



**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**  
**FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHIN**  
**QUEST**

**St. Peter's C. of E. Primary School, Hindley**  
**Hindley Green Community Primary School**  
**St. John's C. of E. Primary School, Hindley Green**  
**St. John's C. of E. Primary School, Abram**



May 2022

Review date: Summer Term 2024

**QUEST (A Church of England Schools Trust)**  
**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

This policy was reviewed by Trust Early Years SLE and staff during the Summer Term 2022.

This document is a statement of the aims, principles, practices and strategies of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum for children at schools within QUEST. It is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the principles, ethos and practices of the Christian faith and teachings, linking to the modern British values of life today.

### **Aims and Philosophy**

QUEST schools are all about passion, determination and enthusiasm. We see challenges as opportunities and have an unshakeable belief in the right of children to a high quality education.

At our schools we believe that a child's education during the early formative years is of crucial importance in shaping their attitude to education in later life. Our primary aim is to provide learning to develop their knowledge and understanding through opportunities for each child in all aspects of their being, within the stability of a warm, caring, safe environment.

We believe that children deepen their understanding through a range of learning situations including through skills based sessions where the children are taught new skills in their learning. There are then planned opportunities for the children to apply these skills when playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and each other.

We teach across the seven areas of learning using many varied, engaging, fun, interesting, motivating and challenging strategies. The areas of learning are split into Prime and Specific Areas and are as follows:

#### The Prime Areas

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

#### The Specific Areas

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

We believe in educating the whole child focussing on the characteristics of the way children learn. By exploring, being active learners, thinking critically and creating in a scaffolded environment, we offer the children experiences that will aid children to reach their true potential. (See Appendix 1)

An integral part of our pedagogy is built around Oracy, giving the children the skills needed to enable them to prosper through their education in our schools. Through our Plan, Learn, Review, the children are provided with specific opportunity to develop Student Agency, speaking about their learning and activities completed in the inside and outside classrooms, expressing themselves in full sentences. We believe that Oracy is the methodology to support the children in striving to achieve their potential in developing independent learners.

Our Early Years curriculum is built around reading and books. Through high quality texts linked to the theme for the half term, we immerse the children in their learning Teacher led sessions ensures the children are taught knowledge and specific skills in line with their development, which they can apply independently during Plan, Learn, Review through Student Agency.

Assessment is an integrated, vital part of daily delivery, both to inform planning and to meet the varying needs of the children. Analysis of children's knowledge, skills and understanding form opportunities for the children to master their next steps in their learning development. We will

maintain strong links with parents and carers to positively benefit and contribute to the education of each child.

### **Special Educational Needs and Differentiation**

The Individual needs of all children are taken into account when planning, to ensure that they meet their full potential within the Foundation Stage. Children who find learning difficult or need additional support will be referred to the Trust Inclusion Manager where the individual needs of the child can be addressed. The schools' Pastoral Co-ordinators are available to support the child and their families. Please refer to QUEST's SEN&D Policy for further information.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting Achievement**

On entry to our settings, the children are assessed through observation and using the National Baseline entry to Reception assessment. This baseline generates outcomes that highlight the children's strengths and key areas for improvement forming a gap analysis of development, which is used by school to inform next steps for teaching and learning in Early Years.

Observations of learning are part of every day practice to show evidence of each child's development. These observations show children's learning of new skills, practising and consolidating taught learning and application of these skills independently. They then help to inform planning and note any areas in which a child may be struggling in order to provide additional support. The assessments are also used in order to secure and then accelerate children's learning in the core basic skills and to support learning about the wider world.

These assessments are carried out through the teacher's knowledge of the children, where they are currently achieving and their next steps to make further progress. They may also be written, photographed, videos, through the children's own work and through observation of children's learning with others, which make up children's individual profiles.

Children's development will be shared with parents/carers throughout the year. This will be through twice yearly parent's evening, and through next steps in their learning, planned and shared when appropriate to build on skills at home. At the end of the year parents are given a written report detailing the child's achievement across all areas of learning and their readiness to move into the next phase of school. There will be an opportunity for parents to discuss the report with staff if requested.

### **Home Support and Parental Involvement**

Prior to their children starting school, parents/carers are informed of the school's expectations and invited to take part in INSPIRE sessions. All children and parents are expected to sign the home - school agreement – it is our way of committing to working together. Alongside the transition programme, including set activities by teaching staff and sessions in school, there will also be a meeting for parents and carers with the class teacher and pastoral coordinator to gain knowledge and understanding of your child in the home environment.

If at any time, the teacher or parent/carer is concerned about any aspect of the child's Reception Year, they are encouraged to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time in order to discuss and clarify the situation as soon as possible. Families have contact with the class teacher at the beginning and end of the school day through Class Dojo/My Child at School. This positive relationship supports the child in ensuring they thrive in school. Moments of home learning can also be shared with school through Class Dojo/My Child at School.

An appropriate reading book, that is closely matched to the children's phonic ability, is sent home each night together with a reading record for parents' and teachers' comments. Children will be heard to read in school each week either individually or as a group. They will also have access to online reading materials and activities through bug club.

Literacy/Mathematics challenges will also be sent home to support children's learning and extra information, ideas, games, puzzles and challenges are sent home where appropriate. At St. Peter's, St. John's Hindley Green and St. John's Abram, Bibles will also be sent home to share as appropriate throughout the year to support learning in class.

**The Spirit of Purpose**

The CEO, Director of Education, Principals and Directors ensure that all Early Years staff attend training at all levels in order to update their knowledge, further their understanding and ensure in all aspects of the Early Years Curriculum is exemplary. We are committed to learning for all in our Trust – adults and children alike.

This policy was reviewed with due regard to the Equality Act 2010 during the Summer Term 2022.

Signed

*S. Bruton*

CEO

## **Appendix 1 – Policy into Practice**

We translate our policy into practice in the following ways in order to achieve our aims.

### **Policy into Practice**

- 1) The Directors are committed to highly qualified staff in Early Years. Funding to support and develop school readiness is specifically targeted to need, to close gaps and accelerate progress.
- 2) Our transition sessions, open days and links with families, settings and professional agencies help us to identify any issues or concerns such as medical needs, learning needs, communication, attachment concerns, safeguarding and most able pupils. We will attend any formal review to support transition into school.
- 3) Each Reception Class has a staggered entry, ensuring the Early Years staff spend time getting to know individuals and helping the group to settle in.
- 4) Our classrooms are bright, clean and 'friendly' in order to welcome and immerse the children, staff and visitors in the learning. Each child is allocated a named Key Person and a coat peg to encouraging a sense of 'belonging'.
- 5) At any time the class teachers and staff will be the key point of contact for any questions, queries, concerns and for sharing great/positive news. The key stage/phase co-ordinator/Pastoral Coordinator and Principal are there to support parents/carers if needed.
- 6) Settling in, getting to know others and learning to be part of a larger group than at home can cause some challenges and concerns. Parents will be informed as quickly as possible where appropriate. Every effort will be made to learn from experience to ensure similar problems do not arise. We value the support from parents/carers as this social learning is a normal part of growing up and we are here to work together in the best interest of all children.
- 7) Settling in, routines and expectations of school will be stated simply and clearly so children know what is expected of them. This will often be reinforced visually, ensuring each child feels confident in carrying out instructions whether it is hand-washing, starting to write or using I-pads.
- 8) As St. Peter's Hindley, St. John's Hindley Green and St. John's Abram are Church of England schools, we believe worship should be an integral part of the school day. For Early Years children, we include a short time of class worship each day. This could be a short child-centred prayer, a chorus or a celebration of the children's achievements. Reception will join whole school worship as appropriate during the Autumn Term. We encourage children to take part with the rest of the school. Reception at Hindley Green Community Primary School will take part in class, phase and whole school assemblies each week, as appropriate through the Autumn Term.
- 9) Outdoor learning areas are provided for Early Years. This helps to integrate the less confident children into the larger playground. Junior Play Leaders organise specific activities for small groups of younger children in specific areas of the playground. In the very early days, a member of the Early Years staff will sit with the children at lunchtime to assist with social, physical skills and to reassure them.
- 10) The children will be assessed throughout the Reception Year in accordance with Government guidelines as set out in the assessment and reporting documentation for the EYFS. As a school, we complete the National Baseline assessment within the first two weeks of school. This information will be shared with parents/carers. This helps us to confirm children's strengths and key areas for improvement and comment on their readiness for school and seamlessly continuing their journey into Year 1.

**11) Teaching and Learning styles** - The Early Years staff plan and work closely as a team. They have evolved various 'themes' which provide the context for delivering the curriculum in a meaningful and exciting way. Each term a new 'theme' is introduced, for example, 'Me and My World'. Through the 'theme' children learn and develop their thinking, working toward the Early Learning Goals and beyond (higher attainers). The themes will change in line with the children's engagement to ensure they are completely immersed in their learning. We provide the children with opportunity to lead their own independent learning through the Plan, Learn, Review approach. This enables the children to plan and review, using of their communication skills, the activities that they would like to take part in during their independent learning. Through encouraging the children to speak in full sentences and modelling high expectations of use of language, repeating the correct use of English, gives the children opportunity every day to speak out in a group and listen to their peers ideas for their ideas and activities, enabling the children to have responsibility for their own learning and have the opportunity planned in to discuss and talk about what learning they are doing, supporting all aspects of communication and language. Plan, Learn, Review is the start of our approach to building Student Agency throughout school. Student Agency builds the children's independent learning skills, supporting them to learn from the teacher, apply their learning in different contexts and use their skills independently to achieve their next steps in learning. The children's independence is supported by the teachers who follow up with questions to challenge the children's thinking, application and learning. The independent skills the children learn in applying their learning are then built on throughout school.

At the heart of the curriculum is reading and the importance of learning to read. The children will be taught specific sounds, in line with the DfE approved synthetic phonics scheme Essential Letters and Sounds. When working on the specific sounds, the children will blend and segment the letter together to support their development of reading skills. These skills are then applied to the children's writing. The children are also read stories to immerse them in vocabulary, modelling the expectation of being a reader.

Our Trust digital strategy begins in the Early Years where the children have opportunity to use digital technology to enhance their learning. Through the use of websites and apps, the children use iPads to support, challenge and extend learning opportunities, whilst also preparing the children for the use of digital technology in learning throughout the rest of school.

Through high quality interactions with children and adults, the children's learning opportunities are enhanced through application of oracy skills in closing the vocabulary gap. When working alongside the children in independent learning times, the adults will facilitate excellent use of language to model, question and immerse the children in vocabulary.

Whilst appreciating the importance of implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum, we ensure breadth and balance across all areas of the curriculum by following the EYFS DREAM curriculum alongside the rest of the school (Depth of knowledge and understanding facilitated through Research, Enquiry and Analysis to ensure Mastery of skills). We use a variety of teaching styles to enable the children to succeed including; whole class sessions, small guided groups, personal challenges to move learning forwards and formal and less formal activities. Children are given opportunities to learn in areas of their choice, through continuous provision. Planned opportunities to enhance learning away from the classroom are provided, linked to the theme, to give our children a wealth of experiences to support their learning.