



# St Paul's Church of England Primary School Foundation Stage Policy

**Adopted by: Curriculum and Achievement Committee**

**On: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

**Review: Autumn 2026**

## **Statement of Intent:**

At St Paul's we aim to lay a secure foundation for future learning. We engage children in learning from the very start and expect our children to leave us as happy, confident, and skilful communicators who are curious about the world around them. We aim to provide our children with knowledge, skills and experiences in a hands-on, holistic way so that all learning is embedded in a meaningful context.

All staff work hard as a team to create a positive, caring and welcoming atmosphere where the children feel secure yet are challenged to achieve their best. The emphasis is very much on helping individual children to achieve their full potential. We embrace the individual and all staff understand that each child is different, and their learning requirements and styles are unique too. By providing a high level of wellbeing this in turn leads to high levels of child development and the ability to create and think critically.

We provide inviting classroom environments indoors and outdoors to stimulate learners and engage them in developing the three 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' as set out within the EYFS.

We offer a practical, play-based approach to learning, based on the needs and interests of our children. This is delivered mainly through topic-based planning. We teach children individually, in small groups, in class bases and in whole cohorts. Through a combination of teacher input and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop.

We carefully plan our EYFS curriculum to meet the following aims:

- Foster a love of learning which inspires curiosity.
- Provide experiences of awe and wonder.
- Ensure all children have access to high quality learning opportunities.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the community and wider world.
- Provide parents/ carers with the opportunity to develop their child's learning at home.

## **The Curriculum:**

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected sections. The prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The 3 prime areas are:

**Communication and language** - Listening, attention and understanding - Speaking

**Physical development** - Gross motor skills - Fine motor skills

**Personal, social and emotional development** - Self-regulation - Managing self - Building relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

**Literacy** - Comprehension - Word reading - Writing

**Mathematics** - Numbers - Numerical patterns (\*)

**Understanding the world** - Past and present - People, culture and communities - The natural world

**Expressive arts and design** - Creating with materials - Being imaginative and expressive

(\*) We also teach shape, space and measures as required in the Statutory document

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus predominately on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. In Reception, activities are planned which give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum.

### **Phonics:**

At St Paul's we begin phonics in the Nursery and have developed a systematic approach to the teaching of early reading and writing.

In the Nursery practitioners use the Letters and Sounds Phase One games, which focus on the children's listening skills, rhyme and oral segmenting skills. These sessions are delivered to the whole class and to small groups of children depending on their level of development and readiness. As the children move through the year they are introduced to initial sounds of well-known words and are introduced to some of the Read Write Inc characters.

In Reception children begin phonics during their second full week in school using the Read Write Inc scheme. They are initially taught in whole class groups, with the Class Teacher and EYP each taking responsibility for the delivery of the phonics programme. At the end of the Autumn term the children's phonic skills are assessed and this assessment is used to group the children, across the phase, into four ability groups. These ability groups are reviewed regularly and children are moved according to their needs and development. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the only strategy used for decoding. The children start by taking home sound blending books and by Spring Term they take home RWI reading books.

### **Play and Independent Learning:**

We believe that independent and supported play, both indoors and outdoors, are fundamental to the way in which young children learn. Play can be enjoying and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk to rehearse their feelings

- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning.
- Narrating children's play.
- Asking questions about children's play.

### **Types of Learning in the Foundation Stage:**

We believe that children demonstrate their learning and understanding in a variety of ways. When observing and assessing the children's learning, practitioners will be mindful of the type of learning being demonstrated.

#### **Guided Learning:**

- The child is engaged in an adult initiated task e.g. guided writing/ reading and receives support from the adult to complete the task

#### **Independent Learning:**

- The child is engaged in an adult initiated task e.g. writing for a given purpose, but receives minimal support to complete the task

#### **Embedded Learning:**

- The child chooses to complete a task on their own which was previously introduced by the adult e.g. creating a number line after a maths based carpet session

#### **Self-Initiated Learning:**

- The child selects their own resources and uses them to create a piece of work/ play based on their current interest and stage of development

### **Classroom Organisation:**

We believe that children learn best in classrooms which are well organised, clearly labelled and easy to access. At St Paul's we immerse the children in print and vocabulary and ensure children have access to a range of good quality resources and materials, both in the inside environment and in the garden. Checks are made to ensure that all resources are safe and appropriate to the needs of the children.

Each Foundation Stage room will include:

- A creative area with a range of resources that can be accessed by the children
- A writing/ mark making area with a selection of tools including pencils, pens, felt tips and a variety of paper etc.
- A construction/ small world area
- A role play area e.g. a home corner, or topic based role play area

- A maths area with a selection of resources and games
- A well-stocked reading area

There will also be areas specific to the individual cohort's needs and individual practitioner's interests.

The garden area will include:

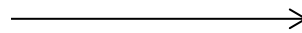
- A planned large physical activity e.g. bikes, hoppers
- A writing area, maths area and small world area
- Sensory opportunities e.g. sand, water
- Large construction materials including bricks and boxes
- Opportunities to explore the natural world e.g. planting, investigating
- Creative experiences e.g. large painting

### **Assessment Procedures:**

#### **Formative Assessment:**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place.

**Planning: What next?** Experiences and opportunities, learning environment, resources, routines, practitioners' role.



#### **Start here**

**Observation:** Look, listen and note. Describing what the children are doing and what they say.

**Assessment:** Analysing observations and **deciding** what they tell us about children.

We use a variety of observational techniques to gather information about the children's learning:

- Incidental observations – using iPads, video recordings, post it notes and photographs

A small proportion of assessment from adult led activities, such as phonics assessment, is used to inform next steps.

#### **Summative Assessment:**

At St Paul's we use a benchmarking document, developed in school, which accumulates into the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) at the end of Reception. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in all areas of learning.

As part of the summative assessment process the school completes an internal moderation three times a year (one per term) based upon the guidance from Hounslow LA. Each moderation focuses on an element of the curriculum based on the school's SIP (school improvement plan), current areas for development and areas identified by practitioners and the LA. This is in addition to the LA moderation timetable, which is shared in the Autumn Term of each year.

Data is collected by the Foundation Stage Leader and is shared with the SLT, Governors and the LA as requested. Targets, which are set at the beginning of the year, are reviewed by the FS Lead and the Class Teachers, and are amended to reflect the School's aspirations and the National Average for GLD.

A complete overview of the assessment process at St Paul's, with guidance for the completion of the benchmarking document, can be found in the Foundation Stage Assessment Cycle Document, which can be found on the school's data system.

### **Planning:**

At St Paul's we complete the following planning formats:

#### Yearly Overview:

We have a yearly overview which ensures that the children have access to a wide variety of experiences and teaching styles, with themes that excite and promote active learning. Themes are adaptable depending on the interests and needs of the children.

#### Medium Term Plan:

The medium term plan is completed at the start of each topic and identifies the weekly theme, key texts and learning experiences to be developed over the course of the half term/ term.

A copy of the medium term plan is sent home to parents with the half termly newsletter.

#### Weekly Plan:

A weekly plan is completed by the class teacher and is shared with all members of the team. The weekly plan identifies opportunities to develop the children's independent learning; adult led activities and focused teaching times. There are planned activities in both the inside environment and garden, which are linked to the children's learning needs and interests. Ongoing learning opportunities are also identified, for example resources available in the creative area for children to access independently.

Practitioners review the plan for each day and adapt the medium-term plan in response to the children's needs and interests.

A copy of the school's planning formats can be found on the data system.

### **Structure of the Day:**

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using Letters and Sounds (Phase One) and Read, Write Inc. Mathematics is planned for using the White Rose Maths Scheme. This document provides practitioners with an overview of what skills and concepts are to be taught and the amount of time to be dedicated to each area.

Significant time is given to the children's independent learning, when children can free flow between the indoor and outdoor learning environments. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further through questioning and modelling. They will also lead focused activities, with small groups of children completing tasks such as guided reading, guided writing, maths and topic-based activities. These focused tasks are designed to teach the children skills which can be used and embedded in their independent play.

An example of the daily routines:

<u>Nursery</u>	<u>Reception</u>
8:55 – Register and Adult input	8:55 – Register and Adult Input

9:15 – Independent Learning One	9:30 – Independent Learning Session One
10:15 – Adult Input	10:25 – Adult Input/ Assembly
10:30 – Independent Learning Two	10:45 – Playtime
11:40 – Story, Songs and Rhymes	11:00 – Phonics
12:00 – Home Time	12:00 – Lunch
	1:05 – Register and Maths
	1:30 – Independent Learning Session Three
	2:55 – Story, Songs and Rhymes
	3:20 – Home Time

### **Safety:**

Children’s safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children’s safety. Our EYP’s are paediatric first aid trained and all teaching staff have first response training. The school’s child protection procedures are clearly displayed around the school and all staff attend termly INSET sessions dedicated to current agendas and procedures.

We follow government guidance on the use of digital technology within the setting. Practitioners, visitors and agency staff are not allowed to use personal devices to record or photograph children and personal devices should be kept in lockers or out of sight during the school hours. There are class ipads for recording work.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food as part of our family service lunch arrangements, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

### **Parents as Partners and the wider context:**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child’s learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate in their child’s education and care in numerous ways including completing learning at home slips and bring your grown up to school events.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We aspire to give our children a range of first-hand experiences and draw on our links with the community to enrich children’s experiences by taking them on outings and by inviting members of the community into our setting. Records of these visits/ visitors can be found on the school website.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child’s needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

They receive a welcome pack containing information and complete an 'All about me' sheet. We also send home a pack of activities to support early reading, phonics and maths at home.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. Parents are also invited to attend an informal meeting with the KS1 team where routines, curriculum and expectations are shared. This meeting usually takes place in July before the children meet their new teachers.

Further information can be found in the Transition Policy.