

St Kenelm's C of E Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy September 2023

Nurturing each and all. Guiding, Trusting, Inspiring and Celebrating.

Our Vision, Values and Ethos

Our Vision

Nurturing each and all. Guiding, Trusting, Inspiring and Celebrating.

(The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Matthew 18. 10-14)

Our vision is to celebrate and support all individuals on their life journey within a Christian ethos. We aim to provide a nurturing environment inspiring all to achieve their full potential and flourish through personal discovery within a caring, trusting community.

Our Values

Respect, Honesty, Friendship, Compassion, Thankfulness & Wisdom.

Values are fundamental expressions of what we think and believe. As a school we encourage children to think about personal and social values and to develop their capacity to be active and effective citizens.

Our Ethos

St Kenelm's School demonstrates the major Christian values in the ways children are cared for and in the care and respect the children are expected to show towards all other people, the world beyond the school and their immediate surroundings. As a school, we celebrate the diversity of the wider community and are committed to the principles of inclusion and equal opportunity.

Being kind, helpful and tolerant to each other in line with New Testament teaching underpins the school's ethos.

Following Jesus, our Good Shepherd, our hope is that children will grow into good shepherds themselves; treating each other with love, kindness, care and respect, as they would want to be treated themselves.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Rationale

At St Kenelm's Primary School, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our pupils thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment, with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework, (2023) 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

- 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 and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

The Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World

- Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

In the Early Years, we write medium term plans using the EYFS curriculum based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. We also follow the children's interests where appropriate. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Children have daily phonics teaching sessions, which increase in length as they progress through the EYFS, using *Jolly Phonics*, which is central to the Systematic Synthetic Phonics method of teaching. We teach children the five key skills that they need to apply the English alphabetic code successfully in their reading and writing. Complete fidelity is given to the *Jolly Phonics* scheme in EYFS.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years' practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, learning and development.

At St Kenelm's Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families based on rapport.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities.

Teaching Strategies

We ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities throughout the day. 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 and modelling explorative talk among children.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We ensure that the tasks are effectively pitched to children's needs and abilities, at the same time enabling children to undertake an open-ended activity. We believe 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 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. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

Teaching and Planning

'When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions'

We include adult-led experiences for children in the form of structured adult-led teaching and adult-led 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.

We believe planning a purposeful and inviting classroom sets a stimulating atmosphere and helps children engage in the activities and tasks planned. Our planning is heavily based on our knowledge of where the children are and what their next steps in learning will be. These are assessed through careful observation. We also rely on children's interests and passions when planning the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure children's interests are followed, enabling children to explore and discover new ideas and depths in knowledge.

Inclusion

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

In the Early Years, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the children so that they have the best opportunity to achieve their Early Learning Goals or ELG's and, for some children, who will 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 from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Visits and Visitors

Visits and visitors play an important role at St Kenelm's Primary School. We aim to incorporate visitors in to the classroom or a trip each term; these can range from a visit to an arboretum, a falconry centre as well as our local S.t Kenelm's Church. Visitors also enhance a topic studied in class and therefore we continue to invite 'experts' to talk to the children, for example: the Police, Fire Department, a nurse, a Blue Cross visit talking about how to care for our pets, as well as members of the clergy who work closely with our school. We often ask parents if they are able to share their knowledge or a skill, for example local bat conservation or wood working skills.

Classroom Organisation

We ensure our classroom is an inviting and stimulating environment. Our Reception classroom has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. The classroom is set up to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. The Reception classroom has a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in different areas each day. The adults work with a group of children for a clearly identified purpose, facilitating and modelling children's learning.

Assessment, Observations and Learning Journeys

At St Kenelm's Primary School, assessment is vital to assess children's existing knowledge, as well as potential gaps in understanding and next steps for learning. We implement summative and formative assessment to continually assess children's understanding of the topic, skill or strategy taught. We believe it is important to continuously assess children to ensure they reach their potential, as well as allowing the staff within the learning environment to facilitate learning to the needs and abilities of the pupils within the setting. Observations of children's understanding and individual thinking is important and we believe it offers a reflection on children's ability to apply the skills taught in group teaching. Each child has their own individual learning journey into which short observations, samples of work and photographs are placed which all help to record progress and inform next steps. The children progress and are assessed using "Development Matters", (September 2020), the non-statutory guidance material produced by Early Education, to support the statutory requirements of the EYFSP handbook 2022, with the aim of the children reaching their Early Learning Goals or ELGs. During the first 6 weeks, all children are assessed using the government baseline assessment tool. We also make our own "on entry" judgements by engaging and interacting with the children to assess their starting points. Parents'/carers' views on their child as a learner are taken into account. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning and is a statutory report. Professional judgement of the children's progress and attainment will be used as 'emerging' or 'expected' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum. Parents/carers will be given information of their child's achievements in a written report at the end of the Summer term. This will be used by the Year 1 teacher to help plan their learning as they make the transition into Key Stage 1.

Partnership with parents and carers

At St Kenelm's School, we believe that the partnership with parents and carers is very important, as parents are children's first educators. Consequently, we strive to involve parents throughout the year, visiting our class and sharing their skills and experiences. We involve the parents and carers to contribute towards their children's learning through a variety of ways:

- sharing WOW moments, which we celebrate in class
- filling in 'all about me' forms at the start of the year which impact our planning,
- we invite parents to come along and share all the children's achievements in the classroom
- we actively encourage parent/teacher dialogue to ensure the best possible experience for the children
- we encourage parents to use the home/school reading record as a communication tool
- sharing photographs on Google Classroom weekly of what we have done in school

Safeguarding:

Daily health and safety checks are carried by all EYFS staff to ensure the provision is safe for all children. We prioritise children's safety at St Kenelm's Primary School and we believe children should learn and thrive in a safe and happy environment.

All staff are trained in safeguarding and how to identify children at risk. The EYFS follows the school safeguarding policy and KCSIE, undertaking annual refresher training and reporting concerns on CPOMS.

POLICY REVIEWED: September 2023

FUTURE REVIEW: September 2025

Signed: