

St Paul's Way Foundation

Early Years Policy

October 2014

Introduction

This policy outlines the provision St Paul's Way Foundation offers to all its pupils aged three to five years. Children within this age range are taught in The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The Foundation Stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate Key Stage. Early childhood education is valued in itself and should not be seen merely as a preparation for the next stage in learning. This policy has been informed by DfE documentation and Tower Hamlets Local Authority.

St Paul's Way Foundation vision:

St Paul's Way Foundation children will be skillful communicators, with confidence to participate in activities. Through active learning they will engage in exploration and observation to become independent learners. Our children will be motivated to take on challenges, have their own ideas and develop inspiring visions for their futures.

Rationale:

'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.' (EYFS, 2014)

It is a single framework for care, learning and development. All children should be given the opportunity to experience the best possible start to their education to develop solid foundations which will ensure that they flourish throughout their school years and on into adulthood.

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

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
 - children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
 - children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
 - **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- (EYFS, 2014)

In Reception, a high quality, well resourced, integrated early education should make a positive contribution to this distinct stage in a child's development. In planning and guiding

children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
 - **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
 - **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.
- (EYFS, 2014)

Rich, stimulating and appropriate experiences will provide each child with opportunities to develop these skills, their competencies and their thinking to the best of their ability across all areas of learning.

Purpose

- **Communication:**
Our children experience a rich language environment to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.
- **Investigation:**
Our children have opportunities to explore, investigate, question and find out about people, places, technology and the world around them.
- **Participation:**
Our children form positive relationships, have respect for others and the skills to be part of groups.
- **Networking:**
Our children have opportunities to become involved in activities within the local community, to visit places of interest and to develop the skills they need for life through real, 'hands on' experiences.
- **Scholarship:**
Our children are motivated, they have their own ideas and they enjoy achieving what they set out to do.
- **Vision:**
Our children are willing to 'have a go', they enjoy meeting challenges and they have lots of ideas.

The Unique Child

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, at varying rates.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by staff provide opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. As children all develop differently it is recognised that a significant lack in achievement after the initial settling in period represents initial concern and careful monitoring. Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents, SENCO, and advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service. In

the Foundation Stage we give all children the opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their range of life experiences, and abilities when planning for their learning. Some children with special educational needs may be identified before entry to school, through liaison with other agencies. Information is also exchanged through links with Pre School and parents. Any child identified with special educational needs that are not deemed to be met by the existing curriculum will follow an Individual Education Programme which will specify differentiated provision. Hearing impaired children receive an individual education programme which will include using specialist staff.

We meet the needs of all our children 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 to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Equal Opportunities

All areas of provision will be made accessible to all children regardless of age, sex, gender, creed, race, ethnicity, or ability. Children are encouraged to explore different pathways, which gives them a better understanding of the world around them.

Transition and Settling In

Transition from Pre-school /Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes and to have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may want to express.
- The children are invited to a number of visits throughout the year to their reception class. The first visits are with their pre-school settings, allowing the children to feel secure in the new environment. In the summer term the children visit at least once without the support of the pre-school practitioners or parents.
- Members of staff from St Paul's Way make links to feeder settings. The number of meetings/visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.

During the first two weeks of term Home Visits are carried out where parents and children can feel at ease in their own home and are able chat to practitioners in a less formal way.

Transition from Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the school, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals (ELGs). The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, if they are exceeding expected levels, or if they have not yet reached expected levels ('emerging').

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. Children entering Year 1 start the National Curriculum. The first term of Year 1 is a transition term between the EYFS and KS1.

Settling in to Nursery and Reception

Children start nursery and reception in small groups over two weeks. Initially, in reception, they may attend school just for the morning, this will increase to include lunchtime and then full day. This is repeated for afternoons. Parents are requested to be available during this settling in time. Links with home are supported through the use of photographs taken during the home visit and the use of familiar toys and resources. Staff make detailed observations of children at this time and use these observations to record a brief settling in diary for each child, which is then shared with parents.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in our school are 'safe'. We aim to teach and model for children 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 our children.

At St Paul's Way Foundation we understand the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. We will:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs

- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Please refer to the separate Health and Safety Policy.

Positive Relationships

Our children will develop to be strong and independent through their many relationships with others, at St Paul's Way Foundation we do this through:

Partnership with Parents

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and the school work together, the result has a positive impact on the child's development and learning. We value the role of the parent in their child's education. We seek to develop an effective partnership with parents in the following ways:

- An induction meeting for parents in the Summer Term
- Parents receive a school information pack containing consent forms and a school prospectus
- Parents are invited to further meetings during their child's first term at school
- Parents are encouraged to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns. There is also an opportunity for parents to meet the teacher formally each term
- Children will take home reading books regularly to be shared and enjoyed with their parents. We value parent's positive comments on their children's reading
- Parents are encouraged to share significant events or achievements with teachers to contribute to their child's learning journey
- Individual reading, writing and numeracy targets are shared with parents in the Spring Term parents' consultation sessions, and sent home when updated.

Key Person

Each child is assigned a key person from the staff team in EYFS. The role of the key person is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

Attendance, bringing and collecting children

All children must be brought to school and collected by a responsible adult.

- To protect children, we will not allow them to go home with anyone under 16 or anyone not known to the school.
- If an unfamiliar adult is to take a child home, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school as soon as possible of who will be collecting the child.
- For children's safety, we will not let them leave with anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- It is important that children are brought to school on time and are collected promptly at the end of each day.

Safeguarding

The well-being of the children in our care is our first priority. Our school procedures for safeguarding children are in line with the guidance provided in:

“Working Together to Safeguard Children” (HM Govt 2006)

“Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” (DCSF, 2006)

“Keeping Children Safe in Education” (Dfe, 2014)

and the procedures outlined by the Tower Hamlets LSCB which formally adopted the All London Child Protection Procedures issued by the All London Child Protection Committee (LCPC) in 2007

The designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding issues at St Paul’s Way Trust School is Jan Iley.

We have members of staff who will act in the designated teacher’s absence and are part of the safeguarding team:

Mrs Hannora Loveday, Headteacher of the Foundation School

Ms Vanessa Mansfield-Taylor, Student Achievement Coordinator

Mr Novak Ivanovic, Director of Learning – Head of Infants (Infant site)

Please see the St Paul’s Way Trust School policy for the Safeguarding of Students which is available on the school website.

Health and Safety

Please see Foundation School policy for further details.

At St Paul’s Way Foundation there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2014, we undertake:

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child’s needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child’s parent and/or carer. A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and the child’s parents and/or carers are informed on the same day
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children’s’ dietary needs are recorded as part of each child’s home visit and acted upon when required.
- A first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy are in place.
- To provide further information for staff, parents and visitors, stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.

Fresh fruit, water and milk are available to children throughout the day. All children are encouraged to be independent in serving themselves.

Lunch times

We have a 'family dining' experience at lunch times. The EYFS team sit with the children at tables and serve them directly from dishes. Children use paper napkins and are shown how to use cutlery in the correct way. Adults encourage children to develop their confidence with conversation skills and vocabulary through talk at each lunch table. All our children get a delicious hot meal which is nutritious and balanced. There is always a different choice for a main meal.

Managing Behaviour

Please see 'Positive Behaviour' statement for more details.

We develop children's behaviour by praising their good behaviour and achievements. We expect all children to behave well and be polite to other children and adults, whilst recognising that young children can be boisterous when playing. We aim to help children learn the importance of respect for other people's feelings, opinions and property. We do this by showing them appropriate ways to behave, teaching them to take turns and challenging behaviour that is unacceptable in a firm but caring manner. Parents will be informed if a child's behaviour is a cause for concern. Our aim is to develop self discipline and respect amongst the children. Offensive language, bullying, name calling, racist and cultural remarks, are unacceptable and all staff will deal with incidents in a serious manner. We also expect all adults using the school to behave appropriately whilst they are on the premises and be role models for the children.

Sickness and Injury

If children are too unwell to stay at school then their parents or carers are immediately contacted to collect them. If a child sustains a head injury, even if it's just a bump, our policy is to phone the parents to inform them in advance of collection as to the nature of the head injury and if it requires any further treatment. Accidents forms are completed thoroughly and copies are given to parents on request.

Enabling Environments

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and 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.

There are areas where the children can be active or take things more quietly. The classroom covers all learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own large enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the ability to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their

current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journeys.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Assessment & Record Keeping

In accordance with the EYFS Framework, regular observations of the children are carried out. These enable staff to monitor both the learning that is taking place and the provision to support each child's learning needs. Early Years value the complete child; therefore, all subjects are treated equally. Each class teacher keeps an assessment folder and data is recorded both electronically and in the Class Assessment Files. All children have a Learning Journey Folder that provides evidence of a child's time in the Early Years, progress throughout the curriculum and next steps in the learning. All parents, carers, staff and children contribute to these.

At the end of reception, each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Learning and Development

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments. (Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The Three Prime areas are described as crucial for building capacity to learn, they are:

- **Communication and language** which involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** which involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** which involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The four specific areas:

- **Literacy** development which involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of

reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

- **Mathematics** which involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** which involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** which involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

This takes place collaboratively between the teachers and other staff involved in EYFS. This includes the learning activities linked to learning intentions and assessment opportunities.

The planning process is as follows:

- Observations are made of children's interests, achievements and needs from which assessments can be made.
- The team plans weekly responding to observations and each class teacher adapts those weekly plans to suit their own class. Plans are evaluated daily in order to inform 'next steps' for children. This is a whole team approach.
- The EYFS identifies three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. Children are involved in investigating and encouraged to 'have a go'; they can concentrate and keep on trying and they can develop their own ideas.
- The learning environment is planned for both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive, inquisitive independent attitude to learning. The children make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent and self-directed learning. They also take part in activities planned as adult focus activities each day.
- Topics and themes are planned which come directly from children's interests. These can be broad ranging and diverse.
- Medium term plans are in place for every half term. They take into account adult led and child initiated opportunities which are topic based and include cross curricular links.
- Literacy and maths carpet sessions are planned for daily to meet the needs of Reception children. A robust phonics programme operates alongside shared reading and writing. Guided reading groups for children start in December.