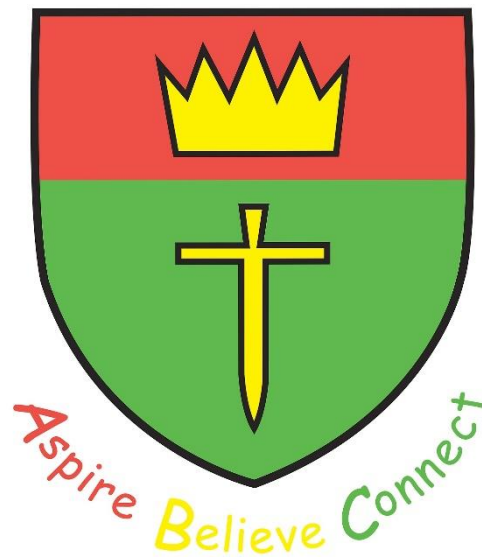


# St Oswald's Church of England Primary School



## Early Years Policy



Sitting below love lies our school's mission statement: *Aspire, Believe, Connect*. As easy as A, B, C, this statement is easy to remember and most importantly represents what we want our children to do in every aspect of their education and lives.

### *Core Christian Values*

The mission statement is underpinned by six core Christian values that each link to one aspect of *Aspire, Believe, Connect*. As children aspire to be the best they can be in every way, they will grow in wisdom. In order to believe in themselves and develop their own beliefs about the world around them, our children are taught about the importance of trust and strength on their journey. We also believe in the values of peace and friendship in helping us to connect with those around us.

### **Introduction**

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE 2023

Four guiding principles should shape practice in our early years setting. These are:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learning to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learning and developing well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefitting from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children developing and learning at different rates.

## **Curriculum**

At St Oswald's CE VA Primary we recognise that every child is unique. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We want our children to be independent and self-motivated learners, encouraging the children to adapt their work, think critically and take risks with their learning.

The foundation stage classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

This document defines what we teach and details the specifics of our setting and school.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and included in the curriculum taught. There are three prime areas, which are seen to underpin all of the basics and support the other more specific areas of the curriculum.

### **The Prime Areas of Learning and Development**

#### *1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

This area focuses on self-regulation, managing self and building relationships. This is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all other areas of learning.

#### *2. Communication and Language*

This area encourages developing competence in listening, attention and understanding, and speaking.

#### *3. Physical Development*

This area focuses on the child's developing physical control of their gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

### **The Specific Areas of Learning and Development**

#### *4. Literacy*

This focuses on comprehension, reading and writing. There is a heavy curriculum focus on Early reading, writing and comprehension which links to

our teaching of SSP for which we follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised.

#### 5. *Mathematics*

This area focuses on learning through practical activities and on number and numerical patterns.

#### 6. *Understanding of the World*

This area focuses on children's developing knowledge and understanding of past and present, people, culture and communities, in addition to the natural world. It forms the foundation for later work in Science, Design and Technology, History, RE, Geography and ICT.

#### 7. *Expressive Arts and Design*

This area focuses on the development of the child's imagination and her/his ability to communicate and express ideas and feeling in creative ways. It incorporates creating with materials, in addition to being imaginative. Creativity is fundamental to successful learning.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Through regular observations, we will discover children's interests and assess what children know. Also fundamental to our practice is to assess how children learn and it is our duty to report to parents their children's individual dispositions and attitudes to learning.

This will be assessed using the Characteristics of Effective Learning which are:

- *Playing and exploring - engagement*  
Children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'.
- *Active learning - motivation*  
Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.
- *Creating and thinking critically - thinking*  
Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

## **Planning**

Cornerstones Curriculum Maestro, White Rose Maths, Project Evolve and Little Wandle form the foundation of curriculum planning. Through planning, teachers ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. During child initiated activities the adults' role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Such interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning.

## **Direct Teaching**

At specific times across the day the children will take part in an input and activity that is teacher led. In Reception these sessions include: daily literacy lessons, maths/counting experiences as well as teaching new skills to support children's learning within the classroom environment. All taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and, in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

Through adult-led activities we can introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Direct teaching centres around Phonics, Literacy and Maths but other subject sessions are also planned for depending on children's learning needs. Children also have a daily story session. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc. Teachers plan sessions based on the children's needs and differentiate them accordingly. Children are active learners during these sessions and they are provided with skills which they can then go and practise independently. Adult-led learning can also take place during continuous provision and indoor and outdoor activities are planned to help address gaps in children's learning.

## **Learning Through Play/Planning**

Children's play/planning time reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. It is our belief that children need activities and experiences that they have initiated and play with peers is important for children's development. We carefully plan the environment both inside and outside and provide opportunities within these environments to reflect these interests to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that children have the opportunity to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching. Through planning children explore and develop learning experiences,

helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Giving children the opportunity to plan with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support this process enhances children's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. The children can also choose whether to work inside or outside during their independent learning time, it must be noted the access to areas is dependent upon staffing and ratios to ensure that safeguarding and health & safety are paramount and adhered to as appropriate.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress**

Assessment is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children's learning and development. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each child's level of understanding. These can be through observations, photographic evidence, examples of work and parental conversations. Assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during planning times when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and alter any future learning.

Observations are taken using the 'Evidence Me' app, which allows staff to take photos and make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying. From such observations we can ascertain what the next steps are for the children. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents during open door sessions, parents nights and through their own online access, which allows them to both view school observations and submit their own observations to their child's online learning journal.

On entry to the foundation stage a baseline assessment is carried out for each child and at the end of each term assessments are collated to track how well the children are progressing. In September 2021 the DfE implemented a new compulsory baseline check which must be completed for all children within the first six weeks of school. Each assessment is completed electronically through

a series of online questions and takes approximately 20 minutes per child. The school do not receive any data following this.

Daily formative assessment and the termly summative assessments then allow the children to be grouped according to their ability. Groupings are flexible and variable daily. Parent consultations are held in the Autumn and Spring terms to provide information about children's progress, to discuss the children's learning journey from Evidence Me and to talk about children's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps. These form the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school. On-going teacher assessments are undertaken in line with the Foundation Stage Profile and these form the basis for the end of year report to parents.

### **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**

At St Oswald's CE VA Primary we value the diversity of all children at our school. We believe that all our 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. Assessments and teacher observations are used to identify children who may have specific needs within the first half term following admission. Results of assessments are used to ensure that a differentiated curriculum is offered to such children to meet their needs. For more information, we have a Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy which is available on the school's website.

### **Safeguarding and Children's Welfare**

Children learn best when they are happy and safe. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023 Guidance. Our school has rigorous Safeguarding and welfare policy and procedures that are used to identify anyone at risk or harm of radicalisation that sets out clear procedures for reporting any concerns.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to teach children that, in society as in a classroom, there is a need for boundaries, rules and limits which we all need to adhere to help us to stay safe. We aim to teach children to be consciously aware of their feelings and the feelings of others and how to manage their own behaviour by identifying behavioural issues and using them as a teaching moment. We also aim to teach our children to take risks



whilst learning how to recognise and avoid hazards. Should accidents occur an emergency contact form is completed for all children on entry into school, which includes medical, personal and social details. Other than minor cuts and bruises, all accidents on school premises are recorded on the school online tracking system and parents are informed via first aid stickers or telephone calls for more serious injuries or any head injuries.

Reception also has its own set of risk assessments, these have been read by all staff members and are reviewed frequently. Staff in Early Years perform daily checks of the environment to ensure it is safe.

### **Induction**

Parents of children who are offered a place in the foundation stage are invited to a short induction meeting in summer term. Parents will be given information about their child's class, staff, uniform and general routines. All children (including those new to the school) will be invited to visit their new class before they start and class based staff will either visit them at their nursery setting or have a verbal discussion with their key workers within nursery around any pertinent information for each child.

### **Partnership with Parents and Carers**

The school recognises the importance of establishing effective relationships with parents/carers in ensuring the children achieve their full potential. Parental involvement is actively encouraged. Staff ensure that parents are well informed about the curriculum their child is experiencing through our range of communication platforms: school website, My School App, facebook, Evidence Me, See Saw and through our open door mind set, at St Oswald's. Staff take the opportunity at the end of the day to talk to parents about significant achievements or any concerns. Throughout the year, parents are invited to attend workshops that help support their child's development at home. Parents are also invited to attend a praise and celebration worship at the end of each week.

### **Home learning**

We value the importance of home learning and all staff work closely with parents/carers to ensure they feel confident supporting children's learning at home. At each parents' evening, staff provide activity suggestions for parents to use at home to meet their child's targets. We also provide set regular homework/activities for parents to complete with their children. Specific activities set for reception can be found within the 'Homework Policy' which can be sourced on the school website.

**Equal Opportunities**

Staff ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. They will be encouraged to respect similarities and differences within cultures other than their own. The school seeks to develop tolerance and concern for others.

**Monitoring**

The Early Years Leader is responsible for the monitoring of this policy. Areas for development will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan as necessary.