



EYFS Policy

Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

October 2026

Policy review date: October 2027

Policy status: Statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Joanna Garvey Headteacher

In line with DfE EYFS statutory guidance July 2026

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 23

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

1. Aims

At Priestley Smith Specialist School, we are committed to providing a high-quality Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that gives every child the best possible start in life. We provide an ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports children to learn, develop and thrive within a safe, nurturing and specialist environment.

Our EYFS provision aims to:

- provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and prepares children for future learning;
 - recognise and respond to the individual strengths, interests and developmental needs of every child, enabling them to make the best possible progress from their starting points;
 - remove barriers to learning through specialist teaching, adapted resources and personalised support for children who are blind or have significant vision impairment;
 - promote children's communication, independence, confidence, wellbeing and resilience through meaningful, first-hand learning experiences;
 - foster positive relationships with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure a consistent and collaborative approach to children's learning, development and welfare;
 - provide a safe, secure and inclusive environment in which safeguarding and the welfare of children are paramount; and
 - support every child to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for lifelong learning and successful transition to the next stage of education.
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2. Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements of the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Group and School-Based Providers (effective from 1 September 2026)**.

It should be read alongside current statutory guidance and school policies, including:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (current edition);
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*;
- the **Equality Act 2010**;
- the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years**;
- the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**; and
- Priestley Smith Specialist School's safeguarding and other relevant statutory policies.

The school is committed to meeting all statutory learning, development, safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS while providing specialist provision that enables children with vision impairment to achieve their full potential.

3. Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) establishes the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to the end of the Reception year. It recognises that early childhood is a unique and significant period in which secure relationships, high-quality teaching and carefully planned experiences lay the foundations for future learning, wellbeing and lifelong success.

At Priestley Smith Specialist School, we provide specialist early years education for children who are blind or have significant vision impairment, many of whom also have additional special educational needs and disabilities. We recognise that vision impairment can affect the way children access information, develop concepts and engage with the world around them. As a result, children may require explicit teaching, carefully adapted environments and additional opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that sighted children often acquire incidentally.

Our provision combines the statutory EYFS curriculum with specialist approaches to vision impairment, ensuring that every child can participate fully in learning and make meaningful progress. Teaching is informed by children's individual strengths, interests and developmental needs, alongside specialist assessment and advice where appropriate. The school draws upon **Development Matters** as non-statutory guidance to support professional judgement and curriculum planning. Specialist assessment and curriculum frameworks, including the **Development Journal for Babies and Children with Vision Impairment (DJVI/DMVI)** and the **Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)**, are used where appropriate to complement the statutory EYFS and support personalised learning.

Our practice reflects the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- every child is a unique child who is capable, confident and continually learning;
- children learn through secure, positive relationships;
- enabling environments support children to develop and learn through play, exploration and meaningful experiences; and
- children develop and learn at different rates, requiring responsive teaching that builds on their individual strengths and needs.

We recognise parents and carers as children's first and most enduring educators. We value open, respectful and collaborative relationships, recognising that children achieve the best outcomes when home and school work together. Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about their child's interests, strengths, needs and achievements, and are regularly involved in discussions about their learning, development and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are provided with the information required by the EYFS Statutory Framework and are kept informed about their child's learning, development and welfare. Information is shared through meetings, written reports, school communications and access to relevant school policies and procedures.

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns promptly with the school. Formal complaints are managed in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children underpin every aspect of our provision. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and accessible environment in which every child feels valued, develops confidence and independence, and is supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.

4. Learning and Development

At Priestley Smith Specialist School, learning and development are underpinned by the requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (September 2026)**. We provide an ambitious, inclusive curriculum that supports every child to make progress from their individual starting points and prepares them for the next stage of their education.

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

These areas are taught through a balance of child-initiated play, adult-guided learning and carefully planned direct teaching. Practitioners create meaningful learning opportunities that build on children's interests, prior experiences and developmental needs, while ensuring progression across the curriculum. Planning is informed by the statutory EYFS educational programmes for each area of learning and development. Children learning English as an additional language are supported to develop both their home language and English in accordance with EYFS guidance

As a specialist setting, the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of children who are blind or have significant vision impairment. Learning is supported through practical, sensory and first-hand experiences, enabling children to develop concepts, communication, independence and confidence alongside the knowledge and skills expected within the EYFS.

Planning also reflects the specialist learning needs identified within the **Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)** where appropriate. This ensures that children develop essential skills such as sensory development, communication, orientation and mobility, independent living, accessing information and the effective use of assistive technology alongside the statutory curriculum.

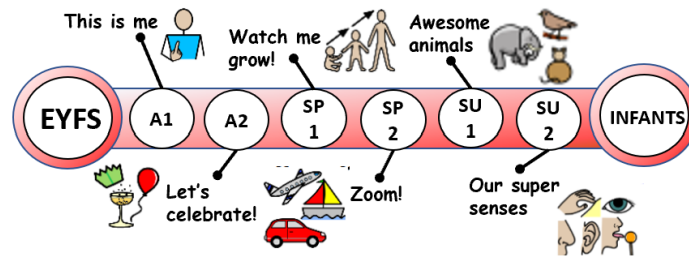
Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’ Experiential learning is vital for children with vision impairments. All activities are planned to enable children to develop learning through tactile and non-visual means, providing a safe environment to explore and investigate.
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements. Fostering resilience is vital for children with vision impairment. Children will be taught to develop concentration through the careful planning of activities which foster individual interests. Achievements and overcoming difficulties will be celebrated through reward systems and assemblies.
- **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things Children with vision impairments do not always learn incidentally in the same way as their sighted peers. Hands-on learning experiences through the formal curriculum and specialist VI curriculum will enable them to make links between different areas of their learning and life in the ‘real world’.

(Taken from Development matters 2023)



Practitioners use skilled questioning, modelling and high-quality interactions to extend children's thinking, encourage curiosity and promote sustained shared thinking. Teaching is responsive to each child's developmental stage and provides appropriate challenge and support to enable every child to achieve their potential.

Where appropriate, children working below the level of subject-specific learning may be supported through the **Engagement Model**, ensuring that teaching is personalised to their individual needs. The Engagement Model looks at how pupils engage in their learning and is fundamentally a pupil-centred approach. Its focus is on the child's abilities rather than disabilities. The model assesses 5 areas of engagement. These are Exploration, Realisation, Anticipation, Persistence and Initiation.

5. Enabling Environments

We believe that children learn best in environments that are safe, inclusive, stimulating and accessible. Our learning environments are carefully organised to promote curiosity, independence, communication and wellbeing while enabling every child to participate fully in school life.

As a specialist school, classrooms and outdoor areas are designed to minimise barriers to learning for children with vision impairment. Resources are presented in ways that meet individual visual and sensory needs, using tactile materials, enlarged or high-contrast resources, auditory cues and assistive technology where appropriate.

Learning spaces are organised to provide consistency and predictability, enabling children to move safely and confidently whilst encouraging increasing independence. Opportunities for exploration are carefully planned so that children can investigate, make choices and develop confidence through meaningful experiences.

Developing independence is a central aim of our provision. Throughout the day, children are supported to develop self-care, communication, decision-making and independence through everyday routines and planned learning experiences. Where appropriate, specialist programmes delivered in partnership with Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment (QTVIs), habilitation specialists and therapists are integrated into daily practice to support orientation, mobility and independent living skills.

Outdoor learning forms an integral part of the curriculum. Children have regular opportunities to explore, investigate and develop physically through a range of outdoor experiences that promote resilience, wellbeing, communication and confidence. Appropriate risk assessment and specialist support enable children to experience challenge while remaining safe. Learning environments are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet children's changing needs and promote full participation across all areas of learning.

6. Observation, Assessment and Planning

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning and is embedded within everyday practice. In accordance with the **EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2026)**, assessment is based on practitioners' professional knowledge of each child and is used to inform teaching and support children's ongoing progress. It should not involve unnecessary paperwork or excessive evidence gathering.

Practitioners make regular observations during play, adult-led activities and everyday routines to develop an accurate understanding of each child's learning, development and wellbeing. These observations, together with discussions with parents and contributions from other professionals where appropriate, inform future planning and next steps in learning.

Planning is responsive and builds on children's strengths, interests, developmental stage and individual needs. Where applicable, practitioners also take account of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes to ensure learning is appropriately personalised.

Development Matters is used as non-statutory guidance to support professional judgement and curriculum planning. It is not used as a checklist or tracking document but as a resource to help practitioners understand child development and plan appropriate learning experiences.

As a specialist setting, assessment also considers the ways in which children access learning and develop specialist skills associated with vision impairment. Where appropriate, practitioners use the **Development Journal for Babies and Children with Vision Impairment (DJVI/DMVI)** alongside the **Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)** to identify strengths, inform personalised targets and support progression in areas such as communication, concept development, sensory development, orientation and mobility, independence, access to information and the effective use of assistive technology.

The school uses the Cherry Garden Branch Maps, where appropriate, to support the assessment of children working below age-related expectations. Cherry Garden is linked to the areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage and enables practitioners to identify, monitor and celebrate small but significant steps in development. It provides a detailed assessment pathway that supports personalised target setting, curriculum planning and the recognition of progress for children with complex learning needs and additional disabilities. The framework complements statutory EYFS assessment requirements and helps ensure that all achievements are recognised and recorded meaningfully.

The use of Cherry Garden is particularly valuable for children with vision impairment and complex additional needs, as it enables practitioners to recognise and evidence small developmental gains that may not be reflected fully through age-related EYFS measures alone.

The school meets all statutory assessment requirements within the EYFS, including:

- the **Progress Check at Age Two**, where applicable;
- the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** within the first six weeks of Reception, using appropriate adaptations where required; and
- the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)** at the end of the Reception Year.

Assessment information is shared regularly with parents and carers and contributes to transition planning, Education, Health and Care Plan reviews and collaborative working with external professionals. Through ongoing assessment and responsive planning, practitioners ensure that every child receives the support and challenge needed to make sustained progress and achieve the best possible outcomes.

At Priestley Smith Specialist School, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe, secure, inclusive and nurturing environment in which every child is protected from harm, respected as an individual and supported to thrive.

Our practice complies with the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Group and School-Based Providers (effective from 1 September 2026)**, **Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, the **Children Act 1989 and 2004**, the **Equality Act 2010**, the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years**, and all other relevant safeguarding and health and safety legislation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff understand their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child, recognise the signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and report concerns immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads provide leadership, advice and support, ensuring that concerns are managed promptly and appropriately through partnership with children, families and external agencies.

As a specialist school for children who are blind or have significant vision impairment, we recognise that some pupils may be more vulnerable due to communication differences, reduced access to visual information, increased dependence on adults or difficulties recognising unsafe situations. Safeguarding practice therefore reflects each child's individual communication, developmental and sensory needs. Staff actively promote children's confidence, independence, self-advocacy and understanding of personal safety through developmentally appropriate teaching, supportive relationships and carefully planned opportunities to develop independence.

Where practitioners identify concerns about a child's progress, development or wellbeing, these are discussed promptly with parents or carers. Together, appropriate next steps are agreed, which may include targeted support within the setting, consultation with the school's DSL, Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment (QTVI), health professionals or other relevant agencies. Where appropriate, referrals are made in partnership with families to ensure children receive timely assessment and support.

Children's physical and emotional wellbeing underpin all aspects of our provision. Practitioners develop warm, secure and responsive relationships that help children feel safe, valued and confident. Consistent routines, high expectations and positive interactions support children's emotional security and mental wellbeing, enabling them to engage successfully in learning and develop resilience.

Every child is allocated a key person who develops a secure and trusting relationship with the child and their family. The key person supports children's emotional wellbeing, learning and development, shares information with parents and carers, and helps to ensure smooth transitions within and beyond the EYFS.

The school provides safe, accessible and well-maintained indoor and outdoor learning environments that enable children to learn, play and explore with increasing independence. Individual risk assessments are undertaken where appropriate, taking account of children's visual, physical, medical and developmental needs. Specialist equipment, adapted resources and environmental modifications are used to maximise accessibility whilst promoting independence rather than creating unnecessary dependence.

Staff are expected to raise any concerns about unsafe practice or the behaviour of adults in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy, and will be supported to do so without fear of detriment.

Children are supervised appropriately at all times in accordance with the EYFS statutory requirements. Levels of supervision reflect children's age, stage of development, individual needs and the activities being undertaken. Particular consideration is given to supporting children with vision impairment to explore,

develop orientation and mobility skills, take appropriate risks and build independence within a safe and well-managed environment.

Attendance and patterns of absence are monitored in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy. Unexplained or concerning absences are followed up promptly as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

The school maintains robust procedures to protect children's health and wellbeing. These include effective infection prevention and control, safe administration and recording of medicines, individual healthcare plans where required, accident and incident recording, emergency procedures, and regular review of health and safety arrangements. At least one member of staff holding a current full **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** qualification is always available whenever children are present and accompanies children on educational visits where required. Staff qualifications are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Where children rest or sleep during the school day, the school follows current evidence-based **safer sleep guidance**, as required by the EYFS Statutory Framework. Sleep arrangements are planned in partnership with parents and carers, taking account of children's individual medical and developmental needs. Children are supervised appropriately while resting, and staff follow the school's procedures to ensure safe sleeping practices at all times.

In line with the 2026 EYFS Statutory Framework, practitioners give careful consideration to children's use of technology and screen-based activities. At Priestley Smith Specialist School, technology plays an important role in promoting accessibility and inclusion. Many children use assistive technologies to support communication, literacy, independence and access to learning. Technology is used purposefully to remove barriers to participation and is balanced with practical, sensory and play-based experiences that support children's holistic development.

The school is committed to ensuring that all adults working with children are suitable to fulfil their responsibilities. Robust safer recruitment procedures are followed in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, including appropriate pre-employment checks, verification of identity, qualifications, references, right to work in the UK and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required. The school maintains an accurate Single Central Record in accordance with statutory requirements.

All staff receive safeguarding training, including induction, that meets the statutory requirements of the EYFS and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Training is regularly updated and supported through ongoing supervision and professional development.

All EYFS staff receive a comprehensive induction and ongoing safeguarding training appropriate to their role. Staff participate in regular supervision in accordance with the school's **EYFS Supervision Policy**, providing opportunities to reflect on professional practice, discuss children's learning and welfare, identify safeguarding concerns, support staff wellbeing and review continuing professional development needs. Staff are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct, uphold the school's Code of Conduct and report any concerns regarding the welfare of children or the behaviour of adults without delay.

Staffing arrangements, including staff-to-child ratios and qualification requirements, comply with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure children's safety and wellbeing at all times.

Effective safeguarding depends upon strong partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals. The school works collaboratively with families, health professionals, Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment (QTVIs), habilitation specialists, therapists, social care and other agencies to ensure children's needs are understood and that support is coordinated. Information is shared appropriately and lawfully to safeguard children and promote their wellbeing. By embedding safeguarding, inclusion and specialist practice throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, Priestley Smith Specialist School ensures that every child is supported to learn, develop and achieve within a safe, respectful and enabling environment.

8. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies and procedures:

- Early Years Supervision Policy
- Equality Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Medical Need Policy
- E-safety Safety (including Acceptable Use) Policy
- Safer recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy



SAFER SLEEP

EYFS • CHILDREN AGED 2+

Safe sleep today. Brighter tomorrows. ❤️

Rest
Learn
Thrive
❤️

SAFE SLEEP SPACE



- ✓ Use the child's own separate sleep space.
- ✓ Keep the sleep surface clear, flat and firm.
- ✓ Use a bed, cot or suitable sleeping mat as appropriate for the child.
- ✗ Never use a sofa, armchair or other soft furniture for sleep.

SEE • HEAR • CHECK



- ✓ Children must remain within sight and hearing of staff while sleeping.
- ✓ Check sleeping children every **10 minutes** and record each check.
- ✓ Children with medical, respiratory, postural, epilepsy or other specialist needs may require a specific monitoring regime. Follow the child's individual care plan.

KEEP COMFORT SAFE



- ✓ Keep bedding simple, light and secure.
- ✓ Avoid loose or bulky items that could cover the face, cause entanglement or trap a child.
- ✓ Remove soft toys, pillows, quilts, weighted items and loose blankets during sleep (unless part of an agreed specialist plan).

AVOID OVERHEATING



- ✓ Dress the child in suitable, lightweight clothing.
- ✓ Check the chest or back of the neck if you are concerned about temperature.
- ✓ Keep the room comfortable, not too hot or too cold.
- ✓ Keep heads uncovered.

AFTER TRAVEL



- ✓ If a child falls asleep in a car seat, transfer them to their separate sleep space as soon as you return.
- ✓ Do this even if they appear to be sleeping comfortably.
- ✓ Ensure their sleep space is clear, flat and firm.
- ✓ Follow our setting's procedure for recording the transfer and ongoing checks.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS



Medical
Respiratory
Postural
Epilepsy
Other

- ✓ For children with medical, respiratory, postural, epilepsy or other specialist sleep needs, follow the child's individual care plan and seek advice from relevant professionals.
- ✓ Make sure all staff involved in sleep support understand the plan.
- ✓ Review plans regularly and after any changes in need.

Before every sleep, ask yourself:



Is the space
clear and safe?

Is the child
comfortable?

Can staff see
and hear them?

Are checks planned
and recorded
(every 10 minutes)?

Safe sleep today
Brighter futures. ❤️

Based on Department for Education 'Help for early years providers: Safer sleep'
(updated 17 August 2026).
Follow our school's safeguarding, risk assessment and individual care procedures.



Different
needs.
Brighter tomorrows. ❤️

APPENDIX 3



Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

Early Learning Goals Children at the expected level of development

Communication and Language

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.

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.

Understanding the World

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.

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.

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.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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.

People, Culture and Communities

- 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.

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.

Expressive Arts and Design

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.

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.

Mathematics

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.

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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.

Physical Education

Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and demonstrate consideration for the needs of others.
- Demonstrate strength and coordination when participating in activities.
- Move energetically, including jumping, dancing, hopping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively and write with a fluent writing – using appropriate tools in all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including paint brushes and cutters.
- Begin to show accuracy in drawing.

Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of stories that have been read to them by using their own words to retell narratives using their own words.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – what will happen in stories.
- Use and understand vocabulary during discussion of non-fiction, rhymes and role-play.

Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistently using their knowledge by sound.
- Read aloud simple sentences that are consistent with their knowledge, including some common words.

Writing

- Write recognisable letters that are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying the letters and representing them.
- Write simple phrases that can be read by others.

- For a child with a VI, their starting points of knowledge and experience can have profound gaps from their lack of incidental learning. Planning and integration of tactile and experiential approaches is essential to compensate for their possible lifelong struggle to see the world around them, to see pictures, diagrams and models. One child may have been blind from birth; another may have just experienced sight loss through a deteriorating condition and may find abstract references to the visual world easier to grasp
- Children who have brain-based visual difficulties (cerebral visual impairment) also need support. This is now the most common vision impairment in children. VI is not always detected in children with profound difficulties or during early years in children with no additional difficulties as children are not routinely given vision checks in the same way that they are hearing checks.
- Working, particularly with younger children with a VI diagnosis, learning focuses to accelerate their ability to plug the gaps caused by their vision loss.
- Vision is the primary driver for learning, particularly in young children. This is explained in detail in the following document:
<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/canaanbarrie/learningtogether.pdf>
- Children's outcomes will improve with the right input from as early as possible in all areas, but especially their education setting. In the DfE Document - The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days, they consider the importance of early interventions.
- *"These 1001 days are a critical period for developing communication and physical skills.If developmental delays are not identified and addressed early, this could cause significant problems later on. Some babies might have a disability or may not follow usual development trajectories."*

APPENDIX 2

Adapting the Early Learning Goals framework for a child with a VI:

Communication and Language

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.

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.

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

Focussed activities in small groups

Low noise levels to allow for concentration

Give time to allow what they have heard to process information

visual/tactile symbols, spoken, sign language, sign systems, on-body signing, objects of reference/tangible symbols, tactile symbols, auditory/ vocal; – visual/tactile access to dual communication boards, including technology that relies on communication through various kinds of switches

SaLT referrals where indicated

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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.

People, Culture and Communities

- 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.

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.

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

Using regular routines to support healthy social and emotional development.

Understanding and talking about emotions and how to express these needs.

Turn-taking activities

Building relationships and social skills

Using stories to describe emotions

Talk about negative and positive emotions

Physical Development **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.

Fine Motor Skills

- 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.

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

Understanding spatial awareness – knowing surroundings and where they are in relation to this

Identify and naming body parts

Gross motor – Wake up shake up implementing interventions with cross over midline body movements to improve mobility and balance, reflexes and postural control often with hand on hand and/or body support.

Vestibular development hand eye co-ordination

**Fine motor skills explored by play
Hand strength and dexterity activities
Use of the Tactile discrimination programme
Repetition and reinforcement.**

Understanding the World

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.

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.

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.

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

**Access to small world play.
Themed, tactile, visually stimulating and relatable to families, culture and environment.**

Exploration of environment familiar and unfamiliar

Using stories and roleplay for discussion.

Expressive Arts and Design

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.

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.

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

Explore engage and play with a wide range of media and materials using real and relevant resources where possible.

Minolta/swell paper pictures, German film for drawing and mark making.

Adapting media to allow tactile exploration and experimenting

Mathematics

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.

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.

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

Repetition explore and experiment using counting songs use of real objects where appropriate to understand simple mathematical concepts.

Exposure to braille numbers and print.

Use of number in daily routines using number in context throughout the day.

Exploration of tactile patterns recognition and the connections

Use of 3d objects to form patterns.

Literacy

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.

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.

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..

Context and barriers to learning for a child with a Vision Impairment

Use of sensory stories using real objects or nearest likeness and exposure to touch smell and audio relatable where possible.

Using clear pictures paired with real 3d objects.

Exposure to early braille and use of pre braille activities

Tactile discrimination programme