

# St Peter's CE Infant School

## Foundation Stage Policy

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just preparation for the next stage, it is important in itself.

### Aims

At St. Peter's we are aware that young children will have had diverse experiences and will possess a wide range of skills and interests when they join our school.

We aim to :

- offer a broad and balanced curriculum in the Foundation stage.
- involve parents, who are valued as first educators of their children, as active partners in the learning process.
- take and build on what children can do and use and develop this as the starting point of their learning.
- offer learning based on first hand experiences inside and outside, as young children learn most effectively when they are actively involved and interested.
- provide opportunities for learning through a balance of child initiated, adult initiated and adult focussed activities.
- develop the confidence of each child, encouraging them to think for themselves and to be able to act independently.

We aim to provide a safe, caring, attractive and well organised environment where the children are given time to adjust to new routines and establish effective relationships with adults and other children. We encourage the children to enjoy school and learn from everything that happens to and around them. We believe that children who feel confident in themselves and their own ability have a head start to learning.

### The Curriculum

The curriculum for the foundation stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing the children's learning in the seven areas of the foundation stage curriculum. All 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, the *prime* areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

The four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design

The following learning activities and experiences for children are provided:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading material (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

## Observations and Assessment

### *Observation*

We make observations of children in order to:

- get to know each child, their interests, learning styles, responses and their emotional well-being.
- inform future planning.
- match children's interests in intended learning.
- record steps of progress.

We record observations through :

- describing an episode of a child's play, their actions, words and deeds.
- recording outcomes of work/play with photographs or photocopies.
- record short notes of significant learning moments.
- focused observations, where we gather information with a specific intention.

### *Assessment*

Assessment is making judgements about what a child currently knows, understands and can do.

We assess children in order that:

- children understand what is being learned and celebrate what has been achieved.
- teaching staff can provide a range of information, which helps them plan effectively to meet children's individual learning needs.
- parents contribute information about their child's achievement and progress, which will encourage their involvement.

Planning of the curriculum is informed by observations and assessments. Observations and assessment contribute to ensuring that all children are included and have equal access to the curriculum. Assessments are added to the child's Foundation Stage Profile and final assessments are made against the Early Learning Goals and recorded at the end of Foundation Stage in the Foundation Stage Profile.

## Partnership with parents/carers

We firmly believe that parents are a child's first and most enduring educator. We recognise that when parents and practitioners work together in Foundation Stage settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. A successful partnership needs a three-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. To ensure this successful partnership we aim to:

- show respect and understanding for the role of parents and carers in their child's education.
- listen to parents' accounts of their child's development and any concerns they have.
- make all parents feel welcome, valued and necessary through a range of different opportunities for collaboration between children, parents and staff.
- use the knowledge and expertise of parents to support the learning opportunities provided.
- keep parents fully informed about their child's progress and achievement through regular meetings and discussion about progress achieved.
- Providing parents with the opportunity to share their observations of their child's progress with the class teacher and contribution to their child's profile.