



**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](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 the 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.
- Reception staff visit pre - school settings to meet the children and their Key Workers.
- Children attend two 'Induction sessions' 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 six 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 aid 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.

### **Inclusion**

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO. The EYFS curriculum will be planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

### **Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

All necessary steps will be taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training. The DSL is Mr Hobson. The deputy DSL is Alexa Turner, Hannah Bowcock or Julie Williams. The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

### **Mobile phones and devices**

For the purposes of this policy, the term "mobile phone" refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets. Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Photography and Images Policy.

Use of personal mobile phones by staff members Staff members will not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time. Mobile phones will be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present. Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they will only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones will not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips.

If staff have a Smart Watch this needs to be turned on Aeroplane Mode during the school day to prevent any phone calls or photographs.

Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action. Staff will report any concerns about another staff member's use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy. Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.

Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors Posters will be used around the school to indicate that it is a mobile free zone. Parents, visitors and contractors will not be permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission. Parents may take photographs and videos only containing their own child during school events. Parents may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents of the children involved. The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at the school or school events on social media. Staff will report all concerns about parents, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Use of the school's mobile phones and cameras Staff will be provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos. School devices will have passcode protection. School devices will only be used for work related matters, e.g. recording and documenting a child's learning. School devices will only be used to take photographs in the presence of another staff member and only with the consent of the child's parent.

Staff will not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, recording concerns forms and body maps will be used to record observations relating to child protection concerns - these can be acquired from the DSL. School devices will not be taken off school premises without prior written permission from the headteacher. Where staff members have concerns over material on a school device, they will report all concerns to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### Safer Eating Practices

To minimise the risk of choking and ensure safe eating environments for young children, the following practices are implemented:

- **Supervision:** All children are supervised during mealtimes and snack time. Children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can be sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- **Choking Hazards:** Staff will prepare food in a way to prevent choking and be vigilant to ensure foods sent in packed lunches have also been prepared safely. Firm, spherical foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes must be sliced into quarters or segments. Cylindrical foods such as cucumber, carrots and cocktail sausages must be cut lengthways into thin batons. This guidance on food safety for young children - <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/foodsafety> includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years settings. If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, staff will record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records will be reviewed and risk assessed alongside other accidents. Appropriate action will be taken to address any identified concerns.
- **Mealtime Environment:** Children will sit down and remain seated while eating and be given time to chew and swallow their food properly. Children are discouraged from talking loudly at mealtimes / snack time. Other distractions such as toys at the meal table are, wherever possible, discouraged. Food sharing is not allowed.

#### Training and Awareness

Staff will receive regular training in paediatric first aid, food safety, allergy management, and safe eating practices. This includes:

- **First Aid and Emergency Procedures:** All staff will be trained in first aid procedures specific to food related incidents, including how to handle allergic reactions and choking. Whilst children are eating there will be at least one member of staff with a valid full paediatric first aid certificate present in the classroom. Paediatric First Aid will be updated at least every three years as a minimum.
- **All staff are required to complete training as part of their induction covering food hygiene and allergy awareness. All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time**
- **Ongoing Training:** Staff will undergo refresher courses on food hygiene and allergy awareness every two years as a minimum.

