



## 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 2020-2021

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## Vision

At Skerton St Luke's, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is crucial in securing 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 learning, 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 our children considering their different starting points. We then carefully develop our flexible 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.

## 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

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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.

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- 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 care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS, 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 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)

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- 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 activities, experiences, and opportunities for children, to develop in each area.

- Communication and language development 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 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 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
- Literacy development 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

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- Mathematics 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 measure
- Understanding the world 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 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.

## Planning

We consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our 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

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 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.

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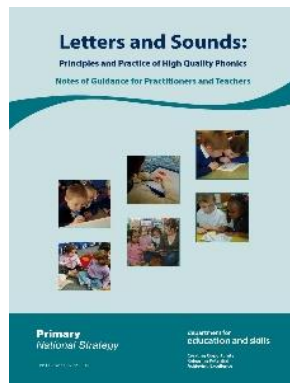


Our learning environments, both inside and out are adapted regularly to meet the different and developing needs of the children. We aim to ensure that these areas are stimulating and exciting and that, importantly, they are accessible to all children, regardless of where they are on their learning journey. 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 using the scheme 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 and systematic programme for teaching phonic skills for children starting by the age of five, with the aim of them becoming fluent readers by age seven.

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



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## Mathematics

White Rose Maths is the scheme we teach in our school. It is taught daily through games and play in Reception and it continues into the National Curriculum from Years 1 to Year 6 to develop number sense, calculating, problem solving, shape and space, time, and measure. The skills are embedded through a consistent approach, 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 exceed in our learning environment.

## Use of Technology

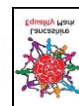
Children use computing and technology daily in Continuous Provision to develop their use and skills of laptops, cameras, iPads, remote controlled cars, etc. but also as a tool to play games to develop learning in other areas such as Phonics, Maths and Expressive Art and Design.

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# Assessment and Recording

Children are assessed continuously through accurate observations and discussions. A Baseline is made 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. 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. Learning is evidenced and a portfolio is created for every child. Termly assessments take place in Phonics and Maths through practical, play activities and the Learning Journeys used as evidence to show where the child is currently working within each area. The document "Development Matters" is used as an assessment tool to inform/support teacher judgement to ensure National consistency of standards. Termly data is inputted into iTrack to track individual, group and cohort progress.



Parents are encouraged to be a part of this process by celebrating their child's achievements outside of school. Every parent receives a "What to expect, when?" booklet on entry to school which is a parent's guide to "Development Matters". Wow slips are used for parents to contribute to their child's learning journey.



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## 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, monitoring of planning and lesson observations ensure evidence of the quality of Early Years teaching and learning. Early Years is monitored by the Deputy and Headteacher in school and the School Advisor. Regular attendance at 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 your 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 Head teacher. The Class teacher during the summer term will contact and liaise with pre-school providers and arranges to visit each child in their setting where they are most relaxed and confident. The Class teacher spends time getting to know the child in their current setting and holds transition meetings with Key Workers and Managers 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, your 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 both work as Key Workers alongside the Class teacher. The children visit in their pre-school groups to allow for familiarity of friends and to model play and relationships half of the current Reception class remain 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

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September. A selection of Year 5 pupils that become Year 6 buddies to your children are present to offer tours of the Reception classroom, learning environments and the school. In July, there is an opportunity for your 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 all 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 your child starts school, the Class teacher with 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 a Phonics program, an 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

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and to continue to build relationships. The Year 1 staff and EYFS team plan and deliver a summer term project whereby the children in Reception and Year 1 learn together with the classes split to access both classrooms and outside learning environments over a two-week period. 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 receiving 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

**SEND – Special Education Needs and Disability**

**TA – Teaching Assistant**

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