

Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust (DNDLT)

Company Number 10847279

Early Years Policy

September 2024

DNDLT Vision Statement

"Every child matters and no child is ever left behind..." "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."

Luke 18:15-17

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School

Love Your Neighbour
As Yourself



Holy Trinity School is a church and village school in the truest tradition. We have a school ethos based on 'Love thy neighbour as yourself' - Matthew 22 Vs. 3-9, of which we are all extremely proud and which has served the Church families and the village community for a huge part of the community's history.

Our aims are to meet the needs of individual children so that they are able to make the most of their abilities and to achieve personal excellence, whilst providing spiritual, moral, social and cultural guidance with the aim to prepare them to take on the responsibilities of later life; including those related to fundamental British Values, in an atmosphere of a caring Christian setting, where there is equality of opportunity for all children

Early Years Policy

At Holy Trinity C of E, we greatly value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education, and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Purposes and Principles

Practice in The Early Years at Holy Trinity C of E, is based upon the standards outlined in the *Statutory Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)*. The rationale underpinning the guidance and that followed by the staff at Holy Trinity C of E Academy is:

“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.”
(EYFS Framework p5, 2021)

At Holy Trinity we provide a practical and playful approach to learning, based on the needs and interests of the children. The children develop within the indoor and outdoor environment which stimulates and enhances their learning. Through a combination of observation, teacher input and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop independently and through exploration and challenge.

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Practice: Early Years Curriculum

- 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Assigns each child with a key person to ensure that each child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

Learning and development

In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of children to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

The EYFS provision and practice is based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in school are planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language:
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development:
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development:
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing

- Mathematics:
 - Numbers
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world:
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design:
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

As a church school, RE and Worship are integral to our whole school life and ethos. We follow the Diocesan syllabus for RE and use the resource Understanding Christianity to teach RE throughout school, beginning in Reception. Reception pupils will be involved in daily acts of Worship and will also visit Holy Trinity Church for Worship.

Relationship Sex and Health Education – As a school we follow the National Curriculum for the teaching of RSHE. Our scheme of work has been developed by our learning trust following a scheme called Jigsaw. Children will gradually, during their time in school, be introduced to a variety of subject areas linked to relationships, health etc where correct names for body parts and scientifically correct vocabulary will be used.

ICT lessons will be used to give children the opportunity to use technology, equip them for the demands of the developing digital world, and prepare them for the next step in their education. As part of RSHE curriculum, when teaching ICT and utilising technology, e.g. laptops and tablets, we teach online safety.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are three **Characteristics of Effective Learning**.

- **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

The environment is of key importance for all areas of learning due to its role in encouraging children to: investigate; try new experiences; demonstrate preferences; and develop independence. Activity areas are organised to stimulate their interests with accessible resources to develop every area of learning, with provision for similar experiences both indoors and out.

The successful learning environment caters for the interests and learning styles of all children and fosters the development of characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners reflect upon the different ways that children learn and implement these in their practice.

The Early Years team have long and medium term plans for Nursery and Reception based around half termly themes or topics. These plans are used by practitioners as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the children’s interests or achievements.

All activities are carefully planned to extend children’s learning across the prime and specific areas with a focus on the children’s interests and encourage children to become deeply engaged in discussions and use new vocabulary. Children learn through play- based activities and are given opportunities to move freely between activity areas throughout the course of the session. Some of

the curriculum elements are taught more formally in small focused groups led by the teacher or teaching assistants in order to build on and develop each individual's knowledge, understanding and skills in areas such as such as phonics, reading and number. In some activities, children will be encouraged to work and play independently and they will be observation and assessment. Language in Early Years is of high importance and therefore the environment is rich with opportunities for talking, reading and writing. Talk Matters, BLAST and NELI and phonic interventions are used to address pupil's needs where appropriate and develop pupil's language and communication.

Assessment and Reporting Procedures

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

Ongoing formative assessments are used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs, and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

Nursery Baseline - Within the first six weeks baseline assessments are completed in Nursery. Assessment information is gathered through observations and activities and recorded by the teacher and on Evidence Me(an online recording and tracking tool). This profile takes into account information gained from parents, adults and agencies who have significant interactions with the child.

Reception Baseline Assessment – a short Government assessment is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year.

The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

Regular assessments are completed for each child's learning and this information is used to ensure future planning reflects their identified needs. When children are younger, we pay particular attention to establishing competency in the three prime areas. The robust tracking systems identify pupils who are 'on track' or 'not on track' and need extra support. Staff assess children and decide if 'Emerging', 'Developing' or 'Secure' within Development Matters. At the end of Reception teachers produce a record of the child's outcomes against the 17 ELGs, stating for each ELG whether the child is: - meeting 'expected' levels or - not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Interventions are designed to support specific needs and are reviewed regularly to enable children to acquire their next steps in learning. Staff discuss their high quality observations as an integral part of the assessment and planning cycle. 'Evidence Me', online Learning Journals are used to log children's wow moments in Development Matters, Early Years Profile and Characteristics of Learning. This allows for a flexible and spontaneous system to track and monitor each child's progress through Nursery and Reception. In Nursery, pieces of work produced by children are placed in their personal 'Mark Making Books'. In Reception, they have English and Maths books which have evidence of the child's work and keeps a real life profile of ongoing progress.

Teachers will not be required to record or document evidence to prove children's level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements in order to plan teaching and where this is beneficial for building knowledge of children.

SEND and Inclusion

If a child is not making expected progress or has developmental delays, parents/carers are informed and the child is monitored. Staff and parents then liaise with the Special Educational Needs & Disability Coordinator; parents will always be kept informed about the social and educational needs of their child in accordance with the Code of Practice; including the involvement of outside agencies. Children identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities have their individual needs provided for through an IEP (Individual Education Plan) which is shared and reviewed with parents.

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures that all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

Review, Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures

Robust moderation processes within school, cluster areas and Church School's Cluster and DNDLT ensures the accuracy of judgements. Review meetings (Pupil Progress Meetings) are held termly with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The discussions cover: analysis of children's progress and attainment; the comparative achievement of specific vulnerable groups within the class e.g. Pupil Premium and SEND; and how outcomes link in to the School Improvement Plan. The outcomes of this discussion are then evaluated and reviewed. They inform subsequent planning and target setting, in order to have an impact. To ensure a seamless transition, EY practitioners and Year 1 teachers work together to develop targets and strategies based on the information gained from the pupil progress meetings.

Safeguarding and Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence." (*EYFS Framework 3.1, p21 2021*)

Early Years implement Safeguarding Policies and Procedures (see schools Safeguarding Policy and Staff Handbook). All staff have regular updates on Safeguarding including Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is **Mrs Baines**. The Deputy DSL is **Mrs Wheeldon**.

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall

responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable. Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

Health and Safety

The school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health.

The EYFS lead will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book in class and first aid bags are in the room. There will be at least two members of staff who have a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate on the school premises at all times, and will accompany children on any school outings.

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered. The school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.

We encourage children to be healthy and eat healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. School milk is free to under 5s and for over-5s it is available at a subsidised price.

The school has a Fire Safety Policy in place and fire procedures are on the wall for staff to refer to.

Communication with parents

"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."

(EYFS Framework 2021 - p5)

At Holy Trinity C of E, we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families. We recognise that parents are a child's first and most enduring educator and we value being partners with them in a child's education through:

- talking to parents about a child before they start school; gathering information which feeds into their child's baseline (parents also complete baseline forms);
- 'Seesaw' - which is a platform where information can be shared with parents. Work can be set for pupils and it also gives teachers, parents and children the opportunity to give written and oral feedback online.
- offering several opportunities during the year to share observations and 'Evidence Me' including the valuable contributions made by parents;
- holding workshops to inform parents how they can help children at home:
 - Nursery - Mark Making, Phonics Support and age related expectations
 - Reception - Reading and Writing Support and age related expectations
- half term and weekly curriculum plans are produced to help parents support their child at home;
- Parent support is available before school to answer brief queries. In addition, if a parent has any concerns an appointment can be made with the class teacher;
- parents can access a class Twitter feed to view the activities undertaken in class;
- three parental consultation sessions are offered per year;
- annual written report outlines attainment and progress at the end of Nursery and Reception.

The class teacher acts as Key Person in Nursery and Reception and works closely with the teaching assistant to collate information about a child. Verbal feedback is given to parents throughout the

child's time in the setting to ensure that the child's welfare, learning and development needs are met in partnership with parents/carers.

Leadership of Early Years

The Early Years Leader is responsible for working towards the achievement of objectives within The Early Years section of the School Improvement Plan. The EY leader works closely with teachers to set challenging targets for cohorts to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' by the end of Early Years. The Early Years Leader monitors planning, teaching and learning; providing feedback to Early Years practitioners. The leader is also responsible for supporting monitoring and assessment in relation to the Early Years Curriculum.

The Local Academy Councillor for the Early Years is Mrs Christine Patton-Woods. She has opportunities to work in the Early Years, communicate with the Early Years Leader and provide feedback to the whole Academy Council, raising any issues that require discussion.

Admissions Policy Nursery

Children are admitted to a waiting list when they are 2 years old. They are then admitted to Nursery the term after their third birthday, if a place is available, in age order.

Holy Trinity C of E, DNDLT, has a 52 place Full Time Equivalent allocation which is broken down into morning and afternoon sessions. Within the 52 places, places are allocated to the Government funded '30 hour' places for children who are eligible. These children access both the morning and afternoon session on a daily basis. The remaining places are available as morning places and afternoon places.

Children who access 30 hours provision have the option to buy into childcare at lunchtime. They can also buy a school lunch or provide a packed lunch.

All children are eligible to buy into our childcare provision 'Seaton Crew' which runs before and after school.

Eligibility rules for 30 hours free childcare are:

1. Your child will be aged 3 or 4 when the scheme starts in your area
2. Both parents must be working – or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family
3. Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage
4. Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000.
5. You live in England

The relevant dates are as follows:

- Children born in the period 1st January to 31st March: the start of term beginning on or following 1st April after the child's third birthday
- Children born in the period 1st April to 31st August: the start of term beginning on or following 1st September after the child's third birthday
- Children born in the period 1st September to 31st December: the start of term beginning on or following 1st January after the child's third birthday.

As admission to Nursery is a separate process, a Nursery place **DOES NOT** guarantee your child a place in Reception at Holy Trinity C of E, DNDLT. Applications for admission to Reception must be made on the Local Authority Common Admission Form, according to the timetable and detailed arrangements published each year by Hartlepool Local Education Authority. Please see the Admission Policy for Holy Trinity C of E Primary, DNDLT for further information about admission to Reception.

Transition

To ensure transition to Reception

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes, and to voice any concerns they may wish to express.
- The children are invited to visit Reception for a full day. The children have dinner and meet their new class members.
- In the Summer term, Reception and Nursery staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Reception.

To ensure children's successful transition to Year 1:

- During the Summer term, children begin to go onto the KS1 playground for playtime.
- The children are invited to visit their Year 1 class. To allow the children to feel secure in the new environment.
- In the Summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

Mrs J Watson

Early Years Lead

September 2024

Review: September 2026