



St Alban's

Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Member of St Clare's Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Diocese of Hallam

Let God's love shine in our lives as we grow and learn together

EYFS Policy Updated April 2024

Approved by:

Date: 15th December 2022

Last reviewed on:

April 2024

Next review due by:

Autumn 2024

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Context

St Alban's is an average sized Catholic Primary and Nursery School, a member of St Clare CMAT, Diocese of Hallam and works closely with the Catholic Dearne Valley Family of Schools as well as the Sheffield Catholic Schools who are part of St Clare's. Our mission as a Catholic school is to create and develop a community centred upon the teaching of Jesus Christ where all individuals are enabled to reach their full potential in all elements of their lives. Our age range is 2 to 11 with 217 on roll, 187 FTE R – Y6. St Alban's Nursery opened in September 2021, and is led by teachers and experienced qualified Early Years practitioners and has continued to grow in numbers. St Alban's serves the local parishes of St Alban's Catholic Church of Denaby and Conisbrough and Blessed English Martyrs, Mexborough all of which are in the town of Doncaster. The school is in the highest 20% of socio-economically deprived catchments in the country and is one of the 5 most deprived schools in Doncaster with a changing profile of number of Catholics attending. In recent years, there have been children with more complex needs attending and from Y4 down to our youngest learners in Nursery, 80% of children in these classes fall within the 10% most disadvantaged in the country. At St Alban's 41% children are disadvantaged and a higher than average proportion of children with SEN at 32%, most of whom have speech, language and communication (63%) and/or social, emotional and mental health (27%) needs. Children entering EYFS are doing so with increasingly significant needs and our current Reception class have 44% of children with complex SEN. Most children at St Alban's are of White British heritage, with a lower than average proportion of children with EAL at 3.23%. St Alban's has lower than national levels of stability and since January 2021 there has been a 15% increase in the number on roll (R – Y6) therefore increasing mobility factors. Prior to COVID, attendance was 97.48% but reduced significantly with 27.8% persistently absent in 21/22 academic year. During the school year 22/23, attendance improved at a significantly higher rate than the national primary rate reaching 94.03%, an increase of 2.13% on 21/22 and a reduction to less than national levels for persistent absence at 19.6%.

Aims

"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 2021)

This policy aims to ensure:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

Structure of the EYFS

At St Alban's we have a 2-year-old provision with 5 am spaces 9am-12pm and 5 pm spaces 12.30pm- 3.30pm.

We have a 3 and 4-year-old provision with 26 spaces, offering funded places 9am-3.00pm and additional unfunded wrap around care from 8am-9am and 3pm-4.30pm.

Eligible parents will be able to access their funded entitlement hours.

We have a reception class, offering 30 places at full school time hours.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These are called the prime areas:

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

Four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas.

These are called the specific areas:

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

Throughout their time in Nursery and Reception, our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs)- Appendix 1

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

Planning

In EYFS the long term plan indicates topics and expeditions covered every term. Short term plans outline indoor and outdoor provisions on a weekly basis. RWI planning is used to support the teaching of phonics, Pie Corbett reading spine supports literacy with well-chosen texts and White Rose/NCETM planning enhances the maths provision in the classroom.

We also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, we consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In EYFS we create long and short term plans to ensure full curriculum coverage and a progression of skills and knowledge in EYFS and into KS1. Although we create plans, teachers must still remain flexible in their approach and

adapt teaching and learning where necessary in response to the children's interests and assessments. For example, if a creative activity has been planned and set up but very few children engage with it, staff need to respond to this and change the activity to something more engaging for the children. They should not continue with an activity that is not supporting learning correctly.

Long term Planning:

Each year the EYFS staff will agree on a series of topics or themes which will be covered during each term. By agreeing these topics, we are ensuring the curriculum remains broad and balanced. Both Nursery and Reception will follow the same broad topics but will respond to the interests and learning of the children in their class within these topics. The long term planning document will detail which topics will be covered and what learning will take place for each area of the curriculum each half term.

Weekly Adult focus planning:

Each week staff will create a plan detailing the adult led sessions and enhanced provisions taking place that week. This plan will include whole class/group carpet sessions and any adult led small group tasks taking place.

Teaching and Learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult supported/initiated and child-initiated activities. We respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

Learning Through Play

In EYFS, it is vital that children have access to high quality continuous provision that promotes independence, allows them to make choices and to explore their own creativity and ideas. When supporting children through play adults:

- Show genuine interest and enthusiasm for the game or activity
- Play on the children's level, not sitting in a chair or standing above them
- Provide a commentary of what you or the child is doing to model language, e.g. "I am going to put this fluffy sheep in the field because I know sheep love to eat grass"
- Consider how you can move play or learning forwards without changing the game too much
- Keep the child's next steps in mind but do not force it if it does not lend itself naturally to the game.
- Model social skills and 'Think Out Loud' during the game e.g. "I wonder if John would like to join in this game, he really likes dinosaurs and I can see he is on his own."
- Model good habits and Think out Loud, "I have finished with these dinosaurs, I need to put them away before I move to another area."

Learning Environments and Continuous Provision

EYFS classrooms should provide a stimulating, well organised learning environment that allows children to learn through play across all seven areas of learning. Continuous provision should be:

- Appealing to the children
- Well organised
- Accessible for the children
- Clearly labelled using photos and text

- Enhanced appropriately (based on assessments, theme or children's interests)
- Clutter free

Reception and Nursery staff will decide which areas of continuous provision are most appropriate for their classrooms and will ensure that classrooms do not become cramped or cluttered

Children are to be encouraged to look after their belongings and classroom equipment, to return equipment to its correct storage place, and to tidy up after any activity. Teachers should lead by example, by keeping their own belongings tidy, and by providing a stimulating classroom environment.

At St Alban's, classroom environments both support and enrich the learning of all children. As well as being vibrant and welcoming, the classroom environment can be a learning tool and a way of engaging children. It supports, promotes and celebrates learning. It creates a sense of ownership and builds 'community'. An effective classroom environment is an interactive resource, supporting teaching, learning and assessment.

- Maths Working Wall- Showing current learning including maths vocabulary, questions, concrete and pictorial examples, pupil voice and children's work.
- Literacy Working Wall- Showing current topic/book including vocabulary, questions, pupil voice and children's work. Class text will be displayed throughout the provision.
- RE Display including- Current topic, vocabulary, reflective questions, word of the week and examples of children's work (If possible.)
- Children's own work displayed and celebrated.
- Numerals displayed both inside and outside to promote counting and numeral recognition.
- Alphabet displayed inside and outside to support recognition of letters and sounds.
- RWI Frieze to support with teaching of RWI and for recognition of letters and sounds.
- Varied examples of environmental print for directions, labels, instructions and information.
- Rich Vocabulary in all areas of learning.
- Visual timetable.
- Vocabulary, signs and labels to be in pre-cursive font.

Adult led learning

In EYFS, most learning is done through play, but there are times when an adult led activity is more appropriate to ensure we are delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. The amount of adult led activities and the length depends on the age of the children.

Two- Three Year Olds – One carpet adult led activity per session (morning or afternoon), these should last 5-10 minutes. Two adult supported tasks within the child's choice of provision.

Three – Four year olds – One carpet adult led activity per session (morning or afternoon), these should last 10-15 minutes. Two adult supported tasks within the child's choice of provision. For those children who come to Nursery for 30 hours, an additional carpet activity will take place in each session.

Four- Five Year olds – Two or three adult led carpet activities per day, roughly 15-20 minutes each with the exception of RWI. Children will take part in focus tasks throughout the week in maths, writing and RE/RHE/topic.

Handwriting

In EYFS, children should learn handwriting through movement and play with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children must develop fine and gross motor skills, manipulative skills and good hand-eye coordination to equip them with appropriate muscle strength and control needed to begin forming letters.

Children will:

- Practice gross, fine and manipulative skills daily through structured sessions as well as play;
- Develop gross motor control through activities such as: climbing, throwing, ribbon dancing, action songs and rhymes, sky writing, large scale painting on walls or playground and upper-body weight-bearing activities like wheelbarrow or animal walking;
- Develop fine motor control through various activities such as: dough/pen disco sessions, threading beads or pasta on to string, threading pipe cleaners through a colander, play dough, beads, sand and water play, finger rhymes, using glue spreaders and sewing;
- Manipulate objects with increasing control such as use scissors to cut along lines with greater accuracy, using tools such as hammers to manipulate items such as golf tees hammered into a pumpkin, use cooking utensils to stir and whisk and tweezers to move increasingly smaller items with good speed and accuracy;
- Nursery will begin with focusing on up and down movements, then side-to-side, next circles and finally diagonal movements using a multisensory approach. If children struggle to form these basic shapes, they are likely to have difficulties forming letters and numbers
- Trace horizontal lines, vertical lines, wavy lines, shapes and letters.;
- Practice writing the letter without a pencil first by sky writing letters, writing on their palm with their finger and writing with their finger on their partner's back;
- Use different mediums to form letters, chalk, in cornflour, foam, paint etc;
- Learn and use edited 'Read, Write, Inc' letter formation rhymes to support writing pre-cursive the letters;
- If ready, Nursery to start pre-cursive letter formation in Summer 1 and Reception to start pre-cursive from Autumn 1;
- Write on lined paper as this is important for the letter's orientation on the line;



Phonics

At St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery school we use Read Write Inc Phonics (RWI) to give your child the best possible start with their literacy.

In nursery, children are introduced to Phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds programme. Phase 1 supports the development of speaking and listening and awareness of sounds.

Children working within Phase 1 will;

- Explore and experiment with sounds and words.
- Distinguish between sounds in the environment and phonemes.
- Show awareness of rhyme and alliteration.

They will play a variety of games and activities with the children and music has a key part in developing children's language. Adult led activities involve modelling speaking and listening, 'Fred talk' to model how to blend (Can you get your c-oa-t?), interact and talk with the children is critical to the success of Phase 1 activities and to promoting the children's speaking and listening skills.

Daily Nursery RWI lessons start during the Spring term. Children have a short phonics input session, where they are taught two new Set 1 sounds per week, and they also review previously taught sounds every day. Pupils practice Fred talk, to develop decoding skills, and they learn to write the corresponding graphemes for the sounds they have been taught. Children also write simple CVC words, using their GPC knowledge to assist them. Towards the end of the summer term, there is an increase in the phonics focus during daily literacy lessons, where children are encouraged to hear and write the initial sounds in words.

Reception RWI lessons start immediately after Reception teachers have completed their Baseline Assessment. Children are organised into RWI Groups based on their phonic knowledge, ability to orally blend taught phonemes and read simple CVC words. This ensures the correct level of support, challenge and progression in the teaching of reading in Reception. Four RWI lessons are taught every week and each lesson lasts for approximately 30 minutes

Assessment

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.

2-Year-Old Progress Check

We undertake developmental checks on all children where possible by the time they are 2 years 6 months. The check is supported by parents/carers and health visitors to ensure accuracy. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires that parents and carers must be supplied with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language. This should be completed when the child is aged between 24-36 months.

The aims of the progress check are to:

- Review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS.
- Share this information with parents at an agreed time to ensure they have a clear picture of their child's development.
- Enable us to understand the child's needs and plan activities and experiences to meet them in the setting.
- Enable parents to understand the child's needs and enhance development at home, with support from the setting.
- Note areas where the child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected.
- Describe actions the setting intends to take to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate).

Reception Baseline

Within the first six weeks of starting in Reception, children will undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment -

The assessment consists of:

- mathematics tasks
 - early number
 - early calculation (early addition/subtraction)
 - mathematical language
 - early understanding of pattern
- LCL tasks
 - early vocabulary
 - phonological awareness
 - early comprehension

The Early Years Foundation Profile

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- 2=Meeting expected levels of development
- 1=Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

Observation

In EYFS we regularly observe the children in their play. Sometimes, we record these observations using an online Learning Journey, 'SeeSaw' or record learning in a class floor book. Staff keep a record of 'significant moments' in a child's development, these observations enable staff to support them in making an overall assessment of a child's learning. Each term overall assessments are made using any evidence collected and practitioner knowledge of the children.

Assessments are also made on a day to day basis and may or may not be recorded. For example, when observing a child in the creative area, a member of staff may notice that they are struggling to use scissors correctly. The staff member may create an observation of that child and make the relevant assessments linked to the observation, or they may simply share this knowledge with other staff who will all seek to support the child in developing their cutting skills over the coming weeks. If several children are observed as having difficulty in the same area, staff may agree to plan a focus activity in the following weeks to support learning in this area.

Working with parents

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning.

- Holding information evenings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and at our home visits.

- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Parent consultation in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys;
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing parents with an annual end of year report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.
- Parents also receive school news through the school spider app and website.

Home Visits

Prior to any child being welcomed into our school the first point of contact will be made, with both parents and child, in the home.

- A home visit will be made shortly before the child is due to start /Two-year-old provision/Nursery or those children new to St Alban's entering Reception.
- Two members of staff will make the visit
- The visit will give the staff the opportunity to meet both parents and child in comfortable and secure surroundings
- If home visits are not possible arrangements will be made for the family to meet in school.
- Meetings will be used, not only to get to know parents and child, but additionally to explain routines, times, interact with the child etc. and to answer any questions that may be asked of the Nursery or the school.
- Meetings will give an opportunity parents and school to discuss mutual expectations or support that may be offered
- The opportunity will be available to arrange Two-Year-Old provision/Nursery visits and Reception visits. Parents and child will visit together to enable smooth settling procedures
- Communication will be encouraged between settings where children attended before or after school clubs or day care setting

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

We are a healthy school and participate in free milk for under-fives scheme and free fruit. For our Nursery and Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal.

Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only.

Children are taught the importance of keeping clean and washing their hands correctly.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Safeguarding Leads and Governor every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1:

The Early Learning Goal Descriptors

Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

ELG: Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG: Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG: Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience, and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet, and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

ELG: Building Relationships

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Physical Development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping, and climbing.

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy

ELG: Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems and during role-play.

ELG: Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

ELG: Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

ELG: Number

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number.
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

ELG: Numerical Patterns

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and –when appropriate – maps.

ELG: The Natural World

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools, and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Invent, adapt, and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Perform songs, rhymes, poems, and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

Appendix 2. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy