

# *St William of Perth*



## *Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2023/24*



## Mission statement

'Inspiring, nurturing and enabling lifelong learners'  
We embrace a 'Learning without Limits' ethos. We believe in the potential of every child so all the children are given the opportunity to develop the capacity to surprise themselves and those around them. They are taught to challenge themselves to build confidence and resilience. This is done through the whole school approach of nourishing our learners.

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. 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.

*('The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE March 2021).*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, comprised of one Reception class, children join us on a phased introduction at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five years old.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

### A Unique Child

At St William of Perth we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first year at school, the children are introduced to the learning behaviors. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, cooperative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mindset. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

In the EYFS we have ambitious and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress to ensure they are working to achieve their next steps and are challenged.
- Providing an environment and activities that creates a love for learning.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St William of Perth we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### ***Parents as Partners***

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school.

- Inviting parents and children to a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' to meet their teacher in a fun and relaxed environment, which also provides the children with the opportunity to meet members of the current reception cohort.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in the first two terms to discuss their child's progress.
- Providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Sharing our approach to reading through a phonics workshop to allow parents to support their child's reading at home.
- Sharing an insight into their child's learning through Class Dojo.
- Promoting reading for enjoyment through Family and Fairy tales.
- Inviting parents to 'Through our Eyes' stay and play sessions to join in with how their children learn at school.

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St William of Perth we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides

opportunities for child-initiated activities reflecting the topic where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills to name a few. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

### **Religious Education within the Early Years Foundation Stage**

At St. William of Perth, all our teaching is rooted in the Gospel Values as revealed to us by Jesus Christ. We aim to support, extend and clarify the experience of Faith given to our children by their families and the Parish. Religious Education is not taught as a discrete subject but permeates all areas of the curriculum and of school life. Each child has the opportunity to participate in Masses and Assemblies, to celebrate Holydays and Special Feast Days, to learn and understand prayers and hymns, to know and understand the Sacraments and to hear Bible stories.

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

Planning within the EYFS is guided by the children's interests to create enthusiasm for learning. Medium Term Plans are written termly and used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning. Through the observation, assessment and planning cycle we ensure children's learning is tailored to their individual next steps, allowing all children to make progress. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children.

In the EYFS assessment of attainment and progress is based on observation, discussion, questioning and

evidence of children's independent learning. Valuable evidence of children's learning is obtained through observation of independent and targeted learning. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and 'wow moments' are recorded in a class floor book or in Learning Journeys. Each child's progress is also recorded against 17 assessment areas derived from the ELGs (Early Learning Goals), noting whether children are 'on track' or not to meet the ELG's. This is used to inform pupil progress meetings and planning to support children's learning. At the end of the Reception year, children are assessed against the statutory Early Learning Goals as either 'emerging' or 'expected'.

## Learning and Development

At St William of Perth 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 interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### *Our EYFS Curriculum at St William of Perth*

Our Early Years curriculum at St William of Perth is designed and influenced by the following aspects;

- The Educational Programmes set out in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS.
- What we know about the children, generally, before they start St William of Perth.
- Our knowledge of the local community both inside and outside of St William of Perth. For example, children's cultural capital, the experiences our children have, our school ethos and our Catholic values.
- Our knowledge of child development, using Development Matters as a 'typical' guide to development and expectations.
- Curricular Goals that we feel are important for a St William of Perth child to achieve in order to grow.

### *Strands of Learning*

#### Prime Areas

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

#### Specific Areas

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



At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children will be assessed against these seven strands of learning to complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

These areas are delivered throughout the loose topics and children's interests and link closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities, providing opportunities for children to practice and repeat the skills they learn in a range of contexts.

The children have their own outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

To encapsulate the seven strands of learning, St William of Perth has tailored our 'Curricular Goals' that we aim for all of our children to achieve. These are goals that as a school we feel are important to the development of children whilst at St William of Perth. The journey with these does not end at the end of the EYFS, but continue to develop and progress throughout their time at St William of Perth. More information about the EYFS Curricular Goals can be found on the school website or via request from Miss Dormedy.

### *Play*

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level.

Playing with their peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through perseverance and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

### **Photographs and videos**

Before child join the St William of Perth family, parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed during their time at school. We use photographs of the children in the classroom, on displays, in learning journeys, on the school website and on Class Dojo.

### **Transitioning into Key Stage One**

Children will leave the Early Years Foundation Stage settled and integrated into school life at St William of Perth. This is evident through the confidence children exert when talking to their peers, members of staff, members of the wider school community and when making transitions to other areas of the school. Children will be prepared for the change of environment and teacher. Children will be given time to visit their new classroom and teacher to begin developing those positive relationships and adapt to new organisational practices. Learning through play

remains an integral part of practice in Year One, especially during the first part of the year to ensure learning is developmentally appropriate for our children. The Reception teacher and Year One teacher have in depth transition meetings to ensure all relevant information is passed on to support the children's learning from the beginning of year one. This is both aids academic progression and personal, social and emotional wellbeing.

### **Safeguarding Children**

St William of Perth takes the safeguarding of children with the utmost of importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available on the school website or via request.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to read and follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system. This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of each academic year and will evolve to incorporate the views and experiences of staff and children concerned.

Last Reviewed by Miss L Dormedy, September 2023

