St. Mary’s Catholic Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our Aims:

* To provide a secure, safe, caring and stimulating environment
* To ensure that all children are valued
* To build on what the child already knows and develop a positive attitude and enjoyment for learning
* To provide a range of opportunities to learn through direct experience, enquiry, drama and active exploration, in the classroom and outdoors, using a wide variety of equipment and materials
* To encourage independence and confidence
* To value the role parents and carers can play to work together in partnership.

How do we do this?

We want children to be engaged in the learning process and for their learning to be relevant and purposeful. Therefore, we believe that children learn best by doing. We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is an ideal vehicle for young children’s learning. Play helps children to explore, investigate and, make sense of the world around them. Play allows children to be challenged in their thinking and helps them to practice and rehearse skills and to be motivated in their learning. Children are inquisitive and curious and we wish to build upon this in a positive and enjoyable manner.

Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based around four Key Themes, three Prime areas of Learning and Four Specific Areas of Learning

The themes:

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

Each theme is linked to an important Principle:

*A Unique Child* - Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

*Positive Relationships* - Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

*Enabling Environments* - The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

*Learning and Development* - Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

The three prime areas are:

* Personal Social and Emotional Development
* Communication and Language
* Physical Development

The four specific areas are:

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

Where possible we plan learning experiences from the children’s’ interests and believe they should play an active role in generating ideas for the curriculum. Each class have plans for continuous provision inside and outside. The continuous provision plans ensure each area of learning is well resourced and equipped for the children to learn, practise, transfer and develop skills. Each week we use the cycle of observing, assessing and planning to inform the enhanced provision within the continuous provision areas (see continuous provision room plans). By doing this we aim to support all children to acquire the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively, and to be ready for the next stages in their learning.

Medium term plans and weekly plans based on the prime and specific areas are displayed in each class and are available in planning folders. There is separate carpet planning for phonics and maths.

We hold weekly meetings where practitioners discuss individual children and their next stages of learning – this is based on the staff assessments through observations the prior week and their knowledge of the characteristics of learning and the development matters document.

Assessment

* Children entering our Foundation Stage Settings are observed during their first weeks, to provide baseline information, contributions from parents through the information to setting sheets are used to help inform these judgements
* Monitoring of each child will take place through observations (both planned and incidental), discussions, photographs and record keeping
* A new Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage commenced in September 2012 and the previous six areas of learning became seven. At the end of the Reception Year, children are assessed in relation to the revised early learning goals against three levels. These are: ‘meeting expected levels of development’, ‘exceeding expected levels’ or ‘not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’)’. During the Summer Term the EYFSP is completed in F2 and is used to inform Y1 of each child’s attainment and it is also sent to the Local Authority
* An end of year a report summarising the achievements from the Early Years Foundation Stage is sent to parents. This same report is also discussed with the Year 1 teacher so that she/he can continue to help the children

Data analysis

Throughout the year we analyse how well individual children are benefitting from their early years experience. We do this through pupil progress meetings, where intervention groups are identified and provision mapping is put in place. It is our aim throughout the year to ensure all children make effective progress, especially those whose needs or circumstances require particularly perceptive intervention and/or additional support. In any particular provision, this may include: disabled children, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and those who have special educational needs, boys, girls, groups of children with starting points that are significantly below those expected for their age, those who are easily able to exceed expectations for their age, children from disadvantaged families and/or backgrounds, including: looked after children, children for whom English is an additional language and children of service families.

Transition

Changing from a pre-school setting or within school, moving year groups, can be daunting for both parents and children. We aim to make this transition as easy and comfortable as possible for all involved. In F1 the teacher will hold a meeting with the child’s parent/carer before the child starts in Nursery. The child will then come in with their parent/carer for an hour on their first day, how the child copes with this is assessed to see whether the child attends their next hour session either independently or with their parent/carer. This cycle continues until the child is transition in to one of our morning or afternoon Nursery sessions. In F2 the practitioners organise a meeting during the Summer Term to meet the new parents, this is an informal meeting which allows our new parents and children to meet the Head Teacher and their new class teachers and also to be given information about the school. We aim for each child to visit their new setting in the Summer Term and also transition children in to school gradually during their first week in September.

Partnership with Parents

We greatly value the contribution and knowledge which parents and carers bring. In order to draw on this as effectively as possible we try to include parents as much as possible.

The following are types of formal meetings which are offered to parents in F1:

* New parent/carer meetings before a child starts school
* Meetings with parents after a planned observation has taken place
* Autumn term: a stay and explore session
* Spring term: a stay and explore session
* Summer term: a stay and explore session

The following are types of formal meetings which are offered to parents in F2:

• Summer term: A new parent and child meeting – June/July.

• Autumn term: a reading meeting to inform parents how phonics and reading is taught and how they can support at home, the parents are invited to stay and work with their child in the classroom for the rest of the session, this also allows time for the practitioners and parents to talk about how their child has settled in

• Spring term: A numeracy workshop to inform parents how mathematical concepts and skills are taught and how they can support at home

• Spring term: parent’s evening to discuss progress and achievements

• Summer term: parents receive a school report, which identifies children’s achievements and identifies their next steps/ways forward; they are also invited to a parent’s evening to discuss this report if they wish

• Links through learning activities as and when appropriate, e.g. story sharing workshops, reading diaries, stay and play sessions, star of the week book, fund raising events

Equal Opportunities

In line with the school’s Equal Opportunities policy, no child in the foundation stage class will be discriminated against or disadvantaged because of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.

Safeguarding

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure our children/young people are appropriately safeguarded this policy is included under the safeguarding umbrella.

See also:

Assessment Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour policy