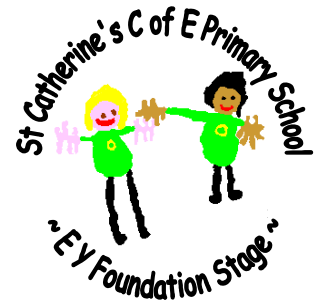


ST. CATHERINE'S C. OF E. PRIMARY
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY



"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."(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

What is Early Years Education?

Compulsory full time education begins the term after a child's fifth birthday. The period from birth to the end of the reception year is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is distinct and important in its own right and in the preparation of children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is the expected attainment for children by the end of the EYFS. In our school most children join our Nursery Unit during the term after their 3rd birthday. In our Reception class most start full time in the September following their fourth birthday. All children are required by law to start school, at the latest, the term after their fifth birthday.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) principles which guide our work are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are welcomed and valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health and hygiene, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.

- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school either through a home visit, Nursery Learning Together programme or through an informal meeting at school
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to visit and spend time in the Foundation Stage before starting school.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' profile books and valuing any contributions to these from parents.
- Offering regular parent consultations at which the teacher and the parent can discuss the child's progress.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Reception year.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the class teacher acts as 'key person' to all children in their class, supported by the nursery nurses and teaching assistants.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs. This informs our planning to enable us to plan challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The long and medium term planning is based around half termly themes which reflect the needs and interests of the child. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. Continuous provision plans are in place to support children during child initiated learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and contribute to the child's individual 'Learning Journey' profile book. In the Nursery and Reception children's progress is recorded and monitored using the EYFS Broad Phases of Development. In Reception the eProfile is used to record judgements against the EYFS profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents/carers, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals. The parents are given the opportunity to discuss these assessments with the teacher.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Both Early Years Foundation Stage have enclosed outdoor areas, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often 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.

Prime Areas:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Teaching and Learning Style

We recognise that features of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations.

Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given an opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Transition

St. Catherine's C. of E. Primary has a detailed transition policy (see policy). Staff feel that a smooth transition is important and work hard to ensure that every effort is made for a smooth transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage and then into Year 1. At St. Catherine's teaching staff meet to discuss individual children's progress as they transfer to the next phase.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored regularly and is part of an on-going and continuous process of improvement. All policies are to be found in the front entrance foyer of Main School and the Nursery Unit