



School Christian Values

Generosity, compassion, courage, forgiveness, friendship, respect, Thankfulness, trust, perseverance, justice, service, and truthfulness.

Bible Reference

Luke 10: 27 'Love your neighbour as yourself'

Policy References

This policy is written with reference to the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Curriculum and Teaching and Learning policies
- Marking Policy
- PSHE and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) Policies
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy and Able Gifted and Talented Policies
- Assessment Policy
- Single Equalities Policy.

Most of these policies are available on the school website. In addition, copies of the following policies are available, on request, from the school office.

Early Years Handbook 2021-2022

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Vision

At Skerton St Luke's, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is key to lay solid foundations that children can build on. It is our intent that the children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude and behaviour to become life-long learners, within our school and the wider community. We believe that all children deserve to be valued as an individual and we are passionate in allowing all children to achieve their full, unique potential. We begin each new year by looking at the individual needs of each child considering their different starting points. We then carefully develop our enquiry based EYFS Curriculum which enables them to follow the path of their learning journey, at a point, that is suitable for their unique needs and stage of development to achieve their full potential.

Ofsted

Findings from our most recent report – June 2018.

The overall judgement for Early Years provision is **Good** and a strength of the school.

- Children thrive in the Early Years.
- The early years area of the school has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection, due to effective teaching and strong leadership.
- Barriers to learning are dealt with quickly and efficiently so that children make good progress in their learning. Consequently, the proportion of children who gain a good level of development has increased each year and is above the national average.
- Different groups of children, including disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress. Those children who enter the school with stronger skills and knowledge are helped to excel. As a result, the proportion of children who exceed the early learning goals is also improving steadily over time.



- Observations of children learning, plus a review of their books and assessment records, show that they are more than ready to take on the challenges of Year 1. Children are cooperative, attentive, and willing to work hard. They are keen to write and happily put their strong phonics knowledge to good use when spelling and reading new words. They know number patterns and they are confident enough to calculate the answer to simple problems mentally.
- The well-organised and attractive environment supports children's learning well. The outdoor area, a relative weakness at the previous inspection, is an exciting, purposeful, and stimulating space. The activities on offer encourage children to be curious, to use their imagination and to talk about their ideas.
- Planned activities are shaped effectively to meet children's learning needs and their interests. Consequently, visitors to early years are greeted by a hive of activity, an air of concentration and many smiling faces. Adults work together seamlessly to support learning and to check on children's progress. They tune in well to children's play and ask good-quality questions to promote their knowledge and skills. Adults are very adept at modelling language. This expands children's vocabulary and encourages them to communicate with confidence.
- Children respond well to the warm relationships that they enjoy with early years staff. Good role modelling from adults and their Year 6 buddies means that children treat each other, the environment, and their equipment with respect. They behave well, follow careful routines, and keep themselves safe.
- The early years leader has been instrumental in engineering the good-quality provision that children encounter each day. Her vision is shared by the early years team, which responds positively to the support and training that are offered to improve their skills further. Opportunities for parents to visit



the classroom and to see their children at work and play underpin the positive partnerships in place between home and school. Good links with the many nursery settings that children attend before beginning at St Luke's mean that children settle quickly and happily into school life.

- Staff adhere closely to the welfare requirements and the school's safeguarding procedures to ensure that children are safe and secure.

Our Curriculum

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** sets standards for the learning, development, and safety of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS statutory framework, including childminders, preschools, nurseries, and school reception classes.

The EYFS framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and care. It gives all professionals working within Early Years settings a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education experiences to all children. As well as being the core document for all professionals working in the foundation years, the EYFS framework gives parents confidence that regardless of where they choose for their child's early education, they can be assured that the same statutory commitments and principles will underpin their child's learning and development experience. At Skerton St Luke's the teaching and learning of the curriculum is practical and playful. There is a balance of adult-led directed learning, teacher taught sessions as well as a wealth of stimulating continuous provision experiences and opportunities, which allow for child led enquiry.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Foundation Stage curriculum is made up of seven areas of learning, all areas are of importance and inter-connected.



Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are called the **prime areas**, they are:

- Communication and Language (C&L)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

The **four specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:

- Literacy (Lit)
- Mathematics (Maths)
- Understanding the World (UTW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Early Years providers plan an educational programme that involves experiences, and opportunities for children, to develop in each area.

- **Communication and language development**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling, and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

- **Personal, social, and emotional development**

Children's personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm, and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to



understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate, and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

• Physical development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy, and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination, and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination, and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control, and confidence.

• Literacy development

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems, and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech before writing).

• Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space, and



measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

- Understanding the world

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries, and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses, and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically, and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

- Expressive arts and design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear, and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary, and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to, and observe.

Planning

We consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The **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

All learning is based on children's strengths, needs, areas for development and interests. There is an overall theme each half term



with each week's planning and learning experiences and opportunities linked to a challenging text to respond to reading in a variety of unique ways while developing knowledge, skills and understanding across the seven areas of learning.

Our learning environments, both inside and outdoor are adapted and enhanced regularly to meet the different and developing needs of the children. We aim to ensure that these areas are stimulating and exciting and that, importantly, they are accessible for all children, regardless of where they are on their learning journey. The environments are developed to promote independence and resilience and to allow our children to access the curriculum independently and confidently with the necessary level of support and challenge.

Early Reading and Phonics

Phonics is taught daily on entry to school in Reception through to Year 2, and beyond where necessary, using a Lancashire scheme Red Rose Letters and Sounds. It is a systematic approach to build children's speaking and listening skills as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed, systematic, and progressive programme for teaching phonics, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven.

The schools reading scheme is Big Cat Collins which is aligned to our chosen Phonics Programme Red Rose Letters and Sounds. This runs from Reception through to Year 6 to ensure every child has the opportunity to excel in reading using a scheme to ensure consistency, progression, and transition between year groups. eBooks can be accessed at home for families to read together reading for pleasure as well as practice with family codes being shared on entry to school.





Mathematics

White Rose Maths is the scheme to teach Maths at Skerton St Luke's. It is taught daily in YR through adult led teaching input, challenges in Continuous Provision and games and play in Reception. It continues into the National Curriculum from Y1 to Y6 to develop number sense, calculating, problem solving, shape and space, time, and measure. The skills are embedded through a consistent approach, models and images and use and application in meaningful contexts to allow the children to become "Masters" in Maths.



Supporting children with SEND

We provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Children with SEND are provided with learning opportunities that are matched to their individual needs. Additional intervention packages are also used for any child who may need it with early targeted support. Children that require additional support with their speech and language will be identified and referred to Speech and Language Therapy for assessment early on in the Reception year with the parents agreement to ensure every child has every opportunity to achieve and exceed in our learning environment.

Use of Technology

Children use computing and technology daily in Continuous Provision to develop their use and skills of laptops, cameras, iPads, remote controlled cars, etc, but also as a tool to play games to enhance



learning in other areas such as Phonics, Maths and Expressive Art and Design.

Assessment and Recording

On entry all children undertake and complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) administered by the class teacher. Data is automatically sent to the Local Authority and recorded to measure the progress seven years later to assess attainment during a child's primary education. Alongside the RBA, a School Baseline is completed on entry in each area of learning to act as a starting point for every child, pre-school information is carefully considered and used to support school's judgement, alongside information shared by parents/carers. This provides the evidence for future planning to ensure all children make good progress from their starting point and to provide every child with every opportunity to achieve expected outcomes at the end of the Reception year. Key learning and wow moments are evidenced in a class area of learning floor book. Termly assessments take place in Literacy, Phonics, and Maths to show where the child is currently working within each area and to monitor and track pupil progress. Phonics Tracker is firmly embedded to identify gaps in Phonics knowledge through the phases. The document "Principles into Practice" is used to inform/support teacher judgement alongside the revised "Development Matters 2021" to ensure National consistency of standards. Termly data is collated on a spreadsheet to track individual, and cohort progress. The children identified as not on track and not meeting age related checkpoints in identified areas of learning receive early intervention and individualised learning. End of year data is submitted to the local authority as to whether a child is expected or not expected for all 17 Early Learning Goals and discussed with the Year 1 class teacher as part of the transition process.





Parents are encouraged to be a part of this process by celebrating their child's achievements outside of school. The revised "What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents" booklet is shared on entry to school. This is a parent's guide to "Development Matters". Wow slips are used for parents to contribute to their child's learning journey to provide an overall profile of the child.



Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of children's work and the quality of teaching in Early Years is the responsibility of the Reception Class teacher, and Early Years leader. Regular book looks, pupil interviews, monitoring of planning and lesson observations ensure evidence of the quality of Early Years teaching and learning. Early Years is monitored by the Curriculum Lead, Assistant Headteachers, Headteacher, and the School Advisor. Regular attendance at EYFS Network meetings ensures practice is up to date with local and national guidance and ensures consistency and sharing of good practice across Early Years settings in the Lancaster and Morecambe Cluster.

Transition from Pre-School

Once places are confirmed, the transition from a child's pre-school setting to Skerton St Luke's begins. Every child is sent via post a school postcard welcoming them to our school from the Class teacher and a welcome letter to parents from the Head teacher. The Class teacher during the summer term will contact and liaise with pre-school providers to arrange visits for each child in their setting where they are confident and familiar. The Class teacher spends time getting to know the child in their current setting and holds transition



meetings with Key Workers, Managers and SENCOs to begin to build a profile of the child, their strengths, areas for development, characteristics, personalities, and interests. Pre-school visits to school are arranged during the months of June and July for the children to access school. During these visits, the child will spend time in the Reception classroom and outdoor learning environment, continue to build a relationship with the Class teacher and meet the other members of the Early Years team that work as Key Workers alongside the Class teacher. The children visit in their pre-school groups to allow for familiarity of friends. To model play and relationships, half of the current Reception class remain in the classroom to offer guidance and friendship. Parents are invited to attend an Information evening in May to meet and greet the Early Years team, staff in school and are provided with a school pack containing everything you need to know for your child starting school in September. A selection of Year 5 pupils that become Year 6 buddies to the children are present to offer tours of the Reception classroom, learning environments and the school. In July, there is an opportunity for the child to attend Story and Rhyme time and this allows all children starting school to come together as a class with the Early Years team.

Families are invited to attend school events such as our Sports day and our annual summer fundraising event during the summer term to build up familiarity and a sense of belonging to our school family before the children start school in September.

We also host a coffee morning for families to attend. The children get to stay and play while parents can meet other parents, continue to get to know the Early Years team and see their children happily settle and play alongside their peers and new classmates.

Refreshments are provided.

In September, before the child starts school, the Class teacher and a TA will make home visits to ensure the child and parents are ready for starting school, continue to build positive working relationships



and for the child to familiarise themselves with the adults they will see on their first day. It also allows additional time to share information as to any changes that have occurred over the summer holidays and for questions to be asked to make the experience of starting school a positive, memorable event.

Transition into Year 1

Throughout the year the Early Years team work closely with the Year 1 staff moderating and viewing samples of work together. We liaise and hold regular discussions regarding each child to build a picture of where each child is at, their interests, strengths, areas for development and how the child learns best. Consistency and fidelity to Red Rose Phonics, Early Reading and Maths scheme ensures continuity of learning which aids the transition for all pupils in the specific areas. The Year 1 staff during the summer term visit children in the Early Years area and once relationships have been built, Reception class visit the Year 1 learning environment for story and rhyme time to become familiar and comfortable within new surroundings and to continue to build relationships. Parents are invited to an Information afternoon held by the Reception and Year 1 teacher in the summer term for parents to get to know Year 1 staff with the Reception staff present for familiarity. Outcomes from the EYFS Profile are shared with the Year 1 teacher along with the child's end of year report that is shared with parents as a formal record of the child's achievements and level of development at the end of Reception year. All of the above allows for a smooth transition to Year 1 which has been a school priority since Summer 2018.



Glossary

ELGs – Early Learning Goals - End of Year expectations at the end of the Reception year

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage – Curriculum for children up to the age of five

RBA – Reception Baseline Assessment

SEND – Special Education Needs and Disability

TA – Teaching Assistant