



**St Columb Minor  
Academy**



# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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### Our Curricular Aims

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to lay the foundation of learning, from novice to expert, across our strands of learning. Our curriculum carefully breaks down composite end points into small step components of learning. Leaders prioritise early reading. There is fidelity to the SSP (Read, Write, Inc) ensuring a strong start for all of our children.

In EYFS, all children take home a weekly book to share for pleasure from the class library. Staff promote reading books aloud to children at home and stress the importance of story time as a building block for reading development. Story books **stimulate children's imaginations and expand their understanding of the world**. We know that regular reading helps children develop language and listening skills and prepares them to understand the written word. Reading for pleasure is promoted through self-chosen books from the class library, this develops a love for storytelling and a passion for reading. We use 'Read, Write Inc' (RWI) to deliver our phonics programme.

Oral language development is key to children's development. Language development can be enhanced by the amount of spoken language a child hears and joins in with. Language comprehension is an important pre-requisite to children being able to understand what they read for themselves, when the teaching of phonics begins in reception. It's also important to later success with writing composition.

Our EYFS curriculum focusses on a practical, play based approach to learning, based on the needs and interests of our children which is delivered mainly through topic based planning.

Our curricular aims are:

- To create a culture of very high aspiration and enable every pupil to make excellent progress regardless of their starting point.
- To support every pupil to use language and numbers effectively, ensuring that every pupil develops a good level of early literacy and numeracy. By doing so, this will ensure that all pupils are well prepared as they move through the school to enable them to improve their social life, career prospects and social mobility in a rapidly changing world.
- To encourage in our pupils a respect for religious and moral values and tolerance of other races, religions and ways of life.
- To encourage, promote and foster independent learners and help them to develop their resilience so that they are equipped well to 'ride the wave of life'

### Intent

The intent of the EYFS curriculum is the content we expect children to learn. At St Columb Minor Academy our EYFS curriculum is taught with the consideration of the needs of all learners. Pupils learn about their world through nature play and outdoor learning. Pupils work within the EYFS framework but increasing emphasis is placed on the teaching of numeracy and literacy skills. What we want the children to learn during each term is carefully planned out for in each area of learning and we embed the children's interests within these. Our curriculum goes beyond the experiences of the classroom to ensure that our children are exposed to the richest and most varied opportunities that we can provide.

We want our children to develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. Our EYFS curriculum enables us to ensure that the children are at the heart of learning. Staff are able to follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout the EYFS curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure that children meet their next steps. We ensure that we work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points. Furthermore, our EYFS curriculum prepares children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage and ensure children make excellent progress from their starting points.

### Implementation

The implementation of the curriculum is how we go about teaching our curriculum. We want our pupils to 'know more' and 'remember more' and to be able to make links with their learning.

All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas in the EYFS curriculum:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We teach children individually and in small groups as well as teaching whole class. Through a combination of teacher input and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop their learning independently through exploration and challenge. Our learning environments, both inside and outside are stimulating and exciting and relevant to the needs and age/stage of our children. We aim for our curriculum to be exciting and to inspire children to nurture a passion for lifelong learning, encouraging inquisitiveness and confidence in our pupils.

Daily guided activities are set up and planned that cover different areas of the EYFS framework and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. Areas of need and next steps are identified for all children to ensure good progress is made. There are also a range of stimulating and engaging activities which the children can access independently and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play. In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. (*See individual planning for curriculum areas*)

Staff in the EYFS ensure that they carefully scaffold learning to ensure that children have time to apply their knowledge. Explanation, modelling and time to practise new skills are a key focus within our daily practice.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are embedded across the Early Years Curriculum and explore the different ways in which children learn. They highlight the importance of playing and learning, active learning and thinking critically. We utilise different characters from popular children's story books to promote and encourage the characteristics of effective learning. All the learning experiences we plan for the children allow them to utilise and develop these skills.

Staff support transition into Key Stage 1. Preparing children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of Reception and the start of Year 1.

#### Impact:

The overall impact of our EYFS curriculum can be seen first-hand from the children. We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be in line with National expectations (GLD). Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessment compares children's attainment to age related expectations using bands in the Development Matters. This is tracked to ensure rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND or who are disadvantaged. Assessment judgements are moderated both in school and externally with local schools. Experienced staff undertake moderator training through the LA which helps validate school judgements.

### Behaviour

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. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

### Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Meeting the needs of all children lies at the heart of EYFS.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all protected characteristics and pupils with SEND.

As detailed above, we meet the needs of all our children through:

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may involve using outside agencies (e.g. speech therapists)

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) we are committed to the inclusion of all children. All children have the right to be cared for and educated to achieve the best possible outcomes, to share opportunities and experiences and develop and learn alongside their peers. We provide a positive and welcoming environment where children are supported according to their individual needs. We recognise that some children may have additional needs that may require particular help, intervention and support. These needs may be short-lived for a particular time in the child's life or may require longer term support. At all times, we will work alongside each child's parents and any relevant professionals to share information, identify needs and help the child and their families to access the support they need. Where we identify that a child has additional or special educational needs, we will work in partnership with the child's parents to establish the right level of support. We use a graduated approach with four stages of action: Assess, plan, do, review. This is a continuous cycle. If a child isn't making expected progress despite interventions matched to their needs, we will consider involving specialists, if they're not already involved and we will make this decision in partnership with the child's parents.

The school SENDCO and class teacher will work in partnership with professionals such as educational psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and any other relevant agency to ensure that the child has a specific plan in place to support learning. The school will take direction from these external agencies and will support the child through making reasonable adjustments to the setting where possible and obtaining resources that will aid development.

### The role of Parents/Carers

We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school. We do this through our Learning Together Sessions. These begin in the term before the child starts school. Parents/carers attend these sessions with their children
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.

There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress annually.

- parents are invited into school throughout the year to look at their child's books and informally chat to the teacher about their child's progress
- parents are also invited regularly to Open Afternoons to join in with various learning experiences in a range of subjects
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances
- arranging for children to start school over the first week of term. We stagger the starting time of small groups of children over this period, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school
- encouraging the involvement of parents through newsletters and invitations to join class activities both within and outside of school, including open days and trips
- parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and show and tell opportunities by adding pictures and information to Dojo.

#### Transitions into and out of Reception

- The EYFS Lead visits all the nurseries, child minders and other Early Years providers to support transitions into Reception class. This enable conversations to take place with the child's key worker and for observations of the child to take place in a setting where they are comfortable and settled.
- 'Meet the teacher' is an Open Afternoon for parents to gain information about school, what they need to know and how to get their child ready for school. It is also an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
- Learning Together sessions – children and parents can stay and play. It is an opportunity to get to know staff and the learning environment as well as other children and parents.
- We have a staggered start in the first week of school in September which also supports the children to settle in a calm environment.
- Formal learning is introduced in the last few weeks of Reception to mirror the learning in Year 1. Transition meetings take place with the Year 1 teachers to support transitions and share information.