

Early Years Foundation Stage

Our Curricular Aims

Our EYFS curriculum is designed around the needs of our cohort and the rigorous demands of the Early Years framework. What is different about St Columb Minor Academy is our strong focus on:

- **Eco school status**
- **International focus**
- **Music and Sport**
- **Outdoor learning**
- **Tailored curriculum provision.**

Our EYFS curriculum focusses on a practical, play based approach to learning, based on the needs and interests of our children which is delivered mainly through topic based planning.

Our curricular aims are:

- To create a culture of very high aspiration and enable every pupil to make outstanding progress regardless of their starting point.
- To support every pupil to use language and numbers effectively, ensuring that every pupil develops a good level of early literacy and numeracy. By doing so, this will ensure that all pupils are well prepared as they move through the school to enable them to improve their social life, career prospects and social mobility in a rapidly changing world.
- To encourage in our pupils a respect for religious and moral values and tolerance of other races, religions and ways of life.
- To encourage, promote and foster independent learners and help them to develop their resilience so that they are equipped well to 'ride the wave of life'

Intent

The intent of the EYFS curriculum is the content we expect children to learn. At St Columb Minor Academy our EYFS curriculum is taught with the consideration of the needs of all learners and we follow the children's interests. Pupils learn about their world through nature play and outdoor learning. Pupils work within the EYFS framework but increasing emphasis is placed on the teaching of numeracy and literacy skills. What we want the children to learn during each term is carefully planned out for in each area of learning and we embed the children's interests within these. Our curriculum goes beyond the experiences of the classroom to ensure that our children are exposed to the richest and most varied opportunities that we can provide.

We want our children to develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. Our EYFS curriculum enables us to ensure that the children are at the heart of learning. Staff are able to follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout the EYFS curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure that children meet their next steps. We ensure that we work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points. Furthermore, our EYFS curriculum prepares children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage and ensure children make good progress from their starting points.

Implementation

The implementation of the curriculum is how we go about teaching our curriculum. We want our pupils to 'know more' and 'remember more' and to be able to make links with their learning.

All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas in the EYFS curriculum:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Physical Development

Communication and Language

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

We teach children individually and in small groups as well as teaching whole class. Through a combination of teacher input and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop their learning independently through exploration and challenge. Our learning environments, both inside and outside are stimulating and exciting and relevant to the needs and age/stage of our children. We aim for our curriculum to be exciting and to inspire children to nurture a passion for lifelong learning, encouraging inquisitiveness and confidence in our pupils.

Daily guided activities are set up and planned that cover different areas of the EYFS framework and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. Areas of need and next steps are identified for all children to ensure good progress is made. There are also a range of stimulating and engaging activities which the children can access independently and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play. In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. **(See individual planning for curriculum areas)**

Staff in the EYFS ensure that they carefully scaffold learning to ensure that children have time to apply their knowledge. Explanation, modelling and time to practise new skills are a key focus within our daily practice.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are embedded across the Early Years Curriculum and explore the different ways in which children learn. They highlight the importance of playing and learning, active learning and thinking critically. We utilise different characters from popular children's story books to promote and encourage the characteristics of effective learning. All the learning experiences we plan for the children allow them to utilise and develop these skills.

Staff support transition into Key Stage 1. Preparing children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of Reception and the start of Year 1.

Impact:

The overall impact of our EYFS curriculum can be seen first-hand from the children. We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be in line with National expectations (GLD). Evidence in children's online Learning Journeys support all areas of the EYFS framework. Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessment compares children's attainment to age related expectations using bands in the Development Matters. This is tracked to ensure rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND or who are disadvantaged. Assessment judgements are moderated both in school and externally with local schools. Experienced staff undertake moderator training through the LA which helps validate school judgements.