St Catherine's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Early Years Curriculum Overview

EYFS Curriculum Intent:

Our school will provide a loving, secure and stimulating learning environment, where every child will grow in their faith journey and be inspired to be the best person they can be. In our Early Years we will nurture each child to become independent, inquisitive and resilient learners. Our EYFS Curriculum has been designed to reflect the needs of our intake. It is therefore unique to St Catherine's Catholic Primary school. We want to ensure that all children leaving our EYFS are ready to start the St Catherine's KS1 curriculum. Each term is based around a series of core texts. Each book focus does not last a specific amount of time but is based on the children's learning at the time, and builds on their interests and fascinations. All the books have resources and activities ready to use in the enhanced provision. Each term the children are introduced to a wide range of high-quality storybooks and age appropriate non-fiction texts. Using books in this way teaches children that books and reading form the basis of all learning.

Implementation:

Our ambitious curriculum is co-constructed with the children, follows their interests, and develops their passions. We will provide shared learning opportunities which excite, inspire and engage each child in their learning, and allow them to develop their unique and individual talents. We use In The Moment Planning to ensure that all children are supported and challenged in their learning through play. At St Catherine's our curriculum is delivered through a mix of child and adult led activities, where adults model, support and scaffold the children's learning so that they develop the core skills they need. Our pupils will leave Reception having developed these core skills, and are ready to move onto the next stage of their education, with the foundations of a lifelong love of learning.

Personal Social and Emotional Development

Our school values of love, faith, integrity, diversity and excellence support children's personal, social, emotional and spiritual development. We strive to enable children to be safe, happy, confident individuals, by creating safe and inspiring places to learn where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. Our Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award (RRSA) embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy healthy lives and to be responsible active citizens. Pupils' social development involves them acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national and global), and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. We also encourage self-regulation as much as possible and introduce rules and boundaries through modelling good behaviour and reflection time. Pupils display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities. The school, but in particular the classroom, provides a suitable environment for promoting social development

within a Christian context. Pupils learn to lead, to use their initiative and to use individual skills and strengths when working together towards a common goal. The ability to be led, to support others and to recognise the different skills of other group members can be developed when children work co-operatively and are influenced by their own spirituality and morality.

Physical Development

Our outdoor environment and grounds enable us to make the most of the outdoors and we encourage children to play outside as much as possible. Our intention is that children learn how to take measured risks. They are given access to our EYFS outdoor classroom, mud kitchen, playground, trim trail, MUGA and wooded area. We encourage children to learn about nature and look after their environment through regular nature walks and outdoor forest school type activities in our school grounds and wooded area. There is a well-established and comprehensive PE curriculum, which includes gymnastics, dance and games.
Children are taught about the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating and are encouraged to join in with whole-school sports initiatives such as the golden kilometre, skip-athons and sports days. Our Healthy Early Years Bronze Award supports and recognises our achievements in child health, wellbeing and development, and our commitment to reducing health inequalities.

Communication and Language

Children are encouraged to listen and communicate appropriately. We enhance the classroom and outdoor area to reflect the children's learning and interests. We flood our children with language by placing a love of reading at the core of our curriculum. Core books are used to enhance the learning environment, and enhancements include role-play areas and small-world play areas to encourage the children to act out scenarios and discuss concepts being learnt. This helps children learn and use new vocabulary introduced through the core book approach. All adults model good speech and language skills to children to encourage language acquisition. Adults model sentences by repeating what children have said using the correct sentence structure and expanding on their vocabulary. Children are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to whole-class and group discussion whenever possible. Children who struggle to communicate are targeted in the provision and learning interventions are used when children lack confidence or do not have the age-appropriate skills.

Reading

We aim to teach children to read and develop a love of books as soon as they arrive at St Catherine's School, and books are used to teach topics and to enhance our whole curriculum. Children engage with daily story time, songs, poem and rhyme sessions. All classrooms have their own book areas, and there are reading areas available outside. Books in the classroom provision are changed each half-term to reflect the different seasons, topics taught and children's interests. Teachers read stories to children from high quality age-appropriate texts at every available opportunity. These books are then used to enhance the learning environment and reading area. We follow a systematic approach to phonics teaching. Discrete daily phonics lessons are taught, and there are opportunities for children to apply their

phonic knowledge in the environment. In our Nursery, we have a strong focus on Phase 1 phonics, which concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills. We understand that Phase 1 phonics lays the foundations for successful phonic work in Phase 2 by emphasising becoming attuned to sounds, alliteration, rhymes and rhythm, oral blending and segmenting. When children begin Reception they will continue to develop their skills in Phase 1, and will then begin Phase 2, where they rapidly learn new phonemes and graphemes, and apply their phonic knowledge. In Reception children also take part in guided reading and take home decodable books which match their phonic knowledge. Children who need extra help with phonics are targeted in the provision by key members of staff. Home learning resources are shared with parents for phonics, and we also provide targeted home learning for children who are not making good or better progress.

Writing

Our environments are planned so that they can 'bump into literacy' at every opportunity. Opportunities for writing are threaded through our provision in the role-play area, writing area, maths area, library and outdoors. The children are provided with a range of pencils, pens, and other media to encourage them to write as much as possible. Adults encourage children to engage in meaningful mark making that is linked to their interests, for example, by writing shopping lists, construction plans, and labels for their models. Staff understand that reading and writing act as dual strands within literacy, and that building on the vital skills of speaking and listening allows children to communicate and explore ideas. This is demonstrated through the use of 'story scribing' where adults write stories that the children tell during their play. As children become more confident, they scribe their own stories based on their play. In Nursery, the children participate in helicopter stories, where children co-construct a story, using a shared write. Helicopter stories and story scribing are one way in which we encourage the children to apply their phonic knowledge. Staff understand the developmental stages of mark making, and plan in opportunities for children to actively develop their fine motor skills, as well as core, arm, shoulder and wrist strength which are essential components of ensuring that children are ready to write.

Mathematics

Children are taught maths through a range of guided group work and whole-class activities. We also use maths enhancement activities in the different areas in the classroom, including the outdoors. In Nursery, we use the NCETM NumberBlocks materials to assist teaching. These resources provide children with a firm foundation in the key principles of counting; one to one correspondence, cardinality, abstraction, order-irrelevance and stable order. The resources also support our children to subitise and develop a deep understanding of the conservation and composition of number, simple addition and subtraction, as well as problem solving. In Reception, children develop these skills further, by deepening their understanding of number, place value, addition, subtraction, measurement, numerical patterns, and geometry. We are keen for our children to think mathematically and use maths in "real life" situations and all areas of the provision. This is done through enhancement of the areas, and experiences such as cooking, planting and meaningful problem solving. We link mathematics to literacy, by ensuring there is a good range of stories in the provision that encourage mathematical thinking. Children who need extra help with mathematics are targeted in the provision by key members of staff. We work hard to ensure the children are ready for the National Curriculum by the end of the Reception year.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

We strive to give children knowledge about the world around them. Children are encouraged to think scientifically through a range of shared 'real life' experiences, such as planting and growing, cooking, learning outside to experience the seasons, trips to the Barnet Environmental Centre, and observing life cycles. Our children come from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, and we explore geography and history through links with parents, for example inviting parents to share stories and celebrations from different cultures, clothing, photographs and special events. We plan a variety of real-life experiences for our children to explore our local community, such as trips to the library, visits from people with different professions such as doctors, dentists, nurses, firefighters and the police. We have strong links with our parish priests, Fr James and Fr John, who regularly visit to celebrate class masses and holy days. We deliver a Religious Education programme using 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' which meets the needs of all children; makes provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils within our Catholic context; builds upon and extends Religious Education begun in the home and we work in active partnership with home and parish. This prepares pupils for more formal Religious Education in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Expressive Arts and Design

We value creativity and self-expression at St Catherine's. We want children to sing songs, make music, dance and perform. Children are given time to play imaginative games and make up stories, songs and dances. Children have free access to a wide range of art materials, such as chalk, watercolour and poster paint, clay, pastels, charcoal, transient art and junk modelling. Children also have access to musical instruments, dressing up resources and loose parts in the provision to inspire their creativity. We value the process of creating as much as, if not more than the end result. Children are taught how to safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function, and children look at different types of art and artists throughout the year. In our woodwork area we encourage children to become risk aware, to use tools safely and appropriately, and to construct with a purpose in mind. We endeavour that all children leave our EYFS with good art skills, having had opportunities to develop their creativity and self-expression.