

# St Paul's CE Primary School

Quarry Bank, Utkinton, Tarporley, Cheshire. CW6 0LA

Tel. 01829 732322 Email: [admin@utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk)

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Executive Headteacher Mrs K McLean Head of School: Miss S Simcock

## Early Years Policy

*"The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn."*

### Rationale

At St Paul's, we aim to activate and facilitate a child's own natural desire to learn, so that they may be able to 'learn to soar, powered by God.'

### Statement of Intent

'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 provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.' The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St Paul's, children can be accepted for a place the term after they reach the age of 2 ½ years and are admitted to Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Here at St Paul's, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

### Aims and Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At St Paul's, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

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- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

## A Unique Child

At St Paul's 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. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the settings and believe that every child matters. All children at St Paul's are treated fairly and with respect regardless of race, gender, religion, or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations in response to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience, and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

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- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy).
- Working closely with parents, carers, and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children from different ethnic groups.

## Positive Relationships

At St Paul's we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school on tours of the school and at transition meetings.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Inviting parents/carers and children to spend time in EYFS setting before starting.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding parent consultations early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns.
- Written contact through school newsletters each term and reading diary entries.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Regularly sharing the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in preschool and the reception year.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.

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- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as worship, stay and play and messy church workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school, and parents e.g. Mystery reader, topic outcome events.

If Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

## Enabling Environments

At St Paul's, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure, and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

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. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world.

We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

## Learning and Developing

### The EYFS Curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS.

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.

The three Prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language

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- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.
- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

## Teaching & Learning Styles

We ensure a high standard of teaching and learning by embedding the following measures:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement.

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- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching.
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors.
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school.
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

## Transition

Our Settling In Policy outlines how we support children starting preschool. We offer a bespoke package of support in order to make the child and their family feel as secure as possible. This includes home visits, stay and play sessions and visits outside of normal school hours.

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the setting.

## Safeguarding & Welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

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At St Paul's, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- To ensure that we work within the staff:children ratios and staff are suitably qualified.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture, and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## Keeping Safe

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Children Policy).

## Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment and observation is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff know children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, staff respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Observations are recorded on planning sheets and used to inform the provision. Learning journeys are shared via a termly display board.

Staff use Tapestry and a communication book to share key moments and next steps with parents and carers. Staff complete tracking sheets every half term and achievements and next steps are shared with parents at two parent consultations and an end of year report.



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Pupils in Reception take part in the DFE baseline assessment. At the end of the year, the EYFS profile is completed for each child and shared with parents, KS1 staff and the local authority.