



ST. ANNE'S C.E.(VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS POLICY

'Together with God, Making Learning a Life Long Friend'

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Through our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we intend to provide children with the best possible start to their school life, providing the foundations upon which their education can be built to enable them to fulfil their potential.

Our Aims:

- To develop a positive attitude and a deep love of learning.
- To provide a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment where all children feel valued.
- To nurture the children's imagination language and curiosity.
- To provide children with early reading, writing and maths skills through purposeful teaching and provision.
- To bring learning opportunities to life with enriched, real and purposeful opportunities through play.
- To build relationships within the local community, and experience cultures around the wider world.
- To work together in partnership with parents and carers, valuing the role that they play.
- To ensure all children make excellent progress in their learning and reach their full potential.

Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to suit the needs of our children, providing them with a wide variety of opportunities and experiences to learn through play. The curriculum has been split into half termly themes to engage children, building upon prior experiences and expose them to new.

THE EYFS curriculum is based upon found guiding principles: -

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

The Reception class follows the curriculum as outlines in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development all of which are important and inter connected. (DFE: 2021: 1.3.)

Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
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Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

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

Our curriculum is enhanced through literature that has been carefully chosen to introduce new concepts, build upon and embed learning, introduce vocabulary to excite and engage a love of reading and literature. The thematic books are carefully selected to respond not only to the next steps of the children but also based on the children's interests.

We strive to provide a broad and progressive curriculum that offers opportunities for every child to achieve and demonstrate talents. EYFS staff work closely with subject leaders across the school to ensure the progression from Early Years acts as a scaffold and is built upon when children move into their following year groups. Staff ensure that children value the importance of the broad curriculum we offer through facilitation of interaction and achievements.

To support and develop children's learning across the curriculum, continuous provision, and enhancements to this are carefully planned out to ensure that provision meets the needs of the children and feeds into their natural curiosity and inquisitiveness, encouraging children to ask questions and explore independently.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are regularly observed, planned for, and implemented across our EYFS curriculum.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things and "have a go."
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep 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.

We engage children in **playing and exploring** using open - ended resources and encouraging children to think of ideas for play themselves. Promoting and planning for role -play enables our children to re - enact situations, activities, and conversation to make sense of the world and we also provide a secure and safe environment for children to take risks.

To ensure our children are **creative and think critically** we provide them opportunities for child - initiated play allowing children to take play and learning in their own direction. Staff work alongside the child and use open - ended questions to develop problem - solving, sharing their ideas and thinking. Children are encouraged to make links and talk through their learning process.

To encourage **active learning**, the timetable has been carefully planned to give children time to become deeply involved in their play and give them the opportunity to find a solution to their problems. Staff offer children praise when they reach a goal and lots of encouragement when they need to persevere with something.

Teaching Strategies

Adults are actively involved in children's learning throughout the day. This may be in the form of adult - led sessions or as an active facilitator to children's play; challenging and questioning children to embed and extend their learning. We believe that during child - led activities the adults' role and interaction with the children is essential to build the children's understanding and guide new learning. Within the enabling environment, staff ensure that children are given the opportunity to put their new skills into practice on their own and have a go for themselves. Their confidence and independence grow through opportunities to try new things, test ideas and make choices through a safe and supportive

environment. We firmly believe that one of the most powerful things we can teach our children is to become independent learners.

Early Reading and Phonics

At St Anne's we believe that reading is an essential life skill and of vital importance. We aim to develop pupils reading through the teaching of systematic and synthetic phonics, shared reading, home reading, individual reading, and library access.

Children at St Anne's participate in daily phonics sessions following the Read Write Inc phonics scheme. Phonics sessions are well matched and suited to the child's ages and stages and equip them with crucial early reading skills. Each child will progress through the phonics phases in lessons as well as accessing independent mastery activities through the enabling environment.

At St Anne's we follow the Read Write Inc reading scheme. Reading at home is encouraged. The children take home a reading book from the reading scheme to share and read with their parents/ carers daily. This book is changed regularly. As phonics teaching and learning takes place, the reading book sent home is in line with the child's phonic ability to promote the application of skills and encourage fluency.

At the end of each day, children have story time where they listen to a variety of books. These books include poetry, fictional classics, and non - fiction texts. They ensure pupils engage with a range of texts at a deeper level to promote writing, drama, and role play, develop repetition and language and foster a love of favourite authors. This time is also used to encourage and develop speaking and listening skills active listening, questioning, discussion and rhyme.

For further information on early reading and phonics in EYFS, please see the Reading policy.

Learning through Play

Learning through play is an important and integral part of the Early Years curriculum and classroom. We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own developing the characteristics of learning.

The Acquisition of Early Language

At St Anne's we believe that the importance of planning for and providing opportunities, time and space for children to talk, listen and understand is paramount. Through careful planning we have created a broad and rich language environment. We ensure the use of talk partners and that time is given to discussion and the sharing of children's ideas. Children are exposed to read aloud sessions daily. Adults facilitate role - play and small world play to extend children's language. Vocabulary linked to topic and key texts are promoted. Adults skilfully interact with children to model, scaffold language, and ensure the use of open - ended questioning to promote discussion. By developing pupils speaking and listening skills, we enable them to access more areas of learning and communicated with adults and other children.

Classroom Organisation

Our Early Years indoor and outdoor environment are organised and accessible for all children through clearly defined areas that children are encouraged to access independently and safely. Opportunities for outdoor learning are valued and exploited. Being outdoors provides children with more freedom to learn and he ability to take risks, to explore and to become independent. Forest School sessions are planned to further learning from within the classroom. Our classroom has been designed with clearly defined areas of provision including reading, writing, maths, role play and creative. A rich set of resources, offering a wide variety of possibilities, are organised to promote children's independence and enable open - ended learning. Risk assessments are carried out frequently to ensure our learning environments are safe and secure.

Parents as Partners

At St Anne's we value the role that parents, and carers play in the life of their child. We look for opportunities to work with families to support learning at home and to involve parents/ carers in their child's school life. We therefore make it our aim to work very closely with parents. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the families of the children in our care. We do this through:

- Providing parents with a handbook of information about our EYFS setting and school readiness information
- Meeting with parents before their children start school at induction meetings and visits to the classrooms.
- Inviting parents to attend informal workshops about the curriculum such as phonics

- Holding and inviting parents to 1:1 meeting to talk about how their child has settled into school environment and talk about their child's progress.
- Sending home observations of the children's learning via Evidence Me App
- Publishing curriculum topic information on school website and Class Dojo
- Regular contact through texts, class dojo, newsletters, email and reading records.
- Offering a range of activities throughout the school year - worships, Christmas productions and sports days.
- Encouraging parents to come and be a 'secret storyteller'

Induction

It is important to us that you and your child feel happy, comfortable and safe when you join St Anne's. We have developed a robust Induction Programme. It is designed to ensure that both our children and our parents are familiar and comfortable with both the school and the staff before your child even begins school. This means that when your child officially joins St Anne's they can settle quickly and feel happy in their new school environment.

Details of our Induction Programme

During the Summer Term, prior to starting school the following September, there are several parts of Induction that take place. There are detailed below:

- Parents are invited to attend an 'Induction Meeting' at school to meet the EYFS leader and the teaching staff.
- Foundation Stage staff visit pre - school settings to meet the children and their Key Workers.
- Children and parents are invited to a 'Picnic' on the field.
- Children attend an 'Induction session' on their own towards the end of the academic year
- Our induction policy is flexible and therefore we can adapt our policy if needed to meet the needs of the children and families.

In September, the children have two half days and then the children start school full time. If needed this can be adapted to suit individual needs.

Transition

We have several transitions throughout the first year at St Anne's that we manage with care. Transitions are times within your child's school journey when they move within our school to their next year group.

The first transition that occurs during the year is when the children come to Reception. We aim to ensure that transition is as smooth and comfortable as possible. In order to do this, parents are invited to a 'Welcome to Reception' meeting during the summer term to provide information about the school, the curriculum teaching staff and the day to day life in Reception. There is also the opportunity to talk about other general information, such as school dinners, uniform and any questions or queries. It is also an opportunity to meet the class teacher and other members of staff.

The children's transition takes place in the whole school transition days in July. During this week all children go into class and familiarise themselves with the classroom.

The second transition is that from Reception to Year 1. During this transition, the children attend transition days as part of the whole transition days in July. During these days, the children may begin their new topic, complete exciting artwork and displays and spend more time with their new classroom staff to familiarise themselves. The Reception teacher continues to support Year 1 for the first half Autumn term to ensure a smooth transition, adapting the timetable and classroom environment to suit the needs of the children as they move from the Early Years curriculum to National Curriculum.

Observations, Assessment and Learning Journeys

On entry at St Anne's the teacher carries out a baseline assessment, these assessments allow us to identify the child's attainment, their important next steps in learning, and any significant barriers to learning. The curriculum is then tailored accordingly for each individual child.

Children in Reception also complete the Reception Baseline (RBA) with a familiar adult, within the first few weeks of starting in line with Government expectations. At the end of year each child is assessed against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG). They are assessed as either emerging or expected for each of the 17 areas of learning and a report is given to parents informing them about their child's progress in each of the areas of learning. This information is also given to the Year 1 teachers to aid transition.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects children's identified needs. Through the regular monitoring of children's progress, we can initiate early action and support we work closely with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make progress.

Assessment in the EYFS primarily takes the form of observations, this involves practitioners observing and questioning children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. Evidence collection is kept to the minimum required and is used to aide professional discussion or quality assure judgements. This evidence may include images, videos and observations. This happens throughout the day when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. Observations are recorded using the app Evidence Me.

As well as an electronic learning journey each child has their own learning journey to evidence and celebrate writing achievements. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents at parent's evenings.