



## Ashton St. Peter's Church of England VA Primary School

### Early Years Education Policy

Ratified September 2021

Update September 2023

#### **Statement of intent**

At Ashton St. Peter's Church of England VA Primary school, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for the future learning and development of all children.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the new statutory framework for the early years foundation stage that has been developed by the DfE, to ensure that each child has a positive and successful start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

We offer a curriculum that is rich in wonder and memorable experiences and we work hard to provide a high quality, stimulating environment that provides exciting opportunities, promotes challenge, exploration, adventure and a real love of learning, preparing children to flourish academically and spiritually, fulfilling their God-given potential.

It is our intent that all children will develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally in an environment that is grounded in a Christian ethos that values all cultures, communities and people. We aim to support our parents in raising their children as flourishing citizens, enabling them to deal with life's challenges with courage and perseverance.

We understand that play is an integral part of learning and this is at the heart of our early years curriculum. We believe that the correct mix of adult directed and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils. Warm and positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with our parents is key to our children's progress.

We recognise the crucial role that early year's education has to play in providing firm foundations to ensure a child's 'school readiness' and upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based.

#### **Implementation**

At Ashton St. Peter's Church of England VA Primary School we meet the welfare requirements laid down in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our children.

We prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions with adults and between peers. Trained and experienced staff ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to become confident communicators. Children are encouraged to become early readers through the teaching of Essential Letters and Sounds, which is our systematic, synthetic phonics programme, our Collins Big Cat reading scheme and through the enjoyment of books in our classroom. The children learn nursery rhymes and counting rhymes and develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching of Power Maths programme and exploration in the continuous provision. We encourage our children to become confident mathematicians, who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.

We have built our school environment to enable our children to strengthen their core muscles and balance through physical play. Children spend time outdoors in the natural environment in all weathers. They develop through wonderful, exploratory, sensory experiences in our mud kitchen, climbing frame and bike track. Our learning environment is adaptable in order to reflect children's interests and progression. The children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play.

Throughout their time in the Reception Year, our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals.

Our curriculum is taught through topics that are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors. Topics are supported by quality key texts. These are chosen carefully to encourage children's speech, language and communication development. We recognise the importance of our children knowing their own community, its history, landmarks and influential people / families, which we incorporate into our topics. All planning however, is flexible and responsive to children's needs so plans can be changed and adapted depending on children's interests.

We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education. We work hard to create strong partnerships between home and school. Parents are informed of the topics that their child will cover each half term and the vocabulary, books and skills that support it, so that they are aware of what their child is learning and how they can support them at home. We recognise the importance of parents supporting their child's reading journey and offer a phonics workshop to help the parents understand how their child is learning to read and short exemplar videos of how to read with their child. Parents enjoy using Tapestry to engage in their child's learning and share experiences from home.

## **Our Curriculum**

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, which has just been updated by the Government. Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice:

These are:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving.

These are called the prime areas:

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

Four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas.

These are called the specific areas:

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

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Ashton St. Peter's are three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

- 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

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

### **Observation, Monitoring and Assessment**

As part of the learning and teaching process, children are assessed in relation to their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These judgements are made on the basis of accumulative observations and in depth knowledge of the children acquired through ongoing assessment. Each

member of the team is responsible for monitoring the progress of the children in their group but overall monitoring is the responsibility of the teacher.

We carry out a home visit, a week prior to the children starting school and carry out the government's statutory baseline assessment within the first six weeks of the children starting with us. We use the findings of these two opportunities and ongoing observations to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year.

The early years team meet frequently to discuss the children's progress and any concerns we may have and then the class teacher and the headteacher meet half termly to discuss individual children's progress and attainment.

In the summer term, the class teacher, using all of the gathered observations and pupil progress data, produces the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which is given to parents to view. The class teacher also meets with the Year 1 teacher to discuss individual children and to share the EYFS profile. We find this helps the children to make a smooth transition to Year 1.

### Reporting to Parents

- We have an 'open door' policy and parents are welcome to speak to members of the team before or after school, or the headteacher as required.
- Parents are also welcome to email the class teacher using the year group email address.
- Three formal parent consultation opportunities take place in the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms.
- 'Look at our Learning' sessions take place in alternate half terms.
- At the end of the academic year parents receive a formal written report, which includes the EYFS profile.
- Additional opportunities are provided throughout the year for parents to celebrate their child's achievements, for example 'Art Gallery'.

### Impact

It is our goal that by the end of the foundation stage, each child will become:

- **A Confident Communicator** who can listen carefully in different situations, hold a conversation with friends and adults, ask relevant questions and use new vocabulary to explain their ideas and feelings.
- **An Independent Individual** who follows the school rules, sets simple goals and perseveres to achieve them, selects resources, manages their own personal needs and knows how to stay fit and healthy.
- **A Fantastic Friend** who can be kind, caring and helpful, show empathy and respect to others, work and play cooperatively whilst considering others' ideas and feelings.
- **An Amazing Athlete** who can show strength, balance and coordination when playing, move confidently and safely in a variety of different ways, and use a range of equipment.
- **A Talented Tool User** who can hold a pencil effectively, use a range of tools (for example scissors, cutlery, paintbrushes, tweezers, hammer, screwdrivers) safely and with confidence.

- **A Brilliant Bookworm** who can show a love for reading, use new vocabulary to talk about what they have read or has been read to them, read words and simple sentences (using single sounds and digraphs they have learnt).
- **A Wow Writer** who can write letters that are formed correctly, write words and simple sentences (using single sounds and digraphs they have learnt) that can be read by others.
- **A Master of Maths** who can show a deep understanding of numbers to 10, recognise patterns within the number system, subitise, compare quantities and recall number bonds to 5.
- **An Exceptional Explorer** who shows curiosity about the world around them, understands how to read and draw a simple map, and understands some differences between times and places.
- **A Compassionate Citizen** who helps to look after their community and care for the environment, knows some reasons why Dunstable is special, and has an awareness of other people's cultures and beliefs.
- **A Proud Performer** who can perform a song, poem or dance to an audience, retell stories with expression and confidence, and play a range of percussion instruments correctly and with good rhythm.
- **A Dynamic Designer** who can design, choose and safely use the resources they need to make their creations, talk about what they have made and how they have made it.
- **Scintillating Scientists** who are curious and inquisitive, investigate problems, learn how science works and discover why science matters in the world.

## MODERATION

- The Early Years Team uses the exemplification file within the Profile Handbook for the Early Years Foundation, as an integral part of the moderation process.
- The Early Years teacher attends the annual LA moderation training.
- The team moderate together, and with other local schools.
- The Early Years teacher participates in whole school moderation.

## Review Procedures

The School's policy will be reviewed:

- Every two year in September 2023
- If the School wishes to review the policy
- If amendments are required by the Local Authority

Ratified by:



Date: September 2021

Headteacher