

# St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

"Loving and Learning Together as Jesus taught us"



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Date of policy review: October 2020

**Next review: October 2022**

Policy Reviewed & Passed by the Governors

Key Person Responsible: Maureen Kelly

St. Catherine's places high value on excellent Early Years Practice in Nursery, Reception and across the school.

## **Aims**

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Language and communication skills
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- Open mind-set
- Focus and persistence
- Team-work and collaborative skills
- Relationships
- Physical development
- Reading and writing skills
- Mathematical skills
- Understanding of the world
- Creative development

Children learn in a complex way and are influenced by everything in their environment. They use their senses to explore and make sense of the world around them. They learn through play, experiential hands-on learning, through conversations with adults and other children and through a variety of planned experiences.

## **Curriculum requirements**

- Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly and at different rates during the early years –physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
- Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- No child should be excluded or disadvantaged regardless of their need; inclusion is at the heart of this.

Staff follow the Early Years Statutory Framework from birth to five and agree with and strive to implement in practice the principles stated for excellent early years education:

- Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to build on what the children already know and can do.
- Parents and practitioners should work together.
- To be effective the curriculum should be carefully structured.
- There should be opportunities for the children to engage in activities that they plan or initiate themselves, as well as those planned by adults.
- Practitioners must be able to observe and appropriately respond to children.

- Well-planned, purposeful experiences and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process.
- For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised.
- Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We believe that children should be treated as individuals and have equal access to the Early Years curriculum. All staff should have an awareness of what Equal Opportunities means in principle as well as in practice. Practitioners should plan to meet the needs of girls and boys, children with S.E.N, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children with EAL, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

### **Learning and Teaching**

Staff believe that learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years, many of these aspects are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Effective learning involves:

- Children initiating activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from each other
- Children learning through movement and their senses
- Children having time to explore ideas and interests in depth
- Children feeling secure, which will help to promote confident learners
- Children learning in different ways and at different rates
- Children making links in their learning
- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

We believe that teaching is the process whereby children are systematically helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward to reflect and make use of what they have already learnt.

Teaching has many aspects, including planning and creating a learning environment, organising time and resources, interacting, questioning, responding to questions, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children's progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents.

Effective teaching requires:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers
- Planning experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable
- Exploring with children as a 'guide from the side'
- Practitioners who model a range of positive behaviour
- Using language that is rich and grammatically correct
- Teaching new vocabulary through modelling and explanation
- Using conversation and carefully framed questions
- Direct teaching of skills and knowledge
- Promoting positive attitudes to learning through interaction and support
- Planning both indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Skilful and well-planned observations of children
- Assessing children's development and progress
- Identifying the next step in children's learning to plan for individual children's progress.

### **The Areas of Learning**

There are seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. 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. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

#### **Communication and language;**

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

#### **Physical development;**

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development;**

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups, and to have confidence in their own abilities.

We also support children in the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

### **Literacy;**

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

### **Mathematics;**

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, space, and measure.

### **Understanding the world;**

Understanding the world involves guiding children 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;**

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. We provide opportunities for children to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### **The Value of Play**

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which young children learn. It is the process through which children explore, investigate, recreate and understand the world in which they live. It is a vital component of children's lives and is the medium through which skills can be developed and practised.

The role of the practitioner is crucial in developing high quality play in the learning environment. This includes planning and resourcing a challenging environment, supporting children's learning through planned and spontaneous play, and extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

### **Playing and exploring**

Children investigate and experience things and 'have a go';

### **Active learning**

Children concentrate and persevere if they encounter difficulties. They enjoy their achievements; and

### **Creating and thinking critically**

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links and connections between their play and experiences, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Planning and Assessment**

Reception staff organise the curriculum through topics. These are topics that are relevant to the needs of the children and are chosen to develop, and take account of children's interests. These might be topics that have been successful and enjoyed by classes in the past. The staff will also ensure a balanced curriculum over the year.

Continuous provision is accessed and set out mainly by the children. They decide what resources and equipment they would like out each day. The adults may model some resources to stimulate their learning.

Teachers plan 'in the moment'; they spot teaching moments by observing the children, assessing their needs, teaching the children and then reassessing their ability.

Assessment in the Early Years is constructive and always used to inform planning. Assessment is carried out through observations- both informal and planned.

### **The Role of Additional Adults in Nursery & Reception**

The Nursery and Reception are supported by their own two teaching assistants. All additional adults are valued for the special contribution that they make and are seen as 'practitioners' in the classroom. They are involved in planning, assessment, teaching and liaison with parents. They have a special role to fulfil and the following list is seen as some of the qualities and skills they bring to the team.

- To assist in providing a full range of activities which meet the emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs of the children
- To learn with groups of children for various activities in the different curriculum areas
- To participate in the preparation of the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, before the children arrive and with classroom management during the session
- To make observations and assessments of the children and share these with other members of staff
- To contribute to the planning of the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children
- To contribute with regards to record keeping and reports as required by the teacher

- To provide first aid and comforting ill children if trained
- To help children acquire self-help skills including toileting and personal hygiene as necessary
- To work closely with parents and carers, providing a welcoming environment
- To assist with the tidying up of materials and organisation of resources used during the sessions
- To help with creating displays
- To carry out lunchtime duties and attend staff meetings and courses when required
- To attend Early Years meetings and contribute their knowledge and ideas

### **Transition**

We have a thorough settling in process for the Nursery and Reception children before they start their sessions. This includes; a new parents meeting, a home visit, several drop in sessions before the children start, as well as a staggered start.

At the end of the year teachers will meet parents to discuss the children going from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year One. This transition time is extremely important and it is essential that the children are well prepared and parents have an understanding of the next step in their child’s education.

### **Role of Parents**

The EYFS Team is keen to develop an effective partnership with parents. We recognise that parents are the children’s first and most enduring educators and that in order to have a positive impact on a child’s development and learning, it is essential to develop a close working relationship with parents and carers, based on mutual respect.

The Reception team is always happy to talk to parents about any issues as they arise and communication between home and school is fundamental to children’s learning.

There are also meetings each term to discuss progress for each child.

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Please read our school policy which provides all the relevant information regarding our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.

### **Tracking**

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