



**Whitefriars  
Avenue Road  
Farnborough  
Hampshire  
GU14 7BW  
01252 542511  
[www.st-patricks.hants.sch.uk](http://www.st-patricks.hants.sch.uk)**

**Early Years Policy**

Policy Reference:	EY1
Responsibility:	Curriculum and Standards Committee
Reviewed by:	Early Years Manager
This Review:	April 2017
Next Review Due:	April 2020
Cycle:	Three Yearly
Ratified by Full Governing Body on:	22.05.2017
Signed:	
Mr Ged Owens	Chair of Governors

***With Christ as our guide and example we celebrate the uniqueness of the individual.  
Together we will try to:  
Learn from Jesus;  
Love like Jesus;  
Live like Jesus.***

## Aims

Four guiding principles shape the learning environment in the EYFS.

These are:

- every child is a unique child, made in God's image and likeness;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs.
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

We promote positive, life-long learning through;

- playing and exploring - children are encouraged to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- active learning - children are taught to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Curriculum Organisation

The EYFS follows the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf). This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the

specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

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

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

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

## Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through

children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. For example, phonics, maths, handwriting, P.E. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.

## **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we promote and inspire active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them 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. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play and adult led activities is very important to us. We use our ongoing assessment to challenge children at the appropriate level. We recognise that more able children, whose achievements exceed the Early Learning Goals should be provided with opportunities which extend their knowledge and understanding – some of which may be planned using the Key Stage 1 programmes of study of the National Curriculum. We recognise that some children will require continued support for achieving all, or some, of the Early Learning Goals, after entering K.S.1. Our Year One transition programme supports these needs.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The EYFS team plans activities with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on 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.

## **Role of staff and key worker**

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

## **Partnership with parents and carers**

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As part of our transition programme, we

offer Reception visit days, two stay and play sessions, home and preschools visits, an autumn and spring term parents evening and an end of year report in July. The Tapestry online learning journey promotes home learning techniques and shares next steps for learning. This tool has proved to be a great asset in building relationships and promoting learning. Our parent workshops help support parents in their role as educators. Our “open door” policy promotes positive parental relationships. We encourage parents to become active members of the school community, for example by hearing readers and taking library groups.

### **Assessment and Monitoring**

Initial assessment begins in the summer before the child starts school when we collate data from preschool visits. Ongoing assessment for planning and target setting will be made based on the Early Outcomes and EYFS exemplification materials. Throughout the year individual, group and cohort progress will be monitored each term using the Protracker software programme. In addition, the Tapestry Online Learning journey will be used to record pertinent observations and to share next steps and home learning strategies with parents/carers.

Specific assessment tools such as Letters and Sounds progression, SOLENT Trust physical and language elements and Leuven scales of wellbeing and involvement will be used to monitor progress across the year.

### **Staff Development**

Early Years teachers and classroom assistants will be encouraged to attend targeted professional development courses and to develop mutually beneficial working relationships with other EYFS settings and Year One teachers. Data analysis will drive further staff development pathways.

This Policy is supported by our school's long, medium and short term planning strategies.

These entitlements apply equally to all members of our school, regardless of gender, race or creed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies particularly the Safeguarding, Pupil Premium, Curriculum Policy and Teaching & Learning Policy.