

The St Giles EYFS Pathway Handbook

Our Intent

Every child deserves the best possible start in life. At St Giles we intend to provide a curriculum that is child led, carefully sequenced and provides a depth of learning. We realise that children can develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future. At St Giles, we are committed to working in partnership with parents as we recognise that parents are the experts in their children's care. We acknowledge that transitioning to nursery and/or school can be a worrying time and we endeavour to support parents and children through our transition process. We work hard to build close and trusting relationships with our families and value their involvement as joint educators. We believe the child's lived experience and their journey so far is significant and important even at this young age. This knowledge of each child is key in supporting practitioners to recognise their unique qualities so that our children can be the best they can be.

Aims of the EYFS in St Giles School

- To provide a relevant curriculum which is supportive and is also broad, balanced, enjoyable and exciting.
- To prepare pupils by building the foundations for learning, nurturing an enjoyment for learning which encourages curiosity and lifelong interests
- To develop partnerships with people that are important for the child.
- To support and promote all the EYFS areas of development and the Characteristics of Effective learning.
- To have a multi-agency approach to ensure that all children are safeguarded.
- To promote the development of children as individuals and to provide equal opportunities for all learners.
- To ensure that all learners have a positive sense of self by promoting and encouraging pupil voice.
- To support pupils to transition into an appropriate educational setting and curriculum pathway.

We will follow the overarching principles of the EYFS which are:

- 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.

Our Impact

In the early years the children are assessed using the St Giles EYFS assessment framework, which is based on the Croydon Early Support Document which is used by Early Years settings to support children with SEND.

The early stages of development are broken down into small steps in the areas: Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development Physical Development Thinking Skills Literacy.

Formative Assessment

All staff in EYFS will observe learning during the day. Observations are recorded on Evidence for Learning with photos and videos where appropriate. Observations are key for capturing significant learning moments for our children. They provide a picture of progress for the learner over time. Observations on Evidence for Learning are linked to assessment frameworks. Observations can be linked to the learner's timeline targets as evidence of progress towards meeting their annual targets. Engagement Model profiles are used to create a holistic picture of the learner based on their responses during learning experiences.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is completed each term using the St Giles EYFS assessment framework. Routes for learning and the engagement model are also used alongside these documents in order to create a picture of progress for all learners. In the EYFS we use SEND Small Steps and Birth to 5 Matters non-statutory framework to assess

our learners against in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 at the end of each term. We have St Giles Communication and Language assessment toolkits and PSHE assessment toolkits that we use to assess against and to support our target setting for EHCP's and next steps. The communication needs of the learners at St Giles are complex and our assessment toolkits are bespoke to the needs of the learner's needs. Learners who are in Year 2 or above are assessed against the St Giles assessment frameworks.

Statutory Assessments

The Reception Baseline assessment is completed within the first 6 weeks of Reception. For most of our learners this assessment is not suitable, however we do have some children who complete the baseline assessment.

Target setting and Monitoring

Learners who are new to the school will have a baseline assessment. The class staff will observe the learner focusing on developing and building a relationship with them. The staff will assess their social coping strategies, their communication needs and create a communication passport for them. During this time staff will identify the learner's access needs as well as their likes and dislikes. Children are given opportunities to develop their voice and we actively give children opportunities to express themselves confidently and in a way that is individual to them. Children have next step targets that are on their timeline document. These next steps are monitored continuously and timelines are a working document. For pupils that have an EHCP these targets will link with the targets set out in their EHCP and annual reviews.

Our Implementation

EYFS Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage at St Giles is for children from Nursery until they leave the Department. We use Birth to 5 non-statutory framework augmented to

support teaching and learning and the provision we provide our learners in order for them to make progress towards the ELG's where appropriate. To begin with we focus on the Prime areas of development:

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning. Thinking and Literacy (including synthetic phonics) are also given high priority throughout the EYFS.

Additionally, we plan to develop all areas of development from the EYFS with all children. We offer plenty of creative teaching and learning opportunities as well as opportunities to experience and understand the world around us. The characteristics of effective learning are intrinsic to all that we do. In the EYFS at St Giles we also strive to have a rich cultural capital where our learner's experiences and opportunities are enhanced by the immersive curriculum we offer.

In the EYFS classes we aim to provide opportunities for both child initiated and adult led learning. Children are supported to develop the essential early learning skills that will enable them to participate and engage in a range of activities as part of a group or individually. Children are identified as working within an appropriate St Giles Curriculum pathway and are set end of year targets at the end of their time in the Department.

Information about Key principles of EYFS Framework

Characteristics of Effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning help us to focus on and understand how children learn. Following characteristics of young children's learning enables them to become effective lifelong learners. We At St Giles, our learners have very different routes to learning and we look at the individual child, how they play and explore, how they think and how we can support them to access all areas of development.

Our learners are continuously observed against the characteristics and these observations support our planning, teaching and assessment. The characteristics of

effective learning will feed into the school's assessment levels including the engagement model at the end of Key Stage One.

The characteristics of effective learning are split into three different areas:

Playing and Exploring

For many learners at St Giles, staff play a vital role in initiating and guiding play activities. For many of our learners with access barriers such as mobility and social communication needs, staff facilitate these play experiences. Play is essential for children's development. Children learn by leading their own play where they can, and most importantly they learn play skills by taking part in play which is guided and modelled by adults.

Active Learning

We provide opportunities for children to follow their interests for extended periods of time. We encourage the development of listening and attention skills to enable learners to fully engaged in what they are doing and concentrating deeply. In their activities, children will have opportunities for success and challenge.

Creative and Critical Thinking

Children will have many different opportunities to be creative – generating new ideas, being inventive, finding problems and challenges and figuring out their own ways to solve them. Adults will be attentive to individual children's interests and will provide new materials and experiences to extend and enhance these processes. For our learners at St Giles we focus on the learning process and the skills developed on the way to the end result.

The Areas of Development

In the EYFS framework there are 7 areas of development 3 prime and 4 specific areas. The prime areas begin to develop in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The prime areas are the main focus alongside the characteristic of effective learning. At St Giles School Thinking Skills incorporates Mathematics and the other specific areas. The Prime areas are the fundamental

building blocks for children in the EYFS. They lay the foundational skills for learning in the Specific areas.

Prime areas of Learning

Communication and Language (CAL)

We use total communication in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes, sign a long, TaSSels (on body signs), photographs, objects of reference, situational cues, symbols as well as key word language and body language. All children use their senses to learn. Adopting a multi-sensory learning for pupils with sensory impairments works to reduce the barriers and make activities more accessible. We work closely with Speech and Language Therapists to ensure that our learners have access to a range of communication and interaction tools. The total communication approach that we take ensures that our learners are immersed in a language and communication rich environment, tailored to their specific communication needs.

Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Developing and nurturing supportive relationships based on mutual respect is very important. In the EYFS, PSED runs through all that we do. We encourage our learners to work at building relationships with peers and staff, sharing and turn taking as well as making independent choices. We provide opportunities for our children to learn to manage their own behaviours and emotions throughout the day. We also work towards the children being able to develop and use their play and social skills to be able to access adult led learning in a group.

Physical Development (PD)

We try to develop personal care and foster life-long independence skills during snack, lunch and toileting routines every day. We also provide activities to develop gross and fine motor skills. Many of our children will have significant issues around movement, physical development and mobility and will follow programmes set by physiotherapy. Some of our learners have sensory processing needs which create barriers to their

learning, we work closely with Sensory Occupational Health staff to support children in order for them to be able to have access to the curriculum.

Specific Areas of Learning

Mathematics and Thinking

Thinking skills incorporates early Maths skills as well as developing skills around object permanence, anticipation, cause and effect and problem solving. Some mark making, book skills, imaginary play and construction..

Mathematics is mainly taught in thinking skills but subject specific Reception and Year 1 pupils will have more of a Mathematical focus during the adult led activities as well as opportunities to develop any interests around mathematics focused play activities.

Literacy

At St Giles we strive to promote a love and enjoyment of reading. All children will have the opportunity to listen to stories daily. Our Topics are closely linked to a range of suggested stories and texts that have been chosen to enhance the learning opportunities for our children. We use Drama and sensory stories to immerse our learners in rich literary experiences. Mark making opportunities are available in child initiated play and may include activities to develop fine motor skills. We also have adult led mark making activities. In the EYFS we also develop early reading skills daily. Exposure to a range of enlivened nursery rhymes as well as environmental and instrumental sound discrimination activities are key in developing early reading skills. For those children who are ready, we also use systematic synthetic teaching of phonics, symbolic development.

Understanding the World

This is explored in a cross curricular way through a Topic based planning approach. Our learners will have opportunities to develop early scientific thinking skills through a creative and sensory approach.

The children will learn about cultures and celebrations in relation to their group and topics. They will also work on being a part of the class and school community. In EYFS we will have weekly assemblies which are interactive and engaging. We will explore the world around us with our senses, this is supported with messy sensory exploration activities.

Technology

In the EYFS we use technology to support access for many of our learners. Cause and effect games and activities provide opportunities to develop anticipation and association skills. We use a variety of ICT resources such as switches, tablets, interactive whiteboards and computers. Technology is a tool to enhance the learning opportunities for our children as well as providing them with computing skills.

Expressive Arts and Development (EAD)

We provide opportunities to be creative in imaginative play activities, arts and crafts, music and dance in both adult led and child led situations. An important part of this area is around developing characteristics of effective learning and Personal Social and Emotional Development. This is often delivered through a topic-based approach.

The Role of the Adult

Children in the Nursery are supported by a Key person. In Reception, Year 1 and 2, adults work to support all of the children in the class. A key person may be given to pupils who still need to work on developing positive relationships with adults. This is especially important during transition times.

As the children move through Nursery, Reception, Year one and Year two, the adult support offered depends on the needs of the individual learners. We encourage our learners to be as independent as possible and we adopt a child centred approach to our teaching and learning. Staff in the EYFS facilitate learning experiences, support learner's access needs, as well as provide opportunities for challenge.

Our Planning Overview

The planning cycle of observing, planning and evaluating is used throughout the EYFS. Our observations of the children as well as our continuous assessment inform all levels of planning.

Long Term planning

This is completed on a three-yearly rolling cycle and makes sure that there is an appropriate balance of all the areas of development and an exciting and captivating range of themes ensuring continuity and progression as they move up the school.

Medium Term planning

This is completed for each theme by the class teachers and is bespoke to the learners in the classes. In the Medium Term plan the topic based activities are linked to areas of learning from the curriculum documents to ensure coverage. Suggested activities are provided as a guide. Topic related books, songs and websites are also included to support the planning process for EYFS teachers.

Short Term Planning

This is completed weekly or when required and outlines what learning opportunities will be available that week, resources and support required for individual learners and desired outcomes. This planning is influenced by feedback from the previous weeks plans and learning that has taken place, observations of the learners and discussions with teaching staff and therapist. Planning is displayed in the classroom and shared with the whole class team.

Other Key Information

Education Health and Care plans

School age children will have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) naming St Giles School. We work with other agencies to develop a full understanding of pupils' strengths and needs to ensure the development of highly effective EHCP's supporting

pupils to reach their full potential. Every pupil with an EHCP has a personalised timeline that breaks annual targets into smaller steps.

Observations

We use Evidence for Learning to record the children's learning journey. Staff in the EYFS use observations to capture significant and meaningful examples of learners showing they have achieved or met a target. Wow moments are also captured photographically or through written observations throughout the day. During adult led activities, any observations recorded are linked to assessment documents and learner's individual timelines. We actively encourage parents and other therapists to share significant and meaningful learning successes with class staff too, in order to create a holistic picture of the child's progress. These observations inform planning, target setting and give a view of the learner's progress in all areas of learning. Observations can be shared with parents.

Child Initiated learning

Play is vital to the EYFS as it underpins all development and learning for young children. Many of the children at our school will need adult support to access play activities or learn to play. Adults teach the children during play based activities by modelling communication and language, demonstrating, supporting, encouraging, facilitating challenge, commentating play and having fun. The learning environments are thought out to meet the continuous provision and learning needs of all the children in the class. We provide opportunities both inside and outside. Many of our learners require adults to initiate play activities. Adults also encourage social play opportunities with peers in small groups by leading the play.

Adult Led Learning

For the learners at St Giles adult led learning is the main vehicle for learning that we use. There are a range of adult led activities throughout the day. Some may be 1:1, or small group and some may be with the whole class they will also vary on length of time depending on the child. Adult led activities will have a focus of an area of development but may have opportunities to develop other areas too. These activities are bespoke

to the needs of the learner based on many factors including their access needs, sensory processing needs, communication pathways and physicality and movement needs. Many learners at St Giles need a high level of structure to complete adult led learning activities.

Intensive Interaction

This is an approach used with many of our children devised by Dr Dave Hewitt. This approach is a way of implementing our aims to develop Communication and Language and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Intensive Interaction is also a fundamental part of communication and play within the Early Years.

Environment

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage will access learning both inside and outside and both areas are of equal importance. At St Giles we are lucky to have a range of play equipment for our learners to access. The play equipment is bespoke to the mobility and access needs of our learners because it is wheelchair accessible. We have specialist bikes to enable learners to be supported to move around our outside area freely.

Working with parents / carers

In the EYFS we work very closely with parents and carers sharing information and learning with them. We use home school books to share learning that has happened during the school day and this will happen daily. Parents are also able to share observations from home. We also share information with parents at meetings, regular contact by phone to promote partnership working with parent alongside chats at pick up and drop off times.

Working with other professionals

All our children have complex health needs and we work closely with health professionals that are supporting our children. We also work with social care where appropriate. We work with other professionals – Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Health Care professionals and other therapists which link to the

school. We carry out programmes set by them to achieve specific targets for the individuals.

EAL and children with different cultures

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are provided opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. We also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn in the English language as well as embrace their own. We celebrate the different cultures and disabilities of all the pupils in the EYFS this is reflected in learning resources as well as activities.