

## Early Years at The Federation of Priddy and St. Lawrence's C of E Primary School

### Intent

We aim to uphold the four guiding principles of the EYFS (unique child, positive relationships, enabling environment and learning and development) when implementing the seven areas of learning and development. We recognise that all children are unique and celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. Children are constantly learning and need to be supported to develop resilience and a sense of self confidence and belief. We aim to develop this at our school through positive, nurturing and supporting relationships, which foster independence and a growth mindset. Emotional health and wellbeing is key and we aim to equip children with the skills to recognise, name and establish strategies to deal with their feelings. We strive for a 'family' environment where children can feel safe, secure, valued and develop a lifelong love of learning. We pride ourselves on our ability to foster excellent relationships with parents/carers to ensure they are fully involved with their learning and know what they can support them at home. We aim to provide effective and transition from home to preschool, preschool to reception and reception to year 1 as we understand that children learn when they feel safe and happy to do so.

We aim to provide carefully planned and well-structured and enabling environments, where adults intervene appropriately to teach and build on key skills and interests. We ensure our staff are well skilled and have an in-depth knowledge of child development. We recognise the gap between language and vocabulary and the attainment at the end of primary school and further on. We aim to close this gap and ensure children gain the best start in life. We aim to provide a fully inclusive, ambitious and progressive curriculum, and acknowledge that every child develops and learns at different rates. We aim to ensure as many first hand experiences as possible and provide regular enrichment opportunities through visits and visitors to our setting.

### Implementation

Our EYFS unit is based at St. Lawrence's Primary School and consists of a Preschool Class (Saplings, 2yrs +) and a Reception Class (Oak Class). The EYFS operates as a unit and although Preschool and Reception have separate classrooms, there are planned opportunities to enable them to mix learn and play together. This also aids transition from preschool to reception. Children also share a purpose-built outdoor area and have regular, free flow access to this throughout the day.

We use Development Matters 2021 and deliver the educational programmes for Early Years through the seven areas of learning and development.

The 3 prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

- ❖ Literacy
- ❖ Maths
- ❖ Understanding the World
- ❖ Expressive Arts and design

The seven areas of learning are delivered through a careful and appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning.

### **Continuous/Enhanced Provision**

Children have regular, independent access to range of open ended, high quality resources, that enable them to interact, engage, explore and investigate both inside and outside. We call this 'Discovery Time' as we feel this raises the profile of learning through play in the environment.

We have created our own play plans, which are based around the Early Excellence play plans released in September 2021. We have adapted these plans to meet the needs of our children at Priddy and St Lawrence's. They indicate resources that are continually available and possible enhancements to extend and challenge. We carefully consider the 'why' behind our continuous/enhanced provision to ensure we are meeting specific needs and stages of development We ensure resources are challenging and provide opportunities to use and apply the Characteristics of Effective Learning – playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically. Our play plans indicate level resources, using the Common Play Behaviour model promoted by Alistair Bryce Clegg (EYFS specialist).

### **Curriculum**

Through our in-depth knowledge of each child and ongoing formative assessment (from home/Tapestry and school), the EYFS team plan exciting and engaging activities that strive to move the children's learning forward.

As a school, we have a 'big question' each term which encourages children to use their imagination, respond, and explore their own thoughts. The big question is woven into our long-term plan. However, we ensure flexibility in this plan to meet the interests and needs of our cohort. Each year provides its own unique blend of learning.

We set high expectations for our children and have 7 Curriculum Goals across Oak and Saplings class. These curriculum goals are ambitious, challenging and ensure clear progression throughout their time at preschool and in then in their reception year.

Throughout Saplings, there is high emphasis placed upon the three prime areas of learning which underpin all of the learning throughout Early Years. We are passionate about creating opportunities for children to communicate and develop their language and communication skills. We strive to immerse our children in new and ambitious vocabulary daily and ensure quality, frequent interactions take place with our EYFS practitioners.

Communication and Language is at the forefront of our practice. We have regular opportunities for stories to be read every day and these texts are progressive across the EYFS phase. Where possible we start all our lessons with a quality text.

In order to ensure that children are ready to succeed beyond our Early Years, we adopt a more formal approach to learning throughout the Reception year, whilst maintaining a balance of child-initiated play and planned independent learning experiences and challenges. There is a shift to focus more on the Literacy and Mathematics areas of learning to ensure that all children achieve their Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year.

We use RWinc as our core phonics scheme and in Oak Class and children have daily phonics lessons. Children begin Nursery RWinc from the summer term. In Mathematics, we use NCTEM Mastering Number, which focuses on ensuring children have a deep understanding of numbers up to 10. This is supported by White Rose Maths materials, to ensure quality delivery of Shape, Space, and Measure. Lessons increase in length as the year progresses.

Outdoor learning is at the heart of our curriculum and we are inspired by the following quote: "*The best classroom and the richest classroom is roofed only by the sky*" by Marget Mc Millan

We aim to promote a 'Growth Mindset' and use the power of 'Yeti' i.e. you can't do it yeti to instil independence, resilience, self-belief and confidence, whilst ensuring high levels of well-being, involvement and engagement. Our goal is for all children to feel supported, to take managed risks, to learn from mistakes, practice and refine new skills and to be challenged in order to reach their full potential. Children are encouraged to talk about how they are feeling and the importance of learning skills to 'name and tame' their emotions. Wellbeing is our utmost priority and we talk freely and openly about strategies to help our mental, physical and emotional health. In addition, children in Reception have weekly PSED sessions using our whole scheme SCARF. We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and mutual respect. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families and involve them in every aspect of their child's learning journey. We hold regular termly Stay and Play sessions in school and Parent Workshops to encourage parents to work in partnership with school to support their children's learning and development. We also use Tapestry Online Learning journey which enables parents to talk with their children about what they are doing and school and add their own observations.

### **Impact**

We are proud of our children and the achievements they make whilst they are in the EYFS.

Our children are independent, confident and secure and the majority of our children achieve a good level of development by the end of their time in the EYFS. We have good parental engagement and strong links between home and school. We recognise that parents are their child's first and most enduring educators and strive to enable parents to support their child's learning at home.

Our children are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and keen to share their ideas and thoughts. Teamwork skills are strong and children are supported to name their feelings and have clear ideas of how to manage them. They develop excellent independent skills and keep on trying hard, particularly if they encounter difficulties.

Our assessment is rigorous and timely and support is implemented to ensure no child is left behind. Our staff are highly skilled and have good knowledge of child development. This ensures we close the gaps quickly and provide challenges to children according to their need and skill development.

Above all, our children are happy and have a love of learning.

**As a happy, healthy and safe young person leaving The Federation of Priddy and St. Lawrence's, every child will:**