Early Years Foundation Policy

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Chair of Finance Committee_____(Mr Mark Gaunt)

Headteacher_____(Mrs Joanne Rowley)

Review Date: January 2026
Next Review Date: January 2028

Introduction

The Foundation Stage applies to children from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday. Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of year 1. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. In addition to our setting, some children have experienced a range of other settings that exist in our community. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich, safe and stimulating environment.

Aims

The Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing pupils':

- Personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- Social skills;
- Attention skills and persistence;
- Language and communication;
- Reading and writing;
- Mathematics;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Physical development;
- Creative development.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning outlines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1.
The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop independence and self management;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observation and more formal assessment, Nursery and Foundation Stage Profile, which are shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience, prior to joining us:
- The clear aims of our work and regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Play in the Foundation Stage

At St Paul's Primary School we value play and believe that through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the need of 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 wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Years Profile. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives in the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. By the end of the Reception year in our school, children have a daily mathematics lesson and literacy hour. Teachers initially address the requirements in a flexible way but, as part of the smooth transaction to Key Stage 1, they put the daily literacy and mathematics lessons into operation by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work where appropriate to support the planning for individual children. Our medium term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and for those working towards Levels 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

During the children's first half term in Nursery and Reception, Foundation Stage staff assesses the ability of each child using the Foundation Stage Profile criteria. We use this information to modify

the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the assessment information with parents.

Using the information gathered through continuous observations the profile is continually updated throughout the year. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. Again, we share this information with parents.

Each teacher keeps a record of children's progress, including examples of work, within an assessment file. This file contains a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at parental consultation meetings.

Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

The Role of Parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that the parents have played and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our Nursery and again upon entering school;
- The teacher visits all children in their home setting prior to their starting Nursery School;
- In the Nursery both child and parents have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- In Reception the children have the opportunity, on School Transition Days to spend time with their teacher;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception class;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents at which they can discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;

- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- Arranging for children to start school over several weeks of their first term;
- Arranging a range of activities that support the involvement of parents (such as Sharing Workshops).
- We also encourage and value involvement from the wider community; such as the Police and Fire Service.