



St John's R.C. School Early Years Policy

'Love one another as I have loved you' (John 15:12)

Introduction

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of St John's R.C School Early Year's in relation to the teaching and learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. It gives a framework and guidance within which all staff work.

The Early Years policy of St John's R.C school applies to all children who join the school in the September of the academic year in which they turn five. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know.
- It ensures that all children are included and have access to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- It offers a structure for learning and development that has a range of starting points and content that meets the needs of young children.
- Activities and play provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a safe, rich and stimulating environment in which all children can learn, develop and grow.

Intent

Through active experience, we aim to help children express and understand the Catholic Faith and to develop Christian values and attitudes through teaching and learning within the whole curriculum. Early Years education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all aspects of learning and development. The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

Communication and Language – Children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development – Children will be provided lots of opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and make healthy choices in relation to food and drink.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – We will help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others. They will learn to form positive relationships and develop respect for others. They will develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings and understand appropriate behaviour. Children will become more independent and have confidence in their own abilities.

Literacy – Children will be taught to link sounds to letters. They will develop their phonic knowledge and begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of literary ideas and materials to ignite their interest.

Mathematics – Children will have lots of practical opportunities to develop and improve their number skills. They will experience and develop their counting, calculating, number recognition and understanding of addition and subtraction problems. They will be taught to describe shapes, patterns, spaces and measures. They will experience Maths practically- solving problems in their play and in focused adult led or initiated activities.

Understanding the World – Children will be guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design – Children will explore and play with a wide range of media and materials as well as have opportunities to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

We also aim to develop the children's ability to learn effectively. For this we take into consideration the EYFS **Characteristics of Effective Learning**; Playing and Exploring- *Engagement*; Active Learning- *Motivation*; Creating and Thinking Critically- *Thinking*.

Implementation

The following points underpin the quality of teaching within our Early Years Foundation Stage Unit:

- The child's home background and language is valued.
- Staff are well trained in the EYFS and undergo ongoing staff development and training.
- Play is recognised as an important tool for children to develop and reflect on their learning.
- There are plenty of opportunities for the children to talk about themselves and the world around them.
- The children engage in first-hand experiences based around exciting and relevant topics that are often child initiated.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of the children, mean that learning is well planned and the needs of the individuals/groups are the starting point for their next steps.

- Children have access to a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.
- Resources are accessible to all pupils.
- Special educational needs are identified as soon as possible and the appropriate measures taken to support the child's learning.
- Partnership with parents and carers is positively addressed and is recognised as being vital to the development of the child.
- Teaching is a mixture of adult led, adult initiated and child initiated play and activities.
- Children have a clear understanding of boundaries and rules within the setting.
- Teaching staff provide a safe and secure environment for children to take risks and 'have a go'. All ideas and contributions are valued.

Quality of Learning

The following points underpin the quality of learning within our Early Years Foundation Stage Unit:

- The children engage in first-hand experiences based around exciting and relevant topics that are often child initiated.
- Teaching staff provide a safe and secure environment for children to take risks and 'have a go'. All ideas and contributions are valued.
- Characteristics of learning are taken into account to provide children with opportunities to play and explore, to be actively involved and motivated to learn, and to think creatively and critically about what the set out to do.
- Children are enabled to access resources and materials independently and return them independently.
- Children have a pride in their work, enjoy and take on a challenge and are inspired to aim high.
- Children are encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their work and that of their peers.
- Everyone is involved in the child's development (parents/carers/staff/the child etc)
- The resources and materials are appropriate to the needs of the child and their learning and development.
- Transition between nursery settings and Year 1 aim to be as smooth as possible to help children prepare and settle happily into their new learning environment. Teaching staff have regular contact with nursery staff and Year 1 teaching staff to discuss transition points and transition days. Year 1 teaching staff moderate writing and maths work with reception staff towards the end of the year. As well as discussion meetings, reception staff provide Year 1 teachers with a report and learning journey on each child to help them to plan for the children's learning and next steps within Year 1.

Organisation and Management

Our Early Years Reception staff:

EYFS Coordinator and Teacher: Mrs C Trivett

EYFS TA: Miss S Vaughan

We have One Reception Class and a generous indoor and outdoor space.

The daily routine involves carpet time, healthy snack time, small and large group activities, focused tasks, child-initiated choosing, phonics/number time, story time and tidy up time. The children also take part in French lessons and PE. The children in our reception classes are encouraged to be part of the whole school environment by taking part in whole school assemblies, masses and other events. The children make choices about their activities and recognise that learning is a social interactive process between child, adult, resources and the environment. There is a balance of adult-led, adult initiated and child initiated activities, delivered though indoor and outdoor play/activities. Topics are exciting and relevant whether teacher or child initiated. Children's ideas and opinions are included in the planning process.

Focused task activity time within a small group is often adult led or adult initiated. The adult's role during this time is to teach, scaffold and observe how children respond to instructions, gather information, interact with peers, solve problems and extend their learning and development. The children are encouraged to have an active role in their learning and be engaged and motivated in these group activities. Group activities will take into account the needs, interests and abilities of the children.

Adults will:

- Extend the children's ideas
- Ask open-ended questions
- Set up additional problem solving activities
- Introduce new resources or concepts
- Help children practise new skills

Carpet time takes place every day for all children. Adults and children will take part in shared worship/prayer, playing games, singing songs, reading/telling stories and talking about special events.

Exploring time is child initiated learning time. Children have access to many resources within the classroom. The adult role is to support children in their play and interactions with other children. They also scaffold their learning and development and provide opportunities to extend their play and learning. Opportunities should be available for children to solve problems, work individually or with others, choose and use resources independently, have and develop their own ideas and take risks in a safe and secure environment. Adults will observe and collect evidence from children's child-initiated play to help provide a picture of the child's learning and development and plan for their next steps.

Phonics and Maths sessions are taught in larger groups. These groups are flexible and reviewed regularly. They are based on specific needs within the group. These sessions are mainly adult led but provide children with lots of practical, visual and kinaesthetic learning opportunities to help children develop their Phonics/Literacy/Maths knowledge and skills.

The Early Years Curriculum

St John's R.C school Early Years Unit follows the guidance set out in the current EYFS Framework and Statutory Guidance with reference to Development Matters. We have designed a personalized Early Years Curriculum and Skills Progression and follow the Little Wandle Phonics programme. We ensure the welfare and safety of all children by carrying out regular audits using county documents and also ensure that whole school policies are in place e.g. see Health and Safety Policy, Admissions Policy, Lost Child Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, EAL Policy.

Teaching, learning and development occurs within seven areas of learning.

Three Prime Areas: Personal Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Physical Development

Four Specific Areas: Literacy; Maths; Understanding of the World; Expressive Arts and Design

Characteristics of Effective Learning forms an important part of the Early Years Curriculum and helps staff understand and develop how children learn. These are as follows: *Playing and Exploring- Engagement; Active Learning- Motivation; Creating and Thinking Critically- Thinking.*

The classroom environment (both indoors and outdoors), resources, staff and provision help to provide a stimulating and safe environment in which children in our reception classes can learn and develop.

Observation and assessment is ongoing throughout the year. Each child's development is formally assessed at various points in the year in relation to the Early Years Outcomes and then in relation to The Early Learning Goal for each area of learning (17 aspects), at the end of the reception year. Transition is a key part of our EYFS curriculum from when children come from their Nursery to our reception classes and when going from reception into their Year 1 classes. We aim to ensure smooth transition and help all children feel happy, safe and supported to learn and develop within their new environment.

Planning

All staff are committed to planning as a team around the needs and interests of the children. The main planning is done by the Early Years teacher with input from the TA.

Long Term Planning

Long term planning provides a clear framework. It outlines topics, trips and whole school events across the year that can help inform all other planning for the children's learning, development and experience within our EYFS unit. Long term planning is flexible and regularly evaluated especially for each new academic year. We ensure that all areas of learning and The Early Years Outcomes are considered and covered. This ensures children's learning, development and progress across the whole year.

Medium Term Planning

Medium term planning takes place each term but is evaluated weekly. The topics are planned carefully to ensure continuity, progression and enjoyment for each child in their learning and development throughout the EYFS. Ideas and interests of the children are also taken into consideration, as well as key special events and festivals (e.g. Lent, Advent, Holy Week, Remembrance Day, Bonfire Night etc). Incorporating Our 5 Cs: Community, Communication, Cognition, Challenge and Creativity into every term's theme ensure breadth and enrichment.

Short Term Planning

These plans are discussed weekly amongst staff. Activities are selected from our medium plans which are deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children (based on observations and assessments and the Early Years Outcomes). The activities are then set out on our weekly planning sheets. The plans are flexible and are extended/differentiated accordingly at this stage.

Resources

The children will have the opportunity to select from the following areas on a daily basis in their adult initiated and child initiated learning:

- Quiet book area
- Sand and water
- Outdoor area (The outdoor area and equipment is regularly risk assessed)
- Construction play
- Problem solving
- Creative craft area
- Writing/mark making area
- Phonics games and resources
- Painting
- Table toys/small world
- Computer
- Maths Area (Maths games and resources)
- Science/investigation resources and tools
- Role play
- Music box
- Malleable materials

- Puzzles
- Bats and balls, climbing and balancing equipment

In addition the children will take part in...

Collective worship in classes and with the whole school

Regular food technology/cooking sessions

Regular PE sessions in the school hall

Outdoor learning in our woodland Area

Observations and Assessment

Observation and assessment is ongoing and helps to inform planning. Staff ensure that they have a deep knowledge of every child.

Within the first six weeks of school the DfE Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out.

Throughout the year daily observations/formative assessments are carried out and summative assessments take place for Phonics every six weeks. Children are assessed in all areas of the Curriculum every term to ensure that they are on track to make Expected progress. In the summer term staff will look at the whole picture of the child in order to make their formal end of EYFS assessment against the Early Learning Goals for each of the 7 areas of learning. Children are described as either 'Emerging' if they are working towards the goal or 'Expected' if they have achieved the goal. A GLD (Good Level of Development) is achieved if children are at the Expected level for all 3 of the Prime Areas, Literacy and Maths. These end of EYFS assessments are shared with parents and Year 1 teachers along with a written report about the child's development within each of the seven areas of learning.

Behaviour

Our aim is that all children will flourish in a secure environment in which, boundaries and expectations are clear and children are free to develop without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone. Children will be supported and encouraged by adults to verbalise their feelings and to adopt a problem-solving approach to dealing with social conflict in order to develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

To achieve this:

- Rules governing the conduct and safety of the group will be explained to all newcomers.
- The teaching of our faith and RSHE will support and underpin the development of children's core values and attitudes to become faithful, respectful Christians.
- Adults will provide a consistent, positive role model and model a restorative approach to dealing with misunderstandings and conflict.
- When behaviour falls short of expectations children are given clear reminders about expectations and adults will support them in making good choices.

- For more serious misdemeanors- eg: hurting others- the child will be given 5 minutes time out of play with the sand timer for some reflection time, after which they will talk through the behaviour with staff before returning to play.
- In any case of misbehaviour it will be made clear that it is the behaviour which is unwelcome, not the child.
- Adults will support children in working towards acceptable behaviour.
- Recurring problems will be tackled by all staff in partnership with the parents to establish an understanding of the cause.

(For more information see our whole school Behaviour Policy)

Parent links

Our aim is for parents to be partners in their children's learning and to be fully informed of their children's progress. We encourage parents to see us at the beginning or end of the day with any queries or immediate needs. All parents/carers will be actively encouraged to be a part of their child's learning and development. A termly newsletter and Knowledge Organiser is sent home each term outlining the topics for the term and how parents can help at home. We send home a 'wow' poster each half term for parents to record their child's achievements. Parents are encouraged to write a short comment about their child's progress at parent consultation meetings to form part of their child's learning journey. Parents are invited to attend:

- New Parents open evening during the summer before their child starts school.
- Parent consultation evenings (twice a year Autumn and Spring Term).
- Phonics, writing and Maths Parent information meetings.
- Occasional curriculum based meetings
- School social events (masses, school fete)
- Participation in special events (Christmas plays, class assemblies, trips)

Staff and Professional Development

The Early Years staff will attend appropriate courses, training, moderation, partnership meetings and information evenings to extend their knowledge, skills and expertise in order to keep up to date and abreast of current educational developments and initiatives. The information is then shared with members of the team and, where appropriate, fed back to the whole school staff.

Equal Opportunities and Special Needs

The school's purpose is to deliver a well-planned, balanced and appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the community and parish we serve. We have high expectations of all our children and provide them with quality learning experiences covering all aspects of the curriculum. These are irrespective of race, gender, class or disability. The school's ethos supports the development of cultural and personal identities and prepares our children for full participation in society. Every child

needs to achieve success in order to develop a positive self-image. We recognise that all our children, including those with English as an Additional Language and Special Educational Needs, require a differentiated approach in order for them to have access to the whole curriculum and therefore reach their full potential. It is the responsibility of the SENCO, EAL coordinator and ALL members of staff to ensure that teaching strategies, resources and support are appropriate to the needs of each individual. (For more information see St John's R.C. School SEND and EAL policies).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The School Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for overseeing staff- their development, planning, assessment and delivery of the appropriate curriculum and the evaluation of its success. An action plan will outline key actions in place and this should be regularly reviewed. The Early Years teaching staff are responsible for day to day planning, assessment and day to day running of the class. Regular monitoring of all Early Years Staff will be carried out by head teacher and other senior members of staff.

Phase Leader: Mrs Clare Trivett

Date: September 2022

Policy to be reviewed: September 2023