



LOVE LEARN SHINE

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out"

(John 1.9)



**St Peter's
Primary**

Early Years

Statement of Intent

LOVE • LEARN • SHINE



Where everyone is **valued and respected**, where we share commitment to **education that is ambitious**, setting the highest expectations and where **integrity** is the foundation.

St Peter's CE Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Statement of Intent, Implementation & Impact

Our Vision - LOVE, LEARN, SHINE.

Love

Love and a strong sense of belonging are the foundation of our school community's life. We want everyone to know and feel they are nurtured, precious, unique and loved by God.

Learn

Children should be inspired to develop a lifelong love of learning; to empower them to explore new paths and make informed choices. We are ambitious that all children become, fluent confident learners, who seek out wisdom, knowledge and skills that guide, inspire and prepare them well for life in a diverse world.

Shine

Every person has something that only they can offer. Every member of our school community is continually encouraged to shine, as only they can, enabling themselves and others to flourish in the light and love of God.

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out"

(John 1.5)

Vision into Early Years

Our Christian vision is fully embedded within our Early Years and underpins all aspects of practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Every element of children's indoor and outdoor learning experiences is intentionally designed to build secure foundations of knowledge, skills and personal qualities that enable children to shine academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

Through high-quality play, exploration, nurturing relationships and carefully planned learning opportunities across both environments, children are supported to shine, developing curiosity, effective communication, confidence and resilience. This approach ensures they are well prepared for their immediate next steps into Key Stage 1 and secure in the understanding that they are precious, unique and loved by God, which is reflected consistently in our ethos, language and daily practice.

EYFS Intent Summary

Vision-Led Practice

All provision reflects St Peter's Christian vision: every child is known, valued and supported to shine academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

High-Quality Interaction and Play

Staff consistently use skilled questioning, modelling and interaction to develop curiosity, confidence, resilience and sustained engagement.

Foundational Knowledge and Skills

Teaching secures the essential building blocks for Key Stage 1: spoken language and vocabulary, early reading (phonics and comprehension), early mathematics (number sense), physical development, and self-regulation. Children are supported and taught to remember, apply and use these across provision with increasing independence.

Sequenced and Progressive Curriculum

Learning is carefully sequenced from starting points, with clear progression so children know more and can do more over time, ensuring readiness for Year 1.

Language at the Core

Adults prioritise talk, explicitly teach vocabulary and create a language-rich environment so children can explain, reason and learn effectively.

Purposeful Continuous Provision

Purposeful continuous provision is carefully planned, limited in number and regularly adapted to reflect progression, ensuring high quality interactions where children practise, apply and deepen learning independently while developing cooperation, language and social understanding through engagement with others.

Accountability, Inclusion and KS1 Readiness

All children, including children with identified SEND, are expected to achieve well through adaptive teaching and high expectations. Staff work to support children to leave EYFS as independent, attentive learners who can access phonics, follow routines and apply core skills with confidence across the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

Well Led Dedicated Early Years Provision

Wrens, our Early Years class, provides a specialist Early Years environment within a single class, separate from Key Stage 1. Children and families are welcomed into a culture rooted in safety, belonging and high expectations for learning. Experienced Early Years staff develop a secure and shared understanding of each child through strong partnerships with parents and carers, ongoing observation and professional dialogue. Staff work collaboratively across the trust, drawing on bespoke Early Years expertise to ensure consistently high-quality provision and informed practice. Leaders meet regularly with the Early Years team to review and evaluate the impact of provision providing support and challenge to aid continued improvement. The environment is carefully designed, purposeful and engaging, offering rich opportunities for play, exploration and sustained involvement. Children are supported to build relationships, communicate confidently and develop positive learning behaviours that establish secure foundations for future learning within the school.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a key priority within our Early Years provision, with leaders maintaining a sharp and sustained focus on ensuring that all children, particularly those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, access a broad, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Leaders are clear in their high expectations that all children can succeed; this includes an expectation that many children with SEND will achieve a Good Level of Development, and where this is not appropriate, that all children will make strong progress from their starting points. Where barriers to learning exist, leaders take a rigorous and systematic approach to identifying, reducing and, where possible, removing these barriers so that children are able to achieve well.

A strong culture of professional dialogue underpins this work. Regular pupil progress meetings, focused EYFS leadership discussions and ongoing staff supervision ensure that teachers are well supported to meet the needs of all children. These structures enable leaders to monitor the progress of vulnerable groups closely, including disadvantaged, challenge underachievement and ensure that provision is precisely targeted. Additional support is strengthened through collaboration with external professionals, trust networks and specialist advisers, ensuring a consistent and high-quality approach.

Provision for children with SEND and those who are disadvantaged is carefully planned and implemented to promote full inclusion, participation and strong progress within the core curriculum. Adaptations are purposeful and individualised, including targeted interventions, scaffolded learning, pre-teaching of vocabulary and the use of visual supports to reduce cognitive load. Support is skilfully managed to ensure that children remain fully included and are able to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupil voice, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, to ensure that their experiences are understood and that any barriers to learning are identified and addressed swiftly. This contributes to a highly inclusive environment where all children feel valued, supported and motivated to learn. Adults maintain consistently high expectations and provide carefully calibrated support to promote independence, resilience and positive learning behaviours. As a result, children with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are well prepared for transition into Key Stage 1 and are able to make sustained, meaningful progress, with many achieving a Good Level of Development.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is given the highest priority within the Early Years, with leaders ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and consistently applied in practice. Robust systems and a strong safeguarding culture ensure that children are kept safe, feel secure and are ready to learn.

Provision is underpinned by clear, well-established procedures which include:

- Strong safer recruitment processes that ensure all staff are suitable to work with children
- Rigorous monitoring of attendance, with timely and effective follow-up of absence to safeguard children
- Enhanced emergency contact arrangements to ensure swift action can be taken where necessary
- Adherence to statutory guidance for food safety and nutrition, including updated practice where staff actively supervise and observe children during snack and lunchtime to ensure safety and support healthy eating
- Respectful, safe and well-managed toileting and intimate care practices that protect children's dignity
- Clear whistleblowing procedures and safer working guidance, ensuring staff understand their responsibilities and act in line with best practice

Leaders ensure that all staff are well trained, vigilant and confident in identifying and responding to any safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding practice is strengthened through regular supervision of EYFS staff, embedded within leadership meetings and supported by a robust appraisal system. This is further enhanced through engagement in EYFS trust networks and collaborative peer working, enabling staff to reflect on practice, share expertise and remain up to date with current guidance. These layers of professional support ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are consistently understood, reviewed and prioritised. Safeguarding procedures are regularly evaluated and updated in line with current EYFS requirements.

As a result, safeguarding is effective, consistently applied and responsive, and children benefit from a safe, nurturing environment where they feel protected and are able to shine.

Curriculum

Our curriculum intent is for every child to thrive and progress well from their starting point through an ambitious, carefully sequenced EYFS curriculum that promotes curiosity, independence, language development and a lifelong love of learning.

We recognise children as unique individuals and adapt provision to reflect their starting points, interests and next steps. Teaching and learning take place within a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where high expectations are maintained for all children. Adults use high-quality interactions, purposeful modelling and appropriate challenge to ensure children make strong progress over time.

The EYFS curriculum at St Peter's is coherently planned to ensure all children develop secure foundations across all areas of learning and move towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). This enables children to transition into Year 1 as confident, motivated and capable learners with secure learning behaviours.

Staff make systematic use of the EYFS Statutory Framework (updated September 2025), which informs all aspects of learning, development, assessment and safeguarding. Assessment against the ELGs at the end of Reception supports a smooth and informed transition into the National Curriculum.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are central to our practice and shape how children engage with learning, demonstrating curiosity, perseverance, creativity and critical thinking. Children access continuous indoor and outdoor provision throughout the day, allowing them to apply and deepen learning in meaningful contexts.

Prime Areas of Learning (Foundational):

Communication and Language (CL):

- We develop children's speaking and listening skills through daily conversations, storytelling, singing, and role play.
- Children take part in circle time discussions, listen to and retell familiar stories, ask and answer questions, and learn new vocabulary through themed activities and play.

Physical Development (PD):

- We support both large and small movements through activities such as climbing, running, balancing, and outdoor play, as well as fine motor tasks like drawing, cutting, using tools, and building with small objects.
- Children practise pencil control through mark-making and strengthen hand muscles using playdough and construction toys.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):

- We help children build confidence and positive relationships by encouraging sharing, turn-taking, and teamwork.

- Children learn to talk about their feelings, manage challenges, develop independence (such as dressing themselves), and form friendships through group activities and play.

Specific Areas of Learning (Built upon the Prime areas):

Literacy:

- We foster a love of reading and early writing through stories, rhymes and songs.
- Children listen to and join in with familiar books, practise recognising sounds and letters, begin to read simple words, and use mark-making to express their ideas, progressing towards writing words and short sentences.

Mathematics:

- We develop early number skills through counting, sorting and problem-solving in everyday activities.
- Children explore numbers through songs and games, recognise patterns, and learn about shapes, space and measure through building, puzzles, and practical experiences like comparing sizes or measuring ingredients.

Understanding the World:

- We encourage curiosity about people, places and the environment.
- Children learn about their own lives and others through discussions and celebrations, explore nature and seasonal changes, use simple technology, and investigate how things work through hands-on experiences.

Expressive Arts and Design:

- We inspire creativity and imagination through art, music, dance and role play.
- Children explore different materials, create their own artwork, use instruments, perform songs, and act out stories, developing confidence in expressing their ideas and feelings.

Curriculum Structure and Implementation

The EYFS curriculum is designed carefully, beginning with what is familiar and meaningful to children and gradually building knowledge, vocabulary and understanding over time. Provision and teaching are regularly reviewed and refined to ensure they meet the learning and developmental needs of all children.

Learning is organised through clearly defined topic-based or themed sequences (for example: *People Who Help Us, Rainforests, Weather and Seasons, Under the Sea, Transport*). These themes provide coherence, progression and curriculum breadth, ensuring coverage across all EYFS areas while maintaining high levels of engagement.

Curriculum implementation combines quality first teaching with well-planned provision. Provision encompasses the learning environment, resources, routines and adult interactions, both indoors and outdoors. This balance allows children to rehearse skills, deepen understanding and make independent choices while adults observe, assess and intervene purposefully.

Daily outdoor learning offers distinct opportunities for physical challenge, problem solving and teamwork.

Through exploration of the natural environment, children develop independence, resilience, collaboration and early scientific thinking, supporting strong preparation for the expectations of Key Stage 1.

Indoor and outdoor provision work cohesively to provide a balanced, language-rich curriculum with a strong emphasis on spoken language development.

Outdoor provision includes:

- Covered creative and mark-making areas
- Large-scale construction
- Garden and mud kitchen
- Sand and water play
- Stage with dressing up and musical instruments
- Playhouse, trikes and bikes

Indoor provision includes:

- A well-resourced reading corner
- Challenge areas
- Junk modelling
- Small world play
- Purpose-built early years construction resources

Provision is deliberately organised into a manageable number of clearly defined learning areas to support sustained shared thinking and high-quality adult interaction. Quality is prioritised over quantity, enabling adults to model language, extend vocabulary and deepen thinking. As children become more independent, adult scaffolding is reduced to promote independence, confidence and self-regulation.

Communication, Language and Literacy

Spoken language development is central to the EYFS curriculum. Children benefit from high-quality interactions, storytelling, structured conversations and carefully planned opportunities to use language for a range of purposes.

Adults model ambitious vocabulary, extend sentences, prompt explanation and encourage children to articulate their thinking. Role play, small world activities and shared storytelling support imagination, sentence structure and expressive language. Phonics and early writing activities strengthen listening skills, sound discrimination and confidence in speaking to others.

Writing opportunities are embedded across provision, and children have daily access to high-quality texts. A dedicated daily story time reinforces comprehension, vocabulary and enjoyment of books, with texts selected to link to curriculum themes and children's personal and emotional development.

The environment is language-rich, with purposeful print, labels, signs and visual prompts promoting links between spoken and written language.

Developing Independence and Learning Behaviours

Independence is explicitly taught and reinforced across the EYFS, aligned with whole-school priorities. Using the ShREC Approach (Share Attention, Respond, Expand, Conversation), staff support children to think, question and problem solve.

Children are encouraged to explore ideas using trial and error, understanding that making mistakes is a valuable part of learning. These carefully designed experiences promote resilience, curiosity and confidence.

Early Reading

Rigorous and systematic implementation of our chosen Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme (SSP), Little Wandle Letters and Sounds, begins in EYFS. Fidelity to this SSP that is implemented skilfully ensures a systematic, consistent and sequential approach to phonics. Daily phonics sessions enable children to learn letter-sound correspondences, blend sounds and develop early reading fluency.

The programme is research-informed, fully aligned with national expectations and ensures that all children, including those requiring additional support, can become confident and enthusiastic readers.

Mathematics

Mathematical learning is supported through NCETM Numberblocks materials, helping children develop strong number sense and conceptual understanding. The visual and narrative approach enables children to explore counting, composition and patterns in engaging and accessible ways, fostering confidence and enjoyment in mathematics from the outset.

Early Years staff benefit from 'in house' support from an LLE for mathematics who works directly with the local Maths Hub and NCTEM directly.

Impact of a Structured Daily Routine in EYFS

The organisation of the day in Early Years reflects a clear curriculum intent, where learning is carefully sequenced and delivered through a balance of child-initiated exploration and well-structured adult-led teaching. This predictable and consistent routine provides children with a secure framework, enabling them to develop independence, sustain high levels of engagement and build knowledge cumulatively over time. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stages of learning.

The implementation of the curriculum is underpinned by a thoughtfully structured daily timetable which includes:

- Registration and purposeful 'morning jobs', promoting independence, responsibility and positive learning behaviours
- Well-planned continuous provision, indoors and outdoors, enabling children to practise, embed and apply new knowledge and skills across all areas of learning
- Daily direct teaching sessions, which are ambitious and progressive, including:
- Systematic synthetic phonics (Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised), ensuring children develop secure early reading skills
- Mathematics delivered through a small steps approach, supported by Numberblocks, to develop depth of understanding
- Focused wider curriculum sessions that broaden children's knowledge of the world and contribute to their cultural capital
- Daily story time using high-quality, language-rich texts, fostering a love of reading and supporting language development and comprehension
- Weekly structured physical education sessions (Mondays), alongside additional opportunities in the summer term on the Stray, promoting physical development and wellbeing

Children have continuous access to drinking water, fresh fruit and high-quality toileting facilities. These support children's personal development, independence and readiness to learn, ensuring that time is used productively and that barriers to learning are minimised. Overall, the carefully structured day ensures that all children, including those who may be disadvantaged, are able to access a broad and ambitious curriculum, leading to strong progress from their starting points.

Progress and Assessment

All children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of entry, providing a reliable and accurate measure of individual starting points on entry to school.

Assessment is ongoing and formative, rooted in high-quality interactions, careful observation and regular review of children's learning. This ensures that teaching is responsive and that next steps are precisely matched to children's developmental needs, supporting secure progress across the curriculum. Parents are

actively involved through regular communication and termly one-to-one meetings, where children's learning, progress and next steps are shared.

End of year assessment is completed through the EYFS Profile, providing a comprehensive and summative overview of each child's attainment and progress in relation to the Early Learning Goals.

An open-door policy underpins strong and purposeful communication with families, ensuring that parents are well informed and able to contribute to their child's learning and development.

Community and Parent Partnerships

Parents are actively engaged as partners in their child's learning from the outset, recognising the critical importance of the Reception year in establishing strong foundations for future success. A consistent open-door approach at the start and end of each day enables informal, regular communication, fostering positive relationships and ensuring that information is shared promptly to support each child's wellbeing and progress. This is strengthened through bespoke transition arrangements, carefully tailored to individual needs, ensuring that children and families feel secure and well supported as they enter school.

Parental engagement is further developed through termly 'Stay and Play' sessions, providing meaningful opportunities for parents to observe learning in action and engage directly with the provision. Early information meetings on phonics and early reading equip parents with the knowledge and strategies to support learning effectively at home, contributing to strong outcomes in early literacy. Structured parent consultations, recorded within EYFS records, ensure that progress is regularly reviewed and discussed, with clear next steps identified. This collaborative approach supports continuity between home and school and has a positive impact on children's progress from their starting points.

Children benefit from a range of enrichment opportunities that enhance the breadth of the curriculum and contribute to their cultural capital. Regular participation in church services, including Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the Leavers' Service, strengthens links with St Peter's Church and supports children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Additional experiences, such as visits to the Stray, local seasonal walks, termly visits to Harrogate Library and attendance at the Christmas pantomime, provide meaningful contexts for learning, deepen understanding of the world and further support language development and engagement. Overall, these carefully planned opportunities and strong partnerships with families ensure that children are well supported, highly engaged and able to make sustained and meaningful progress across the Reception year.

First Published: May 2026

Last Updated: May 2026