

# Priestley Primary School

## Early Years Policy

Reviewed Summer 2021



### Curriculum Intent Statement

Our aim is to provide our children with an engaging, exciting and empowering curriculum that equips them for today and tomorrow. At Priestley Primary School, the curriculum is designed to: recognise children's prior learning, provide first-hand learning experiences, allow the children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become aspirational, creative, critical thinkers. Every child is recognised as a unique individual. We celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values with a vision to prepare them for life beyond primary school. We constantly provide enrichment opportunities to engage learning. We believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in our lives, where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a thirst for new experiences and knowledge. We use our Priestley Values in order to learn like Spikey (Respect for All, Give it a Go, Cooperate, Take Responsibility, Share Great Ideas, Stay Focused, Think Things Through) to promote positive attitudes to learning which reflect the values and skills needed to promote responsibility for learning and future success. Children leave Priestley with a sense of belonging to a community where they have the skills to make decisions, self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners with the confidence to explore life in modern Britain.

### Mission Statement

Placing learning at the heart of all we do by working in partnership with children, parents, staff, governors and the wider community to provide a safe, happy, stimulating and purposeful learning environment. High expectations are set so that all children are challenged to achieve both socially and academically.

### Teaching & Learning

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- Learning and Development

#### A Unique Child

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set challenging expectations based upon a secure knowledge of our children and a clear identification of their needs. We achieve this by planning for the individual and acknowledging the different requirements of those with special educational needs, the more able and those with disabilities.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning challenging activities based on observation and knowledge of individual children with a purposeful identification of the "next steps" which will benefit them;
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary
- Working closely with parents and communicating effectively with them about their child's progress.

#### Positive Relationships

At Priestley we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from the experience of secure relationships.

#### Our Staff

We aim to be the best possible role models for the children and develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with them and their families.

#### Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are the children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers play, as well as their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- a carefully structured introduction to the school even before the child has formally started
- talking to parents before their child starts in our school and arranging Home visits in the first two weeks of them starting school

- having an “Open Door” policy, actively encouraging the early discussion of concerns.
- keeping parents informed of the curriculum and events through newsletters, our website and online journals.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Priestley School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

The classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Although children will be designated a class and Teacher, Ducklings and Goslings operate as a unit thus enabling children to work across both classes, for specific subjects and during the afternoons. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We have our own well-resourced outdoor area which is used throughout the year.

### **Learning and Development**

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 inter-connected.

#### Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

#### Three Prime Areas:

Personal, Emotional and Social Development. (PSED)

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

Communication and Language. (CL)

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

Physical development

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

#### Four Specific Areas:

Mathematics.

- Numbers
- Numerical patterns

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word reading
- Writing

Understanding the World

- Past and present
- People, culture, and communities
- The natural world

Expressive Art and Design

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning:**

All areas of learning and development are underpinned by the “Characteristics of Effective Learning” which focus upon “how” children learn. These closely correlate to our whole school Spikey attributes.

- Playing and Exploring – engagement
- Active learning – motivation
- Creating and thinking creatively – thinking

### **Teaching and Learning**

Important features of the way in which we deliver our curriculum are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children journey towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents through Tapestry online journals and regular parent meetings;

- the understanding of the importance of the transition stage from a previous setting to ours.

The Foundation Stage applies to children from 0 months to the end of reception year. At Priestley all the children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) class at Priestley School we aim to provide a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum which addresses the children's social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment. Our curriculum enables the child to learn and develop skills, attitudes and understanding in all 17 areas of learning.

### **Play in the Foundation Stage**

We deliver a play-based curriculum which encourages curiosity and active learning. There is room for creativity and time for shared, sustained thinking. We want our children to select their own resources and use them in their independent work whilst drawing on skills and knowledge they have developed in teacher-directed activities. We aim to facilitate this in a well resourced, safe environment staffed by knowledgeable and committed professionals working in partnership with parents.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Planning within the EYFS follows medium-term plans, under the guidance of "Cornerstones" which inform weekly plans; however, planning is flexible to allow changes when necessitated by the needs and interests of the children.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation. Assessment of children's learning is continuous whether through structured activity or in recording a spontaneous moment in child-initiated play. We use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Observations are recorded on post-its, annotated pieces of work and photographs. Work carried out by the child, whether it be through child-initiated play or through adult led activities is then displayed in each child's learning journey and/or online journal.

In the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress. Parents have an opportunity to discuss the report with the class teacher.

### **Resources**

At Priestley we plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

**This Policy alongside the Teaching and Learning Policy underpins all that we strive to achieve at Priestley and supports the school's vision and aims.**

**To Be Reviewed Summer 2024**