



ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Early Years Policy

Our Mission Statement

"Do everything with love."

(St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 16:14)

This means that we will...

- *Show our love for Jesus in everything we say and do*
- *Respect everyone by recognising that God made us all different but equally valued.*
- *Strive for excellence and find ways to share, develop and celebrate our talents.*
- *Promote a safe, happy and enjoyable environment.*
- *Actively support our school, parish and the wider community.*

Ratified on

Date _____

Signed _____

Review date _____

This Early Years policy reflects the values and philosophy of our school's mission statement in relation to the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. It gives a framework and guidance within which all staff work.

"We believe every child is unique, a competent learner from birth and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We are committed to developing positive relationships so our children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving secure relationships with parents and or their key person. We aim to provide enabling environments for all our children which play a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. We believe children learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected."

(Adapted from Cole J and Nelson A(2008), Planning for Quality in the Early Years, Early Education, London)

We use the four themes and their linked principles outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children from birth to five:

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

A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

We aim to:

- Meet the needs of all children in our care by focusing on their strengths and supporting areas for development.
- Provide opportunities to encourage independence including taking responsibility for resources in our environment.
- Offer a safe and healthy environment that promotes keeping fit and staying well.
- Use a range of teaching and learning strategies based on children's needs. These can include large group, small group and working alongside individual children leading their own learning through play.
- Use a range of materials that are free from discrimination and stereotyping, reflecting different languages and cultural images.
- Monitor children's progress closely providing additional support and challenge when appropriate.
- Help children to manage their behaviour and to value and respect their own contribution and that of others.
- Work together with outside agencies to meet children's needs and support their learning.
- Support children with their spoken language to become skilful communicators.
- Offer a smooth transition from nursery provision into Year R for all children including: home visits, visits from nursery to school, close links between nursery and Year R practitioners and transfer records.
- Routines in nursery reflect the varied needs of our 2 year olds, including quiet time in the setting, small group time and guided snack times.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

We aim to:

- Make children aware of their own culture and beliefs and encourage them to respect those of others.
- Provide qualified practitioners who work together as a team and share a commitment to providing appropriate quality care and Education for young children.
- Establish a successful working partnership with parents and enable them to support their child's learning.
- Give pupils a secure emotional environment where they can talk and be listened to by:
 - All children having a small group and key person in nursery, including smaller groups for the 2 year olds.
- Work in close partnership with the parents and carers by:
 - Holding workshops and visits as part of the transition procedure.
 - Offer parent meetings with key worker on entry to nursery and home visits on entry to Year R at school.
 - In Year R hold a class meeting to share information about the learning topics.
 - In Year R share class liturgies, assemblies and mass.
 - Encourage contributions from home for different learning.
 - Send activities home such as reading books and phonic games.
 - Hold regular consultation meetings to share next steps and achievements and reassure parents with concerns.
 - Nursery and reception parents are invited to stay with their child to play for up to 15 minutes at the start of the session for early bird reading and to help settle them in.
 - Hold workshops to help Year R parents support their children with their reading, writing and maths
 - Run workshops for nursery and Year R parents on healthy living and routines and behaviour
 - Parents are invited to join their child in their classroom throughout the year for special events, including making Christmas decorations or Easter hats.
- Invite parents to assist with local visits to Paulsgrove Library, shops and trips.
- Share with parents and carers about what we have been learning each week via notice boards and letters home.

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

We aim to:

- Provide a supportive and welcoming environment where the children will feel included, secure and valued, reflecting the seven areas of learning.
- Where appropriate we will work closely with outside agencies to support the specific need of the child.
- Ensure that the physical environment indoors and outdoors is safe and secure, including choke testing all resources in the nursery in line with guidance for safeguarding 2 year olds.
- Ensure the children are involved in well planned and purposeful activities which build on what the children already know and can do and support risk taking based on our observations.
- Provide practitioner led activities based on prior knowledge and children's interests which reinforce previous learning and provide for future development.
- Create an organised, purposeful indoor and outdoor environment which promotes independent learning and thinking through the resources offered.
- Allow time for all children to work and play together, strengthening relationships between peers.
 - In nursery this is allowing all 2, 3 and 4 year olds to have free flow of the environment together
 - In reception this is allowing both classes to have discovery time together and free flow around the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Enable more experienced and knowledgeable children to encourage other learners.
- Encourage children to develop persistence, concentration and perseverance when tackling challenging tasks.
- Use observations to track children's progress throughout the year.
- Make classroom observations that inform planning and teaching.
- Joint moderation will take place with practitioners in onsite nursery throughout the year.
- Monitoring children's progress includes:

Observations
Children's comments
Photographs
Pieces of children's work
Comments from parents
Online learning journey (tapestry)

The above evidence can be found in the children's learning journeys.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

We aim to:

- Offer play based learning, reflecting and meeting children's needs.
- Provide a wide range of stimulating experiences to inspire children to explore and learn through play.
- Support children to learn through hands on experiences that reflect their interests.
 - 2 year old small group activities focus on the prime areas of learning, whenever possible using the children's interests.
 - 3 and 4 year olds have access to daily letters and sounds (focusing on Phase 1) as well as small group time which cover all areas of learning whenever possible using the children's interests.
- Support children to think creatively and critically through the adult-led and child-initiated experiences offered.
- Work alongside the children, valuing their ideas and supporting and extending their learning through sustained shared thinking and asking questions that challenge their thinking.
- Give the children the time to explore their learning and report back about their own work and their peers.
- Assess all children regularly and accurately using the early years learning outcomes:
 - Baseline data collected for all children in September (or when they join)
 - Summative assessments are made every half term in reception and recorded on Target Tracker
 - Summative assessments are made and moderated at the end of Autumn, Spring and Summer term in nursery and recorded on target tracker.
 - 2 year checks are completed as appropriate and recorded on the child's tapestry account.
 - Transfer records are completed for children leaving to start in a reception classroom.
- Provide a broad and balanced range of activities based within the seven Areas of Learning and Development:

Prime areas of learning

Personal, social and emotional development

Communication and language

Physical development

Specific Areas of learning

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the world

Expressive arts and design

Throughout the year we will also reflect on how the children learn and will comment on and consider the following characteristics of effective learning for each child:

- Playing and exploring (engagement)
 - Finding out and exploring
 - Playing with what they know
 - Being willing to 'have a go'
- Active learning (motivation)
 - Being involved and concentrating
 - Keeping trying
 - Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- Creating and thinking critically (thinking)
 - Having their own ideas
 - Making links
 - Choosing ways to do things