

Pope Paul Catholic School EYFS Curriculum

Intent

At Pope Paul School the Gospel values underpin our aim to provide an outstanding education for all. The uniqueness of every individual is nurtured and relationships are based on respect. We strive to create an environment where children develop their relationship with God and have a sense of belonging to a Christian community with Christ at the centre.

Our ambitious EYFS curriculum has been carefully designed to allow every child to develop independence, self-motivation, resilience and a readiness to embrace challenge. Our aim in the EYFS is to build strong foundations rooted in academic success, as well as moral and spiritual development, so that our pupils go on to be successful, active citizens of society and are happy, curious life-long learners.

We believe that children's early learning experiences deeply affect their future physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. We understand that building secure relationships with children and their families at the early stage is key to understanding how we can maximise learning opportunities for each and every child in our setting. We are fully committed to taking the time to understand and follow children's interests and provide a rich curriculum that supports learning, consolidates and deepens knowledge and ensures that children achieve their next steps. Both our indoor and outdoor provision is carefully planned and demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of the way in which our children learn.

We aim to support and nurture our children, so that they achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of their Reception year and make good or better progress, regardless of their starting point. Our ultimate goal is to prepare our children with the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of their learning journey in KS1. We understand that what our children learn in these vital first years of life will stay with them forever and that optimising children's early education is the best investment we can make in ensuring their future success.

Implementation

We believe that a child's transition experience into our school is key to achieving a happy, settled child from the very beginning. Our transition program starts each year by gathering information about every individual child. This is done where possible through: liaising with key staff at previous EYFS settings, visiting children both at home and at their nursery, talking to parents about their child's development, interests and where relevant, concerns and inviting new children and their families into their new school, to see their new learning environments and meet their teachers. This allows us to have a better understanding of the individual needs of our children and their different starting points and with this information in mind, we are then able to plan a range of tailored, broad and balanced learning experiences.

Our personalised EYFS curriculum meets the requirements set out in the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This document specifies the legal requirements for safeguarding, learning and development in the EYFS and provides the 3 Prime and 4 Specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum. Alongside our carefully sequenced Progression of Skills document, EYFS staff use their knowledge of each child, as well as formative assessments, to plan exciting and engaging activities that move the children's learning forward. This involves following a class weekly theme, where we take advantage of cross curricular links in order to combine transferable skills and develop a

wide-ranging vocabulary, which underpins the children's learning. This also includes following individual children's interests and making the most of focused moments, where the teaching and learning can be maximised in a one to one way with teacher and child. Each cohort creates its own unique blend of whole class, guided, adult directed play and child-initiated play activities, dependant on the nature and needs of the class of individuals.

We place huge importance on the development of children's vocabulary and ensure that staff are skilled in assessing early speech and language development and have the expertise to support children in being able to communicate their thoughts and ideas, and explore the meaning of new words. Children have lots of opportunities to facilitate their own learning through carefully resourced provision areas and adults support children through high quality interactions that challenge thinking and extend learning and communication skills. By giving learning a purpose and application, skills for reading, writing and solving mathematical problems are meaningful and more desirable.

Children in Reception learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking critically and creatively and this takes place both indoors and in our outdoor area. Our outdoor area is open all year round, in all but the most challenging weather conditions. Children make their own decisions about where they learn best and teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all areas of learning, both inside and outside.

At Pope Paul School, we use our own carefully designed systematic, synthetic phonics program to teach reading and writing skills; a wide range of physical and online resources is judiciously matched to support this. Every child has access to a phonics session every day, with enrichment opportunities for those who find this area of learning more difficult. We also use the phonics session to develop children's expertise in handwriting. A love of reading is instilled through regular story sessions throughout the day, weekly reading sessions with our Year 6 reading partners and by the daily use of our attractive, comfortable reading area, filled with new and familiar literature.

Staff provide effective and focused intervention for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. This is provided in an inclusive way and support from parents is also enlisted at an early stage to ensure that the children have every chance to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year.

As a Catholic School we follow the curriculum as outlined in the RE Curriculum Directory. 10% of our teaching time is dedicated to RE learning and is explicitly taught using the Margaret Carswell program of study. Opportunities to develop prayer are created through daily Special Prayer Time sessions and assemblies. Alongside the rest of the school, we are constantly developing opportunities for our pupils to develop their relationship with God and work for the common good. We celebrate pupils' achievements recognising their interests, strengths and God given talents. Reception fully participate in the Catholic life of our school, quickly learning the importance of caring for our common home, through regular opportunities to reflect and respond to the Laudato Si' encyclical. For example, joining in the whole school cross curriculum big question 'Who does the world belong to?' and thinking about how we can we make the world a better place.

The EYFS team collect evidence of children's learning through reflections made by staff during adult-led activities, observations, photos and videos; some of which are shared with parents using the Tapestry online system. This means that parents can engage with their child regularly about their learning and experiences at school and it also allows parents to contribute observations made at home.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are consistently tracked by:

- Baseline assessments
- Consistent observations and careful questioning
- Constant communication and questioning with the children
- Teacher led small step assessments.
- Phonic Phase 2/3/4 knowledge assessments
- Data collection, which informs our planning and interventions.
- Summative assessment in the final term directly related to Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.
- Parent Evenings twice a year to discuss each child's development.
- Yearly Individual Report for parents on their child's attainment and progress

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents, carers and staff with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they have not yet met age related expectations. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with their individual report. This informs the dialogue during transitions meetings between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs, and assists with the planning of activities in the early stages of Year 1.

Impact

We aim to exceed National and Herts expectations for children achieving a Good Level of Development during their time in Reception. We also strive to ensure that our children make more than the expected steps of progress from their starting points. The judgements of our school are moderated both internally, with other professionals from local schools and by moderation cluster meeting set up by Herts for Learning. This means judgements are secure and consistent with government guidelines.

Our children leave Reception with the knowledge and skills needed to fully access the Key Stage One Curriculum. They are confident, articulate, independent and happy learners ready for their next stage of learning.