's work with them in an informal manner.
- Sharing progress at school through individual 'Learning Files' and the use of a class floor book.
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their children's learning journey by sharing their child's special moments or achievements at home. Parents are encouraged to emailing photographs and comments of significant achievements, special moments or news to our SeeSaw APP.
- Encouraging them to listen to their child read each night, to make use of the letters and sounds flashcards and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading record book.
- Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g. maths games and Reading for Pleasure books, and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school.
- Discussing individual targets at parent teacher meetings in Autumn and Spring terms. During these meetings, parents are provided with their child's 'Next Steps' in learning.

- Providing an interim 'Mid-Year' written report, summarising progress and specific ways to help at home.
- Providing an annual written report in July, summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. accompanying trips, listening to readers.

At St. Peter's the teachers and TA's act as 'key person' to all the children, supported by the other practitioners. We build good relationships with children, responding sensitively to their feelings, needs and behaviour, so that they become confident, capable and independent. We support children to build friendships and to understand their own and others feelings through stories, activities, class discussions and collective worship. Children learn about other cultures, communities and traditions and learn to respect that others have different needs, views and feelings. Through positive praise and encouragement children are nurtured and develop good self-esteem.

When the children join F2 we operate a very successful buddy system. Year 6 children are paired with a Foundation 2 Stage child to support them through their first year in the main school. They help the Foundation Stage children at lunch time, during whole school events and with some paired reading activities.

Enabling Environments

At St. Peter's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We begin by closely observing the children and assessing their interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning activities and experiences into the environment. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage and challenge children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience - a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence, taking responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

The Learning Environment

At St. Peter's the Early Years classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classroom is set up in areas to enable children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Some areas provide opportunities for the children to be creative and loud whereas other areas provide opportunities for children to play quietly or rest.

The children have daily access to our outdoor environment and, with the use of a covered outdoor area, children are able to free flow between inside and outside during the day. The outside area provides opportunities for the children to do things in different ways and on different scales than indoors. It offers the children the space to explore, use their senses and be physically more active. Outdoor activities are planned to help the children develop in all areas of the EYFSP.

Learning and Development

At St. Peter's we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. Play is essential for children's learning and development, it builds their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is supported, guided and enhanced by adults.

Through play, the children at St. Peter's;

- Explore and develop learning experiences which help them to understand the world around them.
- Develop and build on what they already know and can do, develop their own ideas, move their own learning forward and master what is new.
- Practise and apply skills in a way that is meaningful to them.
- Learn how to self-regulate and build an understanding of the need for rules.
- Are able to think creatively alongside others as well as by themselves.
- Explore feelings and relationships.
- Learn to value and accept the ideas of others.
- Develop their communication skills; speaking and listening with their peers and adults as they investigate or solve problems.
- Act out and make sense of experiences in controlled, safe situations.
- Make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Learn to take risks and to become resilient as learners.

Through carefully planned play activity and children's spontaneous/self-initiated play, the adult at St. Peter's work alongside the children in their play to extend and develop their language and communication, pose questions, working together to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities and extend a narrative. We do not make a distinction between work and play.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are a key element in the early year's foundation stage and are fundamental to every child as a lifelong learner. They focus on how children learn rather than what they learn. This distinction is important as it highlights the process of learning for young children. It is these skills that make a difference to children's long-term outcomes and to their ability to become happy, resourceful and resilient adults.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

At St. Peter's we aim to provide an emotional and physical environment that will support the development of these vital skills and attitudes. We provide

- opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

- encouragement and support to children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is divided into seven areas of learning and educational programmes, three prime areas and four specific areas. We recognise and value all areas of learning and development; they are equally weighted in importance and are inter-connected. Each area of learning is crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building the capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

The four specific Areas are:

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

Observation, assessment and planning

Planning in the Foundation Stage is based around themes which, where possible, reflect the children's interests. These themes can vary from year to year depending on the needs / interests of the cohort. The teaching staff plan weekly, following on from what has been observed during the week, these plans are fluid and open to change in response to needs, achievements and interests of the children and where applicable changes in the weather.

We make regular informal observations and assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Good communication between all members of Early Years team is vital to ensure that observations, achievements, interests and conversations with children and parents/carers are shared to ensure individual needs are identified and planned for. Our professional discussions form the basis of our formative assessments.

The formative and summative information which is collected is used to complete termly tracking. This information is used to identify strengths and gaps in areas of learning and is used to develop the environment, provision and adult led activities.

This information is accumulated at the end of the year when each child's evidence is used to make a professional judgement/assessment against the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. During the Summer term the F2 team have the opportunity to moderated within a cluster of Wirral schools to ensure accuracy and consistency of the judgements made. At the end of the summer term parents are given a report showing progress against the EYFSP assessment scales.

From September 2021, all F2 children undertake a statutory assessment provided by the DFE. Information from this assessment will be reviewed again in Year 6 to measure each individual child's progress.

Transition into St Peter's

At St. Peter's we recognise that starting a new setting is an important and exciting time in the life of a child. It can also be a challenging time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child. Our aim is that children quickly settle in to their new surroundings, build positive relationships with each

other and the adults in their classroom, feeling happy and secure. We believe that strong, respectful relationships between parents and practitioners lay the foundation for positive transition.

Transition into Early Years.

Following the enrolment of a child in Early Years, a convenient time is arranged for the child and their parents or carers to visit the Early Years classroom and meet our staff. During this time, a genuine dialogue with parents provides both staff and parent with the opportunity to share information about the child. Separation anxiety affects both parents and children, and warm exchanges between staff and family members are hugely significant in easing this process.

Following the initial visit, the child is invited back for some transition sessions. These are mutually agreed with the parents and are tailored to meet the needs of the child. We recognise that some children need several sessions at different times of the day whereas others need fewer and are ready to begin their full sessions sooner.

Our staff will continue to liaise with parents following the initial few sessions to share information about how the child is settling ensuring that any queries or concerns are addressed immediately.

If children join us at the beginning of the academic year, their parents are also invited to an open stay and play session to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff. This is a further opportunity to share information about Foundation 1, the school and for the parents to ask any questions.

Transition onto Foundation 2

Although Early Years and Foundation 2 are separated on our school site, the whole Early Years team work exceptionally close together and function as one. Our Foundation 2 teachers and support staff begin building relationships with the children in our Early Years from the moment they join. They are frequent visitors to the Early Years classroom, to read stories, work and play alongside the children. Our links throughout the academic year are exceptionally important to us and the relationships we build ensure the transition into Foundation 2 is seamless.

Our formal transition process begins at the start of the summer term when children of our Early Years F1 class visit our F2 classrooms for weekly stay and play sessions.

During the summer time, the Foundation 2 teachers also hold more formal visits the F1 classroom. They speak with the F1 team, spent time looking at the child's learning file and discussing individual children.

We hold a 'Buddy Day' in the summer term which is an opportunity for all children starting school to meet their Year 6 buddy. They spend a morning or afternoon playing together in the F2 classrooms and spent time familiarising themselves with areas around school such as the dining room, hall and main playground.

Parents of all children starting are invited to an induction meeting to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff. This is an opportunity to share information about Foundation 2, the school and for the parents to ask any questions.

The children are given further opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children. They will spend part of a morning/afternoon in their new class.

To aid the transition in to the main school we operate a staggered start in September. During the first two weeks children will attend for a half day only. This is an excellent opportunity for the children to become confident with the routine and expectations of their new class. It allows the adults working with them to provide more individualised time, really getting to know the children; finding out about likes and dislikes, what they can already know and can do. All children will attend full time by the third week.

Keeping safe

It is important to us that all children feel 'safe'. We help children become familiar with safety, boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Our children will be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical, emotional and psychological well being of all children.

"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. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence."

(3.1 Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

At St Peter's we understand that we are legally required to comply with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years 2021 in relation to section 3 of the safeguarding and welfare requirements;

- Child Protection
- Suitable People
- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills
- Key Person
- Staff: child ratios
- Health
- Managing children's behaviour
- Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment
- Special educational needs
- Information and records
- Other legal duties

Health and Well-being

Children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being. We promote healthy snacks and offer foods from different cultures to develop their taste preferences. Activities relating to the food cycle are interwoven in planning e.g. planting seeds, gathering preparing and eating! We ensure that children can rest during the day and have a designated quiet areas indoors and places outdoors where children can relax alongside space for vigorous free movements.