

# POLICY



## 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

November 2024  
Review November 2026  
Responsible Person: Director of Early Years

## **QUEST (A Church of England Schools Trust)**

### **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

This policy was reviewed by the Trust Director of Early Years in the Autumn Term 2024.

#### **Introduction**

*All schools within QUEST are committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

We believe that our children learn best in an inclusive environment where they feel nurtured, comfortable, safe, secure, and where they are appropriately challenged. It is important that our families feel welcomed and valued as they are an important part of their child's learning journey. We acknowledge that the children across our trust come from a range of ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and work to ensure that their wide variety of needs are met. Play is a vehicle for learning at this age and it is how they embed skills taught through adult led sessions. Purposeful play is designed to engage, excite and develop skills. Play opportunities are carefully planned and child-centered, reflecting in children's interests. We believe that all the foundation stage areas of learning are vital to the holistic development of each child and that the characteristics of effective learning underpin successful development. Learning is best achieved when children feel safe and secure, have high self-esteem, are actively involved, and have the confidence to take risks.

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**

Across QUEST we work together to:

- Provide high quality opportunities for children to develop in all areas of learning both inside and out.
- Enable each child to reach their full potential; emotionally, physically, social and intellectually.
- Ensure that each child has equal opportunities to experience success and joy in their learning with our inclusive settings.
- Celebrate and share children's achievements.
- Provide an ambitious curriculum based on play that challenges and encourages exploration and experimentation through direct experiences.
- Develop positive, open and effective working partnerships between home and school.
- Encourage independence, develop thinking skills and provide opportunities for children to make choices about their learning.
- Encourage collaboration and positive interactions.
- Create a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

## Objectives

The outcomes of the policy are to be seen every day in our work across our Foundation Stage settings across the trust. We will be able to judge its success through what our children know, what they can do and understand, staff and pupil interactions and the quality of learning and the environment.

An environment and curriculum which:

- Is highly ambitious and challenges our pupils
- An environment that offers rich opportunities, is clean, well organised and purposeful and changes with the interests and needs of the children.
- Access to both indoors and outdoors throughout the day.
- Provision that is clearly defined and that offer age-appropriate learning resources.
- Provide practical, hands-on experiences and visits, purposeful play opportunities, visits and high-quality speaking and listening opportunities.
- Provides ready to access high quality resources which encourage children to develop independence, to make choices and to take responsibility.
- Encourages and enables children to develop physically, emotionally, academically, and socially.
- Allows children to think for themselves, to develop self-care and responsibility, to communicate and to form positive relationships with staff and peers.

Children who:

- Are happy and confident and have high self-esteem.
- Are engaged in purposeful play which is often child-initiated.
- Are enthusiastic and involved in a variety of learning experiences.
- Interact positively with adults and peers.
- Make choices about their learning.
- Are enquiring, inquisitive and increasingly independent and resilient.
- Confidently explore both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Embrace challenge and take risks.
- Meet their personal targets.
- Can concentrate and demonstrate perseverance and determination when learning new skills.
- Show evidence of their learning by confidently expressing their thoughts and ideas.

Staff who:

- Interact positively with children, each other and parents/carers.
- Recognise learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors that present themselves through children's activities.
- Are adaptable and creative.
- View parents/carers as partners.
- Are explicitly aware of equal opportunities and inclusion issues.
- Deliver an ambitious curriculum, assess to ensure learning and progression, and evaluate progress, engagement and provision.
- Actively promote all the school's policies.
- Are sensitive to children and families' individual needs and situations.
- Work collaboratively with outside agencies and colleagues.
- Encourage children's autonomy.
- Have a strong understanding of child development.
- Observe, reflect on and document learning to ensure that children's learning opportunities are maximized.

Health and Safety is always of prime consideration and the following measures are taken to ensure safety both indoors and outdoors:

- Equipment is regularly inspected by the staff to ensure that it is not hazardous.
- All new activities are risk-assessed.
- Accidents are recorded in medical books and via school procedures.
- Medicines are recorded and administered in line with the school's policy.
- Staff are kept informed of changes in current legislation and practice by heads of school and the Director of Early Years.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We ensure that each child has equal opportunities to experience success and joy in their learning within the context of our multi-cultural and inclusive setting. We do so by providing opportunities for all children to develop in all the areas of learning within the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage.

The curriculum reflects in its objectives, content and activities the fact that we live in a multicultural society and also reflects the social make-up of the setting. Our curriculum is planned with specific children in mind, taking into account the children's individual achievements, interests and learning styles. In addition to the curriculum, classroom resources are carefully selected to portray positive images of all groups in society irrespective of race, gender, sexuality or disability.

### **Parental Partnership**

At QUEST trust, we believe parental involvement is central to good educational practice. We encourage parents to participate in their children's learning at home and at school – through, for example, cooking and gardening together, playing games, singing, talking with their child about their day, joining us on trips, and reading with their child. Any parent who wants to volunteer their skills at school is always welcomed once they have completed the induction process.

Staff are available at the beginning and end of each day to share news, information, any immediate concerns or to arrange appointments to discuss situations in further detail.

Parent and Carer/teacher conferences and information meetings are offered a key time over the year to facilitate better relationships between parents/carers and staff and to discuss and share the skills and processes children are learning and obtaining.

For home learning, an appropriate reading book, that is closely matched to the children's phonic ability, is sent home each week together with a reading record for parents' and teachers' comments. Children will be heard reading in school each week either individually or as a group.

Literacy/Mathematics challenges will also be sent home each week to support children's learning.

At St. Peter's, St. John's Hindley Green and St. John's Abram, Bibles will also be gifted to the children to welcome them in their faith school. This will allow them to link the learning they will do in class and support their understanding of Christian teachings.

## **Transition**

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 program, including set activities by teaching staff and sessions in school, there will also be a meeting for parents and carers with the class teacher 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 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.

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

The foundation team is made up of a number of different staff with a variety of roles and responsibilities. At any one time the team may contain one or more teachers, learning support assistants and special needs assistants. Effective teamwork is essential to the smooth running of the foundation stage. Each member of the team should be active and involved in the interests of the children both indoors and outdoors as well as play their own vital role:

The teacher has overall responsibility for:

- The quality of interaction between children and adults in their group/class.
- Planning and delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements.
- Delivering high quality learning through our ambitious curriculum.
- Planning for and guiding support staff.
- Overseeing all record-keeping, assessment, progress, target-setting, evaluations, and report-writing.
- Ensuring health and safety requirements are met.
- Setting up and maintaining the environment.
- Identifying children with Special Educational Needs, liaising with outside agencies, and delivering Individual Educational Plans.
- Fostering good relationships with parents/carers.
- Ensuring that the children have access to appropriate high-quality, purposeful resources.
- Leading the team to ensure outcomes for children.

The teaching assistants are responsible for:

- Delivering the curriculum alongside the teachers through meaningful interactions with children
- Being a part of formative and summative assessments.
- Providing a safe, secure, and stimulating environment.
- Contributing to planning, interventions and provision based on observations of children.
- Setting up the learning environments.
- Displaying children's learning.
- Forming positive relationships with children, staff and parent/carers in the setting

## **Personal Staff Development**

The CEO, Headteachers and Trustees ensure that all Early Years staff attend training at all levels 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 Autumn Term 2024.

Signed: M Doyle

CEO

## Appendix 1 – Policy into Practice

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

### Policy into Practice

1. The Trust is 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 teachers spends time during the summer term as part of our transition programme ensuring the Early Years staff spend time getting to know individuals and helping the children to settle in.
4. Our classrooms are developed using the curiosity approach. They are cosy, accessible, welcoming and have been consciously designed to reduce visual noise to support learners. Our environments have clearly defined provision which allows children to access resources independently.
5. At any time, the class teachers and staff will be the key point of contact for any questions, queries, concerns and for sharing positive news. The key stage/phase coordinator/Pastoral Coordinator and Headteacher 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 handwashing, starting to write or getting their lunch.
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-center prayer, a chorus or a celebration of the children's achievements. Reception will join whole school worship as appropriate during the Spring 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, from the Spring Term.
9. To support our Early Years children at lunchtimes we have Junior Play Leaders who 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.

**Teaching and Learning styles** - The Early Years staff plan and work closely as individual teams and as a team across the trust. Our weekly focus comes from the needs of the children and our key text as part of our highly ambitious CUSP curriculum. Opportunities and experiences are planned to ensure that children are engaged in learning and have opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills. 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. Our staff design teaching in a way that builds the children's independent learning skills, supports 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.

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.

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.