



Northern Lights
LEARNING TRUST

Early Years Policy



St. Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School

'To give all the opportunity to be who God created them to be and have fullness of life.'

Prepared by: Assistant Head/ Early Years Lead

Approved: NLLT Board and Local Governing Body

Signature Chair Local Governing Body: Colin Reid

Reviewed: Autumn 2023

Date of Renewal: Autumn 2024

Pastoral Care/Spiritual Development

The quality of relationships between all members of school, staff and pupils, and the relationship with parents/carers is integral to the ethos of the school.

We have a series of overlapping networks of relationships, which includes governors, staff, children, parents/carers and members of the community which the school seeks to serve. Our pastoral work will strive to create and maintain such. Those who are school staff and in particular those in leadership roles, which include all who have a particular responsibility, ensure that by their personal example they set the highest standards expected.

Pastoral care pervades all aspects of school life and therefore will be reflected in the way the school is organised and the way policies are written and implemented.

Our Shared Values

We respect and care for all members of the community, nurturing talents and creating opportunities for all in a supportive environment. We believe that it is through the nurturing of the children, they will become equipped to develop the beginnings of their own values and our vision:

'to give all children the opportunity to be the best that that they can be and have fullness of life'

We share a common set of values that underpin all that we do in our work at St. Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School.

These values are:

- Friendship and Trust
- Compassion
- Service
- Thankfulness

People involved in policy formation:

- Head of School
- NLLT Board
- Staff
- Pupils
- Local Governing Body

Statement of intent – Early Years

At St. Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School, our vision is:

“to give all the opportunity to be who God created them to be and have fullness of life.”

We are committed to ensuring that pupils feel happy, safe and secure and develop a love of learning in order to fulfil their potential. We will provide a stimulating, enabling environment for pupils to learn and encourage them to meet new challenges in a positive way to contribute to their own learning. Our curriculum is designed to celebrate each pupil and to provide a secure foundation on which they can continue their education.

Aims and Objectives

All staff in the Early Years Team meet the individual needs of all pupils by:

- Developing a language rich environment that supports communication.
- Having high expectations of all pupils.
- Encouraging and instilling high expectations within all pupils.
- Providing a stimulating and challenging environment for all pupils to learn.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend pupils' knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on pupils' learning needs.
- Valuing all pupils' contributions.
- Monitoring pupil progress and acting to provide support as necessary.
- Providing pupils with first-hand experiences.
- Encouraging pupils to become independent learners.
- Developing strong relationships between staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Valuing the cultural diversity within our school and community and promoting understanding and respect between themselves and others.
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Legal framework

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2004
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE 'School attendance'
- DfE 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE 'Health and safety for school children'
- DfE 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Structure of the EYFS

- At St. Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School, we operate on a foundation stage basis where our Nursery and Reception classes are integrated.
- We have high aspirations for all children, providing a stimulating learning environment, where children feel safe and secure. Our children learn through first-hand experiences and through play, following the children's interests and promoting resilience, independence and respect.
- To aid a smooth transition into EYFS, pupils and parents are offered – a home visit, staggered visits to school and a shared lunch in our family dining setting. Those children who are joining us in the autumn term, are invited to attend a Teddy Bears Picnic.
- Our nursery operates Monday to Friday, 8.50am to 3.25pm.
- Our reception children attend 8.50 – 3.25pm every day
- At the age of 3, children are entitled to a funded place of 15 hours per week.
- Nursery children can attend:
 - Each morning, 8.50am to 12pm.
 - Full time (30 hours if eligible) – Monday to Friday, 8.50 – 3.25pm
- The school gates and classroom door will open at 8.40am to allow for a relaxed and welcoming entry into school.
- In addition to a child's 15-hour entitlement, paid places are also available at a cost of £12 per session. A cost of £5 to cover childcare over the lunchtime period and the cost of a school meal will also be payable.
- Our environment enables children to explore and learn at their own stage of development. Children learn through a balance of adult led and child-initiated learning, and children's independence is developed so that they are ready for Year 1 by the end of the summer term.
- Nursery children who stay in school over lunchtime will take part in 'Family Dining'. In this time the children will eat in a small group with a practitioner focusing on teaching children table manners and the correct use of a knife and fork. During this time, children are appropriately supervised with a member of staff who is paediatric first aid trained.
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Curriculum

- Our early years setting follows the statutory framework of the EYFS. NLLT schools will adhere to the mandatory Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2023 and the EYFS Statutory Framework.
- The non-statutory Development Matters is used to drive the curriculum.
- There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our educational programmes in the early years setting. 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 the prime areas:

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

We also support children's development in 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

Four guiding principles shape our ambitious curriculum in early years. These are:

- 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** 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.
- The importance of **learning and development**. 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).

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **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.

Health and Wellbeing Curriculum

Oral health is promoted daily through involvement in a tooth brushing programme. A healthy eating curriculum strand exists and this is reinforced by the provision of a healthy snack and milk each day.

Each morning, children start their day in their 'Family Groups' where a dedicated member of staff spends some time chatting with children, in order to develop their vocabulary, and looking at their 'Me, My Family, My World' books. This time each day allows adults to check in with children, determining their frame of mind and addressing any concerns.

The school nurse is used to promote positive health within the Early Years setting and this includes teaching children good hand hygiene and supporting parents with toileting.

Planning

At St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary, staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children, in our nursery are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

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

The following planning is used in our Early Years setting:

- Adult led, question based, following the school's long-term framework and professional knowledge of what children need to know to make them Y1 ready.
- The curriculum has been mapped with carefully matched texts that have been selected to enhance and support learning.
- Foundations are built for subject specific areas and progressive learning is planned using s-plans which outline focussed areas across a half term.
- Child initiated learning, develops based on the interests of children and staff enhance the environment to meet the developing interests of all children.
- Focus on the end point of ensuring all children are eager to learn and are ready for Y1. There is a discrepancy between requirements of ELGs and the requirements of Y1, and so the curriculum addresses this, e.g. teaching capital letters finger spaces and full stops even though it is not required for GLD.
- A Language rich environment – focus on Tier 2 (high frequency words that occur frequently across different contexts) and Tier 3 vocabulary (low-frequency words which are limited to a specific domain and are best learned in the context of the subject matter).
- Teachers plan topic specific vocabulary and these are displayed in different areas of learning in order to support vocabulary development.
- Children's oracy skills are encouraged through the use of family time, where they can share their feelings with others, and during family dining, where children sit together to share lunch. Me, My Family, My World Books support children in communicating and sharing their experiences with others.
- Every child sees themselves as a mathematician. The Early Years Number Sense Programme is used to meet key elements of the educational programme for mathematics in the 2021 statutory framework for the early years' foundation stage. The programme also supports the assessment of the Early Learning Goals for Number and Numerical Patterns.
- In Nursery, children begin their phonics journey through the exploration of environmental sounds, and this gives them a good foundation to begin orally segment and blend words. Ambitiously, if nursery children are ready, then they being to learn the Phase 2 GPCs during the summer term. Little Wandle Letters and Sounds is used from week 2 of the reception year to teach children to decode as the only strategy to read unfamiliar words. We have an ambitious target of every child, with the exception of those with SEND, being able to read by Christmas. For those who are falling behind, daily keep-up sessions are provided.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

Assessment

At St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers and home visits provide opportunity for early identification of need.

At the start of the academic year, practitioners carry out a baseline on all children within the foundation stage, indicating whether they are on track to meet age related expectations in the aforementioned seven areas of learning. Statutory Reception Baseline Assessments are carried out in the first six weeks of the Autumn term.

The Welcomm early communication tool is used to identify children with language delay in their first few weeks of the school year, then WELLCOMM activities are used to address these needs.

Following baseline assessments, practitioners implement an appropriate broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. As per the EY reforms, teachers are not expected to keep vast amounts of evidence, but instead should be able to confidently talk about each child's development in detail, this can be achieved by continuously making on-going formative assessments, including:

- Daily practitioner observations
- Work in books
- Work in floor books
- Professional dialogues
- Conversations with parents/carers

At key assessment points throughout the year, practitioners review each child individually, indicating if they are on track or not.

In order to measure progress in phonics, Little Wandle Phonics assessments are carried out every six weeks. Any child who is identified as not keeping-up is provided with daily intervention and is re-assessed every three weeks.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, namely:

- C&L: ELG Listening, Attention & Understanding
- C&L: ELG Speaking
- PSED: ELG Self-Regulation
- PSED: ELG Managing Self
- PSED: ELG Building Relationships
- PD: ELG Gross Motor Skills
- PD: ELG Fine Motor Skills
- Lit: ELG Comprehension
- Lit: ELG Word Reading
- Lit: ELG Writing
- Math: ELG Number
- Math: ELG Numerical Patterns

- UTW: ELG Past and Present
- UTW: ELG People, Culture & Communities
- UTW: ELG The Natural World
- EAD: ELG Creating with Materials
- EAD: ELG Being Imaginative & Expressive

As suggested in the Early Years Framework, assessment do not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and are not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.

When staff complete the EYFSP, they consider all evidence collected and use their professional judgements to indicate whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers and the Y1 teacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures

There is no external moderation of the EYFS profile. The EYFS Handbook states 'Moderation of EYFS profile assessments should be a collaborative process with colleagues. This supports the quality assurance of teacher assessment judgements and provides a valuable opportunity for professional development.

In school moderations between practitioners in the Early Years, with KS1 staff and amongst the whole school staff take place regularly throughout the year. Cross-school, Trust and external moderations also ratify judgements made by teachers about the attainment of children.

Termly pupil progress meetings take place between EYFS practitioners and the SLT. During these meetings, professional dialogues are held, discussing the progress of children and the standards across the foundation stage. EYFS staff are held accountable through performance management objectives which are linked closely to the school improvement plan. Progress towards these objectives are discussed and evidenced at termly performance management reviews.

The Early Years lead meets regularly with the link governor for Early Years and reports back at governors' meetings as required.

Transition

During transition week children move up to the next year group in order to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Leadership of Early Years

It is the role of the Early Years Leader, under the guidance of the Headteacher to:

- Organise the delivery of the Early Years Curriculum and to ensure progression and development.
- Monitor planning and quality of delivery within the Curriculum.
- Keep abreast of developments within the Early Years and carry out Professional Development when required.
- Monitor and update resources and plan a budget linked to priorities.
- Liaise with outside agencies, partner schools, the Local Authority and parents.
- Contribute to the School Improvement Plan.
- Inform the governing body of any developments and impact.

Working with Parents/Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. 'Me, My Family, My World' books share information with us about a child's learning and development outside of school.

Each child is assigned a key person, their class teacher, who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to share any information which may impact a child's learning or development with school. Where possible, home visits are arranged prior to children starting our nursery setting, in order that important and useful information can be shared between home and school.

At the end of the Reception year, a written report will be provided to parents which summarises the results of the EYFS Profile. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss this with their child's teacher.

Safeguarding

At St Peter's Elwick CofE Primary School, the safeguarding of our children is our priority. All practitioners in the Early Years follow our whole school child protection procedures, recording as appropriate on CPOMs and reporting to our Safeguarding Officer.

All staff ensure the safeguarding of our children by adhering to the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Risk assessments are written in relation to specific areas of the EYFS and these demonstrate how we are taking reasonable steps to ensure staff and children are not exposed risks. The risk assessments identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

Appropriate Staffing

The lead practitioner within the Early Years is a qualified teacher and as such exceeds the minimum qualification requirements to work within the Early Years. All teaching assistants across school hold a level 3 qualification and as such are all sufficiently qualified to work in the Early Years.

Appropriate ratios are maintained at all times according to the DFE Early Years Document.

There is at least one member of staff who is paediatric first aid trained in the Early Years setting at all times, and this training is renewed every 3 years.

Equality of Opportunity

Early Years staff ensure that every child has equal opportunities and feel completely included. Staff ensure that children are not at a disadvantage because of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, ability, disability, special or medical needs. Consideration is always given to home language, family background and specific issues that may impact a child's learning or development.