



# St Saviour's School Early Years Policy



December 2016

## Core Purpose

'We are committed to strengthening our learning community and developing each young person as an individual and responsible member of the community and seek to empower individuals to enjoy an enriched and active life.'

*Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. ('The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE March 2014).*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school all children join us on a phased introduction at the beginning of the school year in which they are three (Nursery) or four (Reception).

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- 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;
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

## **A Unique Child**

At St Saviour's School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first years at school, the children are introduced to the learning habits. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mindset. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

## **Inclusion**

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at St Saviour's School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement. Teachers plan adult directed activities and provide opportunities which enable all children to access the learning and to achieve as highly as possible. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs policy.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and 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 through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. Through citizenship teaching and the nurturing programme we provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Saviour's School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners (Partners in Building a Future)**

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts at our school;
- inviting the children to spend time, play and stay sessions, with their teacher in the classroom
- before starting at school
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in the first two terms to discuss their child's
- progress
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each
- school year
- encouraging parents to contribute observations to Learning Journeys
- sharing our approach to reading
- inviting parents to a curriculum meeting where the topic/ learning is explained

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

We have good links with the local feeder playgroups and nurseries, regular visits are undertaken throughout the year. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Saviour's School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated activities reflecting where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

## Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS starts with the Long Term Plan. A weekly focus is based on the learning objectives linked to the EY curriculum and shared with all EYFS staff. Planning is displayed within classrooms so it can be accessed by all adults and parents. Planning folders are shared routinely with SLT and Professional Partners. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children. Activities for Letters and Sounds are planned and delivered daily throughout early years and KS1 to support phonics and early literacy.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of forms in the children's individual learning journey books and on Early Excellence Tracker. They also contain information provided by parents. In Reception, each child's progress is also recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the ELGs (Early Learning Goals).

Both informal and formal moderation form part of our assessment practice. Discussions and support from external moderators occur during the autumn and summer term. Nursery submits data on entry to the department and Reception submit end of year data.

## Learning and Development

At St Saviour's School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

## Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

### PRIME AREAS

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication & Language

### SPECIFIC AREAS

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas are delivered throughout the learning and linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The EYFS classes have their own outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

## Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning 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.

**Date to be reviewed: December 2017**