

St Alban's C of E Academy

In Association with:
Manor Multi-Academy Trust



Early Years Policy

St Alban's C of E Academy

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION POLICY

BACKGROUND

The Early Years Foundation Policy at St Alban's C of E Academy has been developed by all Early Years staff, Manor Multi-Academy Trust and the Senior Leadership of the school. It has been developed using the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. (The Primary framework for literacy and mathematics is also used for those children progressing beyond ELG's in their Reception year). The period from age three to the end of the reception year is described as the foundation stage. It is a distinct stage and important both in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling. The stepping stones help guide children's development through the stage and the early learning goals set out what is expected for most children by the end of the foundation stage. It is important that early years practitioners work in partnership with parents and other adults. These may include therapists, health visitors, ESW, Educational Psychologists and school nurses. Partnerships are promoted by valuing and building on children's previous learning.

THE CHILD AS A LEARNER

In the Early Years children are developing more rapidly, intellectually and socially, than at any other subsequent stage in their lives. This growth is, however, very individual and children vary greatly in their maturity in the different areas of development and each child enters the setting with a unique range of experiences, abilities and understanding. The educational experiences planned at St Alban's C of E Academy will take account of these individual achievements and needs. The aim of the Early Years Curriculum at St Alban's C of E Academy is to nurture and build upon children's natural energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and sense of humour. Young children learn predominately through playing individually or co-operatively in small groups and, therefore, structured, planned play is the medium through which the Early Years Curriculum at St Alban's C of E Academy will predominantly be delivered.

Early Years Foundation Stage : Long term planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is mandatory for all schools and early years providers in Ofsted registered settings attended by young children i.e. from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday. There are four themes in the EYFS which express important principles underpinning effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children. The four themes are; A Unique Child; Positive Relationships; Enabling Environments; Learning and Development. Each of the underlying principles is supported by four Commitments. Our long term plan outlines how we put the principles and commitments of the EYFS into practice in our setting and is used alongside policies and procedures that underpin statutory welfare requirements.

Theme: A Unique Child

Principle
Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
Practice
Practitioners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps• support babies and children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture

- identify any need for additional support
- keep children safe
- value and respect all children and families equally

In our setting we support each **Unique Child** by recognising and respecting children's individual characteristics and temperament. We get to know each child really well through sensitive observations of their freely chosen play; by listening to them and their parents/ carers and by interacting in their play. As a result we are able to tune into their interests, schemas, communication and learning styles. By providing time, space and resources for child-initiated play, we enable children to explore, investigate, and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes. We ensure children feel valued, secure and confident to learn by acknowledging them as competent learners and building on what they can already do and understand.

Children's communication skills are supported through high quality adult/ child interactions where we provide good eye contact, follow the child's lead, tune into their focus of interest and have genuine conversations with children. We praise and affirm their communication, commenting on what they are doing or the focus of their attention and take opportunities to explain, repeat expand vocabulary to deepen thinking.

By working in partnership with parents and other agencies, and by providing an accessible and welcoming environment, we aim to include all children effectively. We use a visual timetable so that all children can feel secure in the knowledge of what will be happening throughout the day and can track the sequential progress of the day's events. We provide additional support for children's developing speech and language skills by using photographs, symbols, gestures and sign language.

We provide warm, responsive care and have an effective safeguarding policy and procedure. We respect and support children's dietary and medical needs, provide a range of healthy food and ensure fresh drinking water is always available. Children get fresh air and exercise through access to our secure outdoor area. We provide a safe, secure environment both indoors and outdoors where children can pursue their learning through a balance of physically active and restful learning opportunities. We explain and demonstrate clear, consistent boundaries and routines and help children to learn to assess risks and keep safe.

Theme: Positive Relationships

Principle
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
Practice
<p>Positive relationships are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging • sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests • supportive of the child's own efforts and independence • consistent in setting clear boundaries • stimulating • built on key person relationships in early years settings

In our setting we provide **Positive Relationships** by working as a close co-operative staff team and in partnership with parents, to support every child in our care. We make time to form good relationships with children and their families, initially through individual meetings with parents and their children and then through sensitive induction into our setting. We communicate with practitioners from previous settings to help make transitions smooth and seamless for children and families. When children first start Nursery parents are welcome to stay with children until they are settled at the beginning of each day, giving time for informal dialogue between parents and staff.

In EYFS as across the whole school we send out termly Curriculum Letters which explain the topics to be covered, the targets children will work towards and support that children could be given at home to support their development.

Parents are valued contributors to their child's individual Learning Journey and there is a two-way flow of information about children's progress. Nursery and Reception use Home/School reading journals, and Homework/Home Link Books to aid regular communication between home and school. Parents are helped to understand more about learning and teaching through workshops on important areas such as early reading, maths and physical development.

All staff are dedicated to getting to know the children really well, responding sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour and helping them become settled, secure and confident. We help children understand their own feelings and those of others, and support them in building friendships. Stories, Circle Time and Persona dolls are used to promote understanding and respect for different needs, views and cultures. By valuing their contributions, tuning into their interests and needs, encouraging and praising their achievements, we nurture children's self esteem and give them a strong sense of belonging. Nursery children are helped with the Transition into Reception by making regular visits, across the final half term, accompanied by familiar staff into the Reception learning environment. Children also have continuous opportunities throughout their time in Nursery to interact with, learn alongside and become familiar and confident with Reception children and Staff.

We use friendly and lively approaches to stimulate and support children, encouraging them to try several ways to make something work rather than giving up. In order to support children's development and learning effectively, we make sensitive observations of children and then respond and interact appropriately. Because we know the children well we are able to judge when children are ready to be taught new concepts and skills.

By joining in the children's play, we show that we respect and value the children's ideas and creativity; through exploring materials and researching alongside the children we encourage and extend curiosity, language development and thinking skills. By modelling how to be a learner, we help children reflect on their own learning.

Theme: Enabling Environments

Principle
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 carers.
Practice
<p>Enabling Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value all people • value learning <p>They offer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities • rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching • support for children to take risks and explore

Our setting provides children with an **Enabling Environment**. We understand that when children's physical and emotional needs are met they are more ready to take advantage of the play and learning opportunities on offer. Good communication with multi-agency professionals and links with other local settings helps us to support continuity of learning and consistency of care for children, enabling them to settle in quickly. Through building positive relationships with the children we enable them to learn. When children feel confident and secure in the environment they are willing to try things out, knowing their effort is valued.

In order to ensure that children's experiences and our teaching matches the needs of the children, we observe children carefully and gather evidence of their interests, development and learning in a range of ways. These include: written notes, annotated photographs, samples of children's mark making; conversations with children about their learning; and dialogue with parents. Careful analysis of this information will be used to: document children's Learning Journeys; to identify and track their progress across the six areas of learning and development; highlight children's achievements or their need for further support; and most importantly to plan the next steps for children.

Whilst our planning is informed by our observations of children's interests and developmental needs, where possible we also try to involve children in planning their learning experiences. We then link the children's ideas to objectives in the six areas of learning and development in the EYFS Framework and also ensure a balance of child-initiated learning opportunities and adult-led teaching. Not only is our teaching informed and enriched by the children's ideas and interests, but the children also use taught skills independently to support, extend and deepen their learning. In this way, adult-initiated and child-initiated learning opportunities are often interdependent and mutually enhanced. Experiences are differentiated for those who need extra support or challenge. Planning is flexible to enable us to capitalise on children's current fascinations or unplanned events such as a fall of snow or squirrels in the nursery garden, which can enable powerful learning.

We provide an enriching environment both inside and outside and move learning between the two areas as much as possible. To enable children to experience the weather and the seasons first hand we have a stock of Wellington boots, sunhats, and a canopy to protect them from the sun's rays. Being outside has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and our outdoor environment is resourced to support all six areas of learning and development. For example, children have opportunities to explore and investigate the natural world and a range of sights, smells, sounds and textures; they can plant flowers and vegetables; build dens and shelters; make large constructions with blocks; follow maths trails; use maps for treasure hunts; control programmable toys; do large scale painting with decorators' brushes; create music and dance; co-operate in parachute games; engage in action rhymes and traditional playground games; and enjoy role play that requires extra space such as fire fighting or postal delivery. We also provide quiet relaxing spaces like our seating in the shade for children to have space and time to watch, talk, reflect, draw, and enjoy stories.

Our inside environment also supports all areas of learning and development. Resources are accessible for children and are stored in such a way that they can easily find them and know where to put them away. For example, storage boxes and drawers are not only labelled with words but also with photographs of the contents.

We provide children with a range of multi-sensory experiences and open-ended resources to encourage exploration, investigation and creativity and to generally enrich their learning and development. We provide sensory trays where, early writing can be explored by mark-making in glitter, cornflour silk, shaving foam, soapy sand or finger paints. Exploring playdough and clay is not only a satisfying sensory and therapeutic experience, but it also helps develop children's manipulative skills. Water play and trays of material like sand, compost, lentils, give children opportunities to explore filling containers and investigate different sizes, shapes and capacity. Over the weeks we may add a range of other stimuli to the water tray, including: food colouring; ice cubes; small world sea creatures; sailing boats; bubbles; plastic tubing; and water wheels. In the sand or compost, children are able to dig for buried treasure, which might include objects of different texture, colours shape or size; or letters, words or numbers.

We have comfortable, attractive book corners where children can independently access and enjoy a range of picture books, stories, poems and non-fiction. These include books that: encourage interaction such as flap books and pop-up books; reflect cultural diversity and additional needs through positive images; support children who are experiencing a variety of life events e.g. new sibling, admission into hospital; have been written by the children with the practitioners; and have photos of recent events in the setting with appropriate captions. There are soft toys for children to cuddle and read stories to, Story Sacks and puppets for them to engage in retelling stories, and a cassette recorder for children to listen to taped stories and rhymes.

We resource the environment to give children scope for developing their imagination and begin to create stories through: small world play (dolls house; farm set; vehicles and play mat; garage; play people; railway track; cars, dinosaurs etc.); by providing resources for extending sand play (shells; pebbles; twigs; play people; lego bricks; diggers; cars; trucks; dinosaurs; large black tray) so children can create gardens, parks, building sites, castles, treasure islands or other imaginative scenarios. Dictaphones are used for children to record their stories as they tell them and musical instruments for them to add sound effects.

The children help us to plan and resource our role play area and we ensure that it not only supports children's creative development but also provides rich and meaningful opportunities for other areas of learning. For example, if the

children have decided they would like a Café this gives us opportunities for developing Communication Language and Literacy by providing a menu; an order pad; recipes; bills; receipts; posters; a "Specials" blackboard; signs such as "Open", "Closed" and "Pay here". There are also ideal opportunities for developing Problem Solving Reasoning and Numeracy through the number of items being ordered, the use of mathematical language such as "one more", "the biggest cake", "the round biscuit", and payment of the bill. In order to give children greater scope for creative play we also provide lengths of fabric for dressing up and other open-ended resources which the children can adapt and use imaginatively.

We have an inviting Writing area to encourage independent writing, with a range of attractive resources including: paper and card of different sizes, colours and shapes; pencils, crayons, felt tips; clipboards; postcards; envelopes; scissors; sticky tape; glue sticks; paper clips; hole punch; treasury tags/string; note books; message pads; old diaries and address books; blank coupons and forms to fill in. We provide a range of stimuli that is selected to reflect and extend the children's current interests such as: greetings cards; postcards; party invitations; letters and addressed envelopes; leaflets; flap books; zig zag books. Each child has a box or tray with their name and photo (for younger children) on to encourage the children to draw and write messages for each other.

Our Creative area has materials for "placing and arranging", such as shells, leaves, pebbles, feathers, buttons and seeds. To support "designing and making", we provide empty boxes, cardboard tubes, lolly sticks, paper and card, scissors, masking tape, glue, hole punch etc. We also use a range of kits such as duplo, mobilo, magnetic blocks and lego to support construction play. In addition we display photos of buildings, bridges and vehicles to inspire children with their constructions, and provide clipboards and pencils for them to record their ideas. At the appropriate stage, children are encouraged to take photographs with the digital camera and to write captions on the computer; draw and label diagrams of their models; and even write instructions on how to build them.

Children have lots of opportunities to develop Problem Solving Reasoning and Numeracy in both the indoor and outdoor environment. As much as possible we use real life situations to make problem solving meaningful, for example: celebrating birthdays; preparing for snack time; writing shopping lists; cooking; planning for a party; scoring for games. The children also enjoy going on Maths trails to look for different shapes and numbers, counting the "giant strides" or "kangaroo jumps" they make as they search. Treasure hunts and obstacle courses support children with their positional language as they look *under, on top of, next to, behind,* and travel *through, round and over.*

We have some interesting collections of objects for children to sort, classify, order and count, such as: shells, pebbles, buttons, beads; keys; stacking boxes. The children help us to make number lines; perhaps by collecting a number of objects and putting them in a little transparent bag to hang on a hook, above which is the number; or by using the digital camera to photograph a number of objects. We gather and use props to support the many number rhymes that the children enjoy, such as: Five Little Speckled Frogs; Five Little Ducks; Ten Green Bottles; Ten Little Monkeys jumping on the bed.

Theme: Learning and Development

Principle

Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Practice

Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

They foster the characteristics of effective early learning

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

EYFS Statutory Framework

I. 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.

II. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

III. The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, 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 individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

IV. The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The **learning and development requirements** cover:

- the *areas of learning and development* which must shape learning opportunities and experiences (*educational programmes*) for children in all early years settings;
- the *early learning goals* that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five); and
- *assessment arrangements* for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

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V. The **safeguarding and welfare requirements** cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

(...p2/3 EYFS Statutory Framework)

In our setting we acknowledge and value children's play and exploration as a powerful way in which they develop and learn, so we ensure a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. In order to promote children's choice, exploration and independent learning, we ensure that the environment is accessible with a wide range of interesting, inviting opportunities. Through flexible planning we allow children time for sustained involvement in self-chosen learning opportunities and our high quality interactions facilitate and extend children's creativity and critical thinking. Our cross-curricular planning, informed by children's interests and needs, ensures all six areas of learning and development are treated with equal importance and helps children make links in their learning.

• **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

By building caring attachments with children and establishing an atmosphere in which achievement is valued, we nurture children's self esteem and positive dispositions to learn. These include curiosity; interest and excitement; exploration and investigation; sustained involvement; perseverance; resilience and critical thinking. We promote children's independence by making them feel secure, having an accessible environment and familiar routines. They are encouraged to put their independence to good use by pouring their own drink at snack time, making choices, and selecting their own resources.

We model good behaviour and respectful attitudes and support children in forming friendships, giving them opportunities to play in groups of various sizes. By using Circle Time and stories to evoke discussion about feelings, we help children understand their own feelings and those of other people. We use Values Education to support children in understanding important values such as respect, patience, trust, and co-operation. Respect and empathy for difference is nurtured through the use of Persona dolls and stories that reflect positive images of cultural diversity and disability.

• **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

• **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

We engage in high quality adult-child interactions to encourage, support and extend children's speech and language development. We promote an ethos where listening to children's ideas and feelings is important, where books are treated with respect and excited anticipation, and where children's attempts at mark making and early writing are valued and encouraged.

Children's early reading is supported through enjoyable, fun learning opportunities from "Letters and Sounds" and enhanced by Floppy Phonics and Jolly Phonics. We ensure that they have daily experience of action rhymes, songs and stories. We have a print rich environment with signs for children to read and an attractive book corner that houses a good range of stories, poetry and non-fiction books. Children are able to interact and recreate stories with props such as Story Sacks, puppets. We model the process of reading and writing for children. For example, when preparing for the following day's cooking activity we read the recipe and write a shopping list together for the ingredients we need.

Swirling ribbons on sticks, painting with decorators' brushes outside and stirring mixtures in cooking are amongst the learning opportunities to help develop children's shoulder and arm movements for writing. Fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination are encouraged through such learning opportunities as finger rhymes, bead threading, pouring in the water tray and using tweezers to pick up small items. Opportunities for mark making are provided in the sensory trays

with soapy sand, gloop and finger paints. The children can access a well-equipped writing table to encourage their emergent writing.

• **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

We capitalise on opportunities to count such as: counting the buttons on a child's coat as we help them do them up; counting the number of children in the group and the number of cups at snack time. Children sort, classify, order and count a range of items; lively number rhymes with supporting props help children with counting on and counting backwards; and we involve the children in making interesting number lines. As much as possible we use real life situations to make problem solving meaningful, for example when planning for a party: counting the number of invitations; thinking about quantities when writing the shopping list; weighing out ingredients when cooking the birthday cake; counting the number of candles; making party hats the right size; setting the table with the right number of place mats, plates, cups; wrapping different shape presents. Role play areas also help children to practise and consolidate skills in a meaningful context, for example when ordering a number of cakes in the café, paying for items in the shop, weighing the baby at the clinic, stacking the saucepans in the home corner, dialling numbers on the telephone, making appointments at the doctor's surgery.

All number work is supported with colourful, attractive apparatus such as Numicon which can be used in the sand, water, paint, role play areas to consolidate and deepen children's learning.

The children also enjoy going on Maths trails to search for numbers in the environment, for example numerals on doors, clocks, car registration plates, calendars; the number of windows, chimneys, trees, yellow flowers they can find etc. Treasure hunts support children with their positional language as they search for treasure *under, on top of, next to, behind*. They also construct obstacle courses and travel *through, round and over*. The children take part in and devise target number games outside, throwing bean bags onto a chalked number grid or counting up the score as they successfully throw beanbags into a bucket. To help their developing ideas of size we have stacking boxes and use stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears and the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

• **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

We make extensive use of our indoor and outdoor environment and the local community to support children's developing knowledge and understanding of the world. To engage their curiosity and provoke "exploration and investigation" and "designing and making" skills we provide children with a range of multi-sensory experiences and open-ended resources as described in the section on "Enabling Environment".

We provide a range of equipment to support children's interest and developing ability in using ICT; i.e. battery operated toys; torches; cassette recorder; portable CD player; digital camera; flip video cameras; Fizzbooks; programmable toys; computers; and Smart Board. We teach children the skills to be able to use this equipment effectively and as independently as possible, for example knowing: which buttons they need to press to make the tape recorder stop, start and rewind; how to make the programmable toy go forwards, backwards and change direction; how to take a picture with the digital camera and view the photograph in the display screen; camera; how to use the mouse on the computer; how to self register on the Smart board.

In our setting we support children's sense of "Time" with consistent daily routines, sequential photographs/pictures of routines such as hand washing and our visual timetable of the day's events. We support and enable children to re-enact routines and events in the day during role play, for example: preparing breakfast, lunch and tea in the Home Corner; getting the baby ready for bed; ordering, cooking and eating a meal in the Café. We discuss present and past events such as what we did yesterday, last week or today and what we will do tomorrow. By comparing photos of the

children now with when they were younger we help them notice and discuss changes over time. Similarly we plant seeds and monitor their growth and notice changes in the seasons. We invite parents and grandparents to tell us what life was like when they were children

We support a sense of "Place" by talking about children's favourite places, encouraging them to investigate different features of our outdoor area and local environment. Visits to the local church, park and shops and a study of the road our school is on support this process and we often provide children with photos of local features to find en route. We encourage children to care for the environment by: involving them in growing plants and vegetables in our garden; by identifying features of the local environment that look uncared for or spoilt with litter, then discussing how we can improve it. By sharing photographs and picture books of different places such as cities, villages, the beach, mountains, deserts and jungles we introduce them to a range of different environments. We also provide play maps and small world equipment for children to create their own environments.

To support learning about "Communities" we ask parents to share photographs of special people in their family and share some stories and songs they use at home. Charlie, our teddy bear, goes home with a different child from our setting each day and children talk about what Charlie has done whilst with them. People from the local community are invited to come and tell us about their jobs and sometimes we are lucky enough to visit them on site, such as the shopkeeper, the school nurse, the police, the fire service, the lollipop person.

Children have opportunities to sample food from a variety of cultures when we are celebrating a range of festivals. We provide books and photos that show a range of dress and customs, ensuring that we use modern photographs, especially of parts of the world that are commonly stereotyped and misrepresented. We have notices and books in other languages, especially home languages of any children in our setting with EAL. In Circle Time we enable children to learn positive attitudes and behaviour towards people who are different from themselves through stories and Persona dolls.

• **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

We support the physical development of children with safe but challenging environments both indoors and outside, suited to the children's stage of development, for example we: ensure that equipment is appropriate to the size and weight of the children and offers challenges to children at different levels of development. A balance of active and restful experiences is offered both inside and outside. Children have opportunities for energetic learning opportunities like throwing, rolling, kicking and catching games and developing their own vigorous play such as Superheroes. We help develop children's spatial awareness by giving them opportunities to create pathways, negotiate obstacle courses and re-enact stories such as "We're going on a Bear Hunt". Children are helped to explore the different ways they can move such as jumping, marching, tip-toeing, rolling, slithering. We provide time and opportunity for children with physical difficulties or motor impairments to develop their physical skills, working in partnership with relevant specialists such as physiotherapists and occupational therapist.

We support children's health and bodily awareness by: being aware of specific health difficulties such as allergies; helping children to enjoy their food and appreciate healthier choices by combining favourites with new tastes and textures; having fresh drinking water available; promoting the benefits of exercise; planning opportunities, particularly after exercise, for children to talk about how their bodies feel; encouraging good hygiene.

Fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination are encouraged through giving children opportunities to use a range of tools and equipment such as: toys with push buttons, lift the flap books; playdough and clay; paintbrushes and rollers; jugs for pouring; cooking utensils; pegs and washing lines; tongs and tweezers; musical instruments; small world toys; beads for threading; construction kits that fit together by pushing, twisting, slotting or magnetism

• **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings

through a variety of learning opportunities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

We ensure that the ethos of our setting enables children to be creative by valuing their responses to experiences and the unique ways in which they express and communicate their ideas. We support their creativity and critical thinking across all six areas of learning and development. Multi-sensory experiences are offered through many resources such as: soft feathers; silk squares; mirrors; shiny mobiles; smooth pebbles; bubbles; muslin bags containing herbs to smell; fragrant flowers; the beauty of the natural world. We observe and reflect on children's responses and take opportunities to join in as co-explorers, supporting and extending children's descriptive vocabulary of the colours, textures, smells and sounds they experience. Children are provided with a range of media and materials in which to respond and express their ideas, for example: gloop; playdough; clay; paint; crayons; pastels; chalks; charcoal; collage materials; strips of fabric and weaving frames; natural resources.

We provide recorded music from a range of styles and cultures, giving children experiences of different instruments, moods and rhythms. Children are encouraged to explore a variety of percussion instruments and to create their own music to express their ideas and feelings or to respond to stories, poetry or art. They also have opportunities to paint whilst listening to music. CDs, musical instruments, scarves and streamers are available for children's spontaneous responses to music through movement and dance. We encourage children to develop a repertoire of movements such as twisting, twirling, curling, and support them in identifying how they can perform these in different ways such as slowly, quickly, strongly, gently and by reaching up high or bending low. Children are encouraged to use their movements expressively to create their own dances. We also provide them with opportunities to see professional dancers, musicians and storytellers.

We facilitate children's imaginative play by providing open-ended resources such as long lengths of fabric, which in the children's hands might become cloaks, rivers or magic carpets and large empty boxes that could be houses, pirate ships, caves... We model different voices and expressive intonation as we read stories to inspire children to use different voices for characters in their imaginative play. Most importantly, we give children time to develop their play scenarios and become fully involved.

THE CURRICULUM

In St Alban's C of E Academy's Foundation Stage there will be an interactive curriculum where learning is first hand, explorative and active where children:

- learn about themselves;
- learn about the family and the wider community,
- become independent, self-motivated learners,
- express their emotions,
- take ownership of their own learning,
- develop creativity,
- develop a wide range of skills and concepts,
- learn to enquire and problem solve,
- learn to explore and investigate;
- learn to evaluate and reflect.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the *prime areas*, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

Providers must also support children in four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

(...p5 EYFS Statutory Framework)

Area of learning and Development	Aspect
Prime Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Making relationships
	Self-confidence and self-awareness
	Managing feelings and behaviour
Physical Development	Moving and handling
	Health and self-care
Communication and Language	Listening and attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
Specific Areas	
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Numbers
	Shape, space and measure
Understanding the World	People and communities
	The world
	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Exploring and using media and materials
	Being imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning
Playing and exploring – engagement Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to 'have a go'
Active learning – motivation Being involved and concentrating Keeping trying Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
Creating and thinking critically – thinking Having their own ideas Making links Choosing ways to do things

THE ROLE OF ADULTS IN THE EARLY YEARS UNIT AT ST ALBAN'S C OF E ACADEMY

All adults who work or interact with young children play a crucial role in their learning. Children need interested, sensitive adults to support them as they learn by promoting qualities, skills attitudes and values which enable them to think and act for themselves, to begin to understand moral issues and to accept social responsibilities.

In the Foundation Stage of St Alban's C of E Academy we will ensure all the teaching staff have:

- a professional qualification and training;
- an understanding of child development and how children learn;
- the ability to plan programmes of learning appropriate to the particular group of children and/individuals;
- the ability to teach using a variety of strategies and approaches;
- an understanding of the Early Years curriculum and the EYFS in the context of their future learning;
- self confidence and self esteem;
- the ability to work as a member of a team and have good interpersonal skills;
- a sense of humour;
- good observational skills
- the ability to work under their own initiative;
- inestimable energy, enthusiasm and patience;
- the ability to articulate their educational philosophy;
- imagination;
- intellectual curiosity and vigour;
- commitment to teaching in the Early Years.

We will ensure a successful learning environment is provided by:

- sharing a common philosophy and perceptions of children's learning;
- supporting and providing a stimulating, supportive and purposeful ethos;
- sharing knowledge of child development and educational experiences;
- planning collaboratively for and assessing children's learning;
- sharing expertise, valuing each other's strengths and skills;
- providing role models for children, and reflecting this in all our relationships within the school and the wider community;
- promoting equal opportunities showing respect for all;
- setting agreed acceptable standards of behaviour;
- valuing and working towards a partnership between home, setting and community;
- ensuring we have an induction programme for parents/carers and encourage their participation;
- identifying individual needs for personal and professional development;
- Ongoing reviewing and assessing the Early Years setting and how it supports children's learning and development.

PARENTS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

At St Alban's C of E Academy we believe the starting point for developing positive links with the home is a belief in the philosophy of partnership, where parents and staff are seen to have different roles, but both have equal importance. This implies a two way process, with information and knowledge, passing freely between the partners. This partnership at St Alban's C of E Academy begins with meetings between parents, carers and Foundation Stage staff before they begin their Early Years education. These processes begin to form link between the nursery and home. To ensure this process is then further developed we will ensure that we:

- value the child's previous and present home experiences, acknowledging that they have as much to learn from parents/carers and their special knowledge and relationships with their individual children, as parents/carers have to learn about their children's continuing education in the school environment;
- aim for all parents/carers to feel confident, valued and able to contribute effectively to the education not only of their child but also other children;
- foster the use of parents/carers own skills, expertise and interests which reflect the cultural, social diversity and values that exist within the setting and wider community;
- provide a warm and welcoming environment which fosters a sense of belonging so that the setting is not seen as an isolated but part of the community;
- ensure opportunities exist for parents/carers to clarify and discuss how they can best be involved in the learning process; allowing for carers/family/social circumstances, work/further education commitments and personal inclination;
- support and encourage parents/carers in home-learning learning opportunities and within the Foundation Stage;
- show an awareness of the learning needs of the parents/carers themselves.
- Maintain good links between nursery and other carers such as wrap-around care and child minders.

At St Alban's C of E Academy we believe effective partnerships which results in high quality learning depends on all the knowledge, skill, effort and example of all adults.

We believe successful learning involves adults and children . . .

Sharing
Planning
Observing
Recording
Evaluating
Co-operating
and celebrating together.

However these Early Learning Goals do not themselves constitute a curriculum. They are goals for learning for most children to achieve by the time they leave the Foundation stage, though some children will progress beyond these goals whilst still in Reception. Our aim is to provide a firm and effective foundation for later

achievement with learning objectives that dovetail into the National Curriculum and the Primary framework for literacy and mathematics.

The Early Years curriculum will be delivered through cross curricular topics in Nursery and Reception and, in preparation for the transition into KSI, separate elements of literacy and numeracy teaching introduced to Reception classes at the appropriate time.

It will develop knowledge, attitudes, values, understanding and experience across subject boundaries.

It will have structure, breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression and continuity.

By the end of the foundation stage, the majority children will have achieved Early Learning Goals set out by the DFES.

On entrance to both Nursery and Reception and upon leaving Reception children will take part in Aspects and PIPS baseline assessment. This will enable teachers to identify a starting point and the next steps for each individual child's development.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Practitioners will need to plan for each child's individual learning requirements, including those children who need additional support or have particular needs or disabilities and also for children who appear gifted or talented. The focus should be on removing barriers for children where they already exist and on preventing learning difficulties from developing. Early years practitioners have a key role to play in identifying learning needs and responding quickly to any area of particular difficulty, to develop an effective strategy to meet these needs so that later difficulties can be avoided. Wherever possible, practitioners should work together with staff from other agencies, such as therapy and sensory impairment services, to provide the best learning opportunities for individual children.

Practitioners should take specific action to help children with special educational needs to make the best possible progress by:

- providing for those who need help with communication, language and literacy skills through, for example:
 - using alternative and augmentative communication, language including signs and symbols;
 - using visual and written materials in different formats, including large print and symbol text;
 - using information and communication technology, other technological aids and taped materials.
- Planning, where necessary to develop understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences through, for example:
 - using materials and resources that children can access through sight, touch, sound and smell;
 - using word descriptions and other stimuli to make up for a lack of first-hand experiences;
 - using information and communication technology, visual and other materials to increase children's knowledge of the wider world.
- Planning for full participation in learning and in physical and practical activity through , for example:
 - providing additional support from adults when needed;
 - adapting learning opportunities or environments and providing alternative learning opportunities where appropriate;

- using specialist aids and equipment.
- Helping children who have particular difficulties with behaviour to take part in learning effectively through, for example:
 - adapting learning opportunities or environments and providing alternative learning opportunities where appropriate;
 - setting reasonable expectations which have been discussed with the child;
 - establishing clear boundaries;
 - appreciating and praising children's efforts;
 - giving children every chance and encouragement to develop the skills they need to work well with child or children;
 - helping children to value and respect their own contribution and that of others.

GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN.

Practitioners should take specific action to help children with special educational needs to make the best possible progress by:

- Helping gifted and talented children to progress further by
 - planning appropriately levelled and stimulating learning opportunities.
 - allowing children the opportunities, support and resources to extend their own learning.
 - giving children the confidence to use and exhibit their skills/ talents in all curriculum areas.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Some children in early years settings will have a home language other than English. Practitioners will value this linguistic diversity and provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning. These children may spend a long time listening before they speak English and will often be able to understand much of what they hear, particularly where communication through gesture, sign or facial expression and other visual images is encouraged. Learning opportunities should be planned to help children develop their English, and support given from staff within the setting.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Assessment and record keeping will be consistent with the whole school's policy on assessment. In the Early Years we will ensure it:

- Is manageable and an intrinsic part of everyday practice;
- Identifies children's learning and subsequent progress;
- Becomes the basis of record keeping and future planning for each child;
- Forms part of a continuous and ongoing process throughout the phases of education;
- Is focused, integral to and led by whole setting development and curriculum planning;
- Assists in the early identification of children with special educational needs including the more able;
- Provides the basis for informing parents about their child's progress;
- Is a shared process of review with adults and children working together towards agreed targets;
- Assists the school in evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.
- Will inform the completion of the Early Years Profile by the end of the Foundation Stage.

CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

All children's development is a continuous process that does not proceed uniformly or at an even pace. Careful planning and development of learning opportunities, teaching approaches and strategies, organisation of the learning environment and the range of experiences will ensure that the children experience a continuum from an Early Years based curriculum based on Early Learning Goals to the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

Clear transition arrangements ensure smooth, happy transfer from one setting to another. To achieve this well ensure there is:

- Close links between staff in Year 1, Reception and Nursery classes, play groups, carers and parents;
- Exchanges of work e.g. nursery children's pictures displayed in reception class prior to admission;
- Older children from the school supporting Early Years children, e.g. reading stories;
- Shared record of an individual child, including medical information which may affect learning and assessment;
- Gradual introduction into the new Nursery setting so that children can be admitted in small groups where possible, with children they know from previous setting;
- Sensitive introductions to the routines e.g. playtimes and lunchtimes; collective worship.
- Preparing for transition by introducing some routines and teaching styles from the next setting.
- Induction meetings and workshops for Parents and Carers, sharing information and giving the opportunity for them to ask questions.
- Regular time in the final half term for Nursery children to visit their new Teacher and classroom, accompanied by familiar staff.
- Reception children having opportunities to meet and visit their new Year One Teacher and classroom.

ADULTS WILL ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

With regard to race and culture by providing experiences that:

- Recognise, respect and give value to children and families from all races and cultures;
- Actively seek to ensure good role models;
- Do not serve to reinforce negative stereotypes;

With regard to gender by providing experiences that:

- Involve all children in the full range of the curriculum;
- Promote positive role models avoiding stereotypes;
- Engender an equal expectation.

With regard to children with special educational needs and or disability by providing:

- Appropriate resources to aid accessibility to all aspects of the life of the setting;
- Opportunities that encourage independence and raise levels of confidence;
- Staff development that ensures an understanding and knowledge of the needs of the individual child;
- Access to positive role models.

With regard to socially and economically deprived children by providing experiences that:

- Ensure that no child feels less valued than any other;
- Take place within a stable and secure environment;
- Encourage, support and develop the family as a whole.

POLICY REGARDING MOBILE PHONES IN SETTING

All staff and adults are required not to have mobile phones out or in use in the setting during the hours children are present.

Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by staff and directors.