



Saint Pierre School,
16 Leigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9

Early Years Policy

Policy Owner (Position)	Last Updated By (Name)	Date of Last Review	Date Next Review Due
Head of Early Years	Gemma Hoffman	November 2024	September 2026
Read in Conjunction with: EYFS COVID Risk Assessment			

The early years foundation stage defines children aged from birth - 31st August following their fifth birthday, setting the standards for early years settings that deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

“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” [DfE, 2012 (Updated December, effective 1st November 2024)].

Aim

At Saint Pierre we aim to provide the highest quality of care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs in order for our children to make good progress.

Statutory Framework

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings: 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 practitioners and parents and/or carers; Children develop and learn at different rates.

Principles into Practice

At Saint Pierre, as part of our practice we:

Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS and Birth To 5, across the seven areas of learning, which is delivered alongside our additional curriculum to develop the children's knowledge and skills in line with our school ethos.

Focusing heavily on the prime areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development.

Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, through daily topic circles, assemblies, and via our themed additional curriculum.

Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support; working in partnership with parents and within the wider context.

Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation, assessment and the child's interest.

Inspire creativity through the strategic planning and delivery of activities that are both adult directed and child initiated, allowing opportunities for the children to take ownership of their individual learning journey.

Encourage curiosity and discovery through implementing an enhanced creative curriculum, including current topics and world-wide affairs, inspiring the children to explore their inquisitive side through discussions and questioning.

Promote the children's confidence and self-esteem through engaging in activities that encourage and build their resilience and independence. Thus, allowing the children to take ownership of their learning whilst developing/mastering new skills.

Key Person Approach

Within the Nursery we follow the key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children; and provide a secure and safe learning environment, indoors and out. The key person is a familiar figure to the child and parents/carers, who builds relationships where appropriate.

Responsibilities

Head of EYFS

Liaise with EYFS team, other staff and Headteacher.

Liaise with SENCO and appropriate outside agencies.

Lead the development of EYFS.

Arrange order and approval of EYFS resources.

Check learning observations, via both Tapestry and individual books.

Observe the delivery of curriculum.

Review Policy (Including EYFS Safeguarding/ child protection).

Monitor and review EYFS practice, keeping up to date with any new statutory framework or guidance.

Head of Nursery

Planning and evaluation.

Oversee the delivery of the curriculum and learning outcomes.

Assessments – Entry Baselines/Two Year Checks/In-House Formative.

Ensure effective arrangement and distribution of practitioners.

Organisation of resources.

Liaise with EYFS team, Head of EYFS, Headteacher and appropriate outside agencies.

Attend relevant internal and external meetings.

Oversee displays.

Check learning observations, via both Tapestry and individual books.

Keep up to date with new developments related to National Statutory Framework and guidance.

Class Teachers

Planning, evaluations, and teaching.

Assessments – Formative Baseline/EYFS Profile/In-House Formative.

Ensure effective arrangement and distribution of practitioners.

Organisation of resources.

Liaise with EYFS team, Head of EYFS, Headteacher and appropriate outside agencies.

Attend relevant internal and external meetings.

Displays and marking.

Write online learning observations.

Keep up to date with new developments related to National Statutory Framework and guidance.

EYFS Practitioners

Support individuals and groups of children in learning/extending play.

Give feedback to Class Teachers, Head of Nursery and Head of EYFS.

Liaise with EYFS team, attending meetings where appropriate.

Prepare resources – including setting up of indoor and outdoor areas.

Support interventions.

Contribute to planning and evaluation.

The Early Years Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The Prime Areas of Learning are the essential foundations for children to work with and master before progressing into the Specific Areas of Learning.

Three Prime Areas:

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

And Four Specific Areas Which Reinforces The Prime Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Saint Pierre School, we develop termly curriculum guides ensuring that individual targets and developmental needs are being met to challenge the children's potential. In order to achieve this, we create our own additional curriculum which outlines weekly topic themes to broaden the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

Planning

In the Early Years we write plans using both the Non-Statutory Birth to Five, progressing onto the Statutory ELGs as outlined in the most recent framework, based on a series of topics, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas, in both the inside and outside learning areas. We also follow the children's interests where appropriate. Please see our plans for more details. The EYFS team convene during weekly planning meetings to ensure the plans reflect the changing individual needs, interests, and development.

Differentiation

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursey (2.5-3 yrs) will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively.

The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group teaching and learning times which increase as they progress through the EYFS, including a daily phonics session as well as teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach, as outlined by the EYFS. Each area of learning and development must be implemented through focused, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated activities. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, Early Years practitioners interact to challenge and scaffold children's learning opportunities allowing them to become independent learners.

With regards to children who require additional support through special educational needs or disability, specialist support is considered, linking with relevant outside agencies, where appropriate. Staff work closely with parents/ carers to ensure there are open lines of communication and that the best suitable provision is readily available to support individual needs.

Regulatory Requirements

We ensure that we implement the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Effective: 4th January 2024) and meet the associated regulatory requirements. Early Years Leaders (Head of EYFS, Head of Nursery) will attend relevant meeting/training.

Monitoring and Assessment

At Saint Pierre, during the first half term, teachers and key workers take the opportunity to get to know their children before completing initial in-house assessments to set appropriate individual next steps based on children's abilities when they start, this in turn assists our planning and inclusion of each child's individual needs.

Throughout the year ongoing observations/assessments are completed and next steps are reviewed and adapted as necessary, in order to formulate a complete view of each child's progress and achievements. Children's progress is shared with parents during planned parents' meetings. However, if any significant emerging concerns arise throughout the course of the year a meeting with parents/carers will then be arranged immediately to discuss an action plan. This will involve the school SENCO who is responsible for making additional referrals and putting appropriate intervention in place.

Within the final term of both Nursery and Reception, we provide the parents with a report based on their child's development and learning capabilities. Additionally, Reception EYFS Profiles are complete by the 30th of June each year. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Nursery staff and Reception teacher.

At Saint Pierre, we use Tapestry as means of communication, which is accessible to parents, allowing them to see an insight into their child's daily activities and progression. Parents/ carers may add additional observations and information of their own. This also helps to build a well-rounded profile and supports our strong parent partnership.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures, and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

The following ratios are adhered to:

Nursery – Children aged 2 and a half to 3 (Ratio 1:4)

Children 3 and above (Ratio 1:8)

Reception (One Class Entry Form, maximum 16) – Class Teacher (Ratio 1:13)

Teachers Assistant (1:8)

At Saint Pierre, we promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident, regular physical activity, having a good sleep routine and road safety. We also endeavor to promote excellent oral health, through discussion/ topics on the importance of good personal hygiene.

During both snack and lunch time children are always seated safely on an appropriately sized chair or bench. They are closely supervised, both listened to and seen, at all times to ensure their safety against choking risk.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability, or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Partners

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on visits and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term Nursery and Reception participate in a 'move-up' afternoon allowing them to spend time with their new teacher and familiarise themselves with their new learning environment. The new class teacher will also meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the EYFS, Birth to Five, and Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to the next year group. This discussion helps the teacher to plan an effective, responsive, and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Impact

By the end of the first half term (approximately 6 weeks) both nursery and reception children undergo informal assessments carried out by staff to ensure individual developmental needs and interests are being adhered too. In Reception staff administer a more formal inhouse baseline assessment.

Within the summer term, at the end of EYFS, staff will complete the EYFS profile for each child. The children are assessed against the seven areas of learning in order to meet expected levels or not yet reach the expected levels within the seventeen early learning goals. This profile reflects ongoing observations and communications with parents/carers.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local independent schools to, to ensure consistent assessment judgments. EYFS profile data is then submitted to the local authority as requested.