



St Peter's Catholic Primary School Early Years Policy
January 2018

This policy was approved by the Governing Body of St Peter's Catholic Primary School at their meeting on...7 February 2018

Signed..... Chair of Governors

For review April 2020 or as necessary

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St Peter's Catholic Primary School children are admitted to reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Peter's Catholic Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We have taken into account the findings of the November 2017 OFSTED report 'Bold Beginnings' in recognising that "A good early education is the foundation for later success.". In line with that report, we aim to tailor our curriculum to ensure a smooth transition to year 1 and beyond.

However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At St Peter's Catholic Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.

- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children through their education.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

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

A Unique Child

At St Peter's Catholic Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and 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 and believe that every child matters. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this 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 learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

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/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at induction afternoons and individual parent meetings in early September.
- Visits from the class teacher to children at their pre-school setting. (where possible)
- Providing an induction pack for parents prior to their child starting at school.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Encouragement of parents to volunteer in class.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if EYFS staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through school newsletters and parent reps.
- Sending home 'Proud notes' designed to enable parents to record achievements at home.
- Weekly news round-ups informing parents of what has happened and what is coming up.
- Inviting parents to attend informal workshops about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' at open house sessions
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in reception.

- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.

Staffing

One class teacher and one Teaching Assistant plus specifically appointed staff to support children with additional needs where necessary. All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that on a daily basis, spaces and activities are created specifically to encourage children to increase their competence in writing, reading and mathematics.

We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals and aims to ensure a smooth transition to the children's learning in Key Stage 1.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. 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.

The three Prime areas are:

- 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

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with school policy. Direct teaching time is also set aside for writing and mathematics throughout the school week.

Being a Catholic school, children at St Peter's are taught 2 full hours of RE every week starting in Reception. For this we follow the 'Come and See' programme. Once the children are attending full time they are included in whole school worship.

Planning

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early

Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths, reading and writing directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards National Curriculum goals.

Observations

EYFS staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations

then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys with photographs and examples of children's work

Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

Tracking grids (on Target Tracker) are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be just working towards, comfortably working within or securely working within the Development Matters age-bands.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc.

Children have access to both inside and outside area across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. The EYFS has its own outdoor classroom area complete with trim trail. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

Starting Reception

When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first week, children will attend for the morning session only. (until 12noon)
- During the second week children will stay for lunch and go home at 1pm.
- From the third week children will attend school full time.

In exceptional circumstances parents can request that their child starts full time at a later date. This can be discussed during the induction phase.

Transition to Year 1

Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children.

Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the summer term as well as having regular story sessions with their new teacher.

Children are given the opportunity to ask questions in a "worry box" which are answered by Year 1 children.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'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.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At St Peter's Catholic Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014 and to have in mind at all times the guidance set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;

- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Use of cameras and mobile phones

1. It is recognised that photography plays an important part of record keeping and observations at the Early Years Foundation stage. At St Peters we are committed to using photography as an effective tool for teaching and learning in a way that safeguards the welfare of all our children.
2. The only persons authorised to take photographs of the children are the Reception class teacher and teaching assistants
3. Photographs are taken by a camera kept in the classroom for that purpose
4. Photographs are not taken of any child without the permission of their parent/carer
5. Photographs are uploaded onto a school computer and printed off on school premises.
6. Once uploaded and printed, photographs are immediately deleted.
7. Personal mobile phones are never to be used within the classroom during teaching hours (other than in the case of emergency) and must be kept securely.
8. The use of mobile phones to take photographs of the children is not permitted.

Attitudes to Learning and Behaviour

Children learn about attitudes to learning through the Growth Mindset programme, which is followed throughout the school. To encourage the children to use 'Growth Mindset' attitudes in their learning, we use animals to represent the different attitudes to learning. For example : Tiger – resilience Tortoise – perseverance Cat – curiosity.

We also use Learning Superheroes with corresponding stickers to encourage learning characteristics specific to Reception. Examples are Super Explorer Man, Achieving Iron Man, Miss Fantastic Focus and Miss Super Chooser.

Once the children are attending school full time they are included in the whole school Behaviour programme, where children work to follow the school rules. We use a series of faces with happy, neutral and sad expressions on them. A child's name will be moved down a face in the event of behaviour which breaks the rules. It is possible for a child's name to be moved back up if they show an improvement in behaviour. Any child whose behaviour results in them being on the bottom face will spend some part of their break time in 'Reflection' where they are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour, and parents will be informed.

However, we recognise that for children of such a young age some flexibility is sometimes required, and children can be asked instead to take a 'time-out' to allow them time to calm down in a specific space until they are able to participate in the class again.

Positive reward systems include stickers, a wonderful walker award and kindness leaves. One child each week is awarded 'Star of the Week', and another 'Disciple of the Week'.

Keeping Safe

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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

There is an ongoing focus on healthy living throughout the year.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Teaching and Learning Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed in April 2020 or as necessary.

H Hockley Jan 2018