



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

St George and St Martin Catholic Academy



School Mission Statement:

"Growing, Learning, Loving in Christ; United in Play, Prayer and Peace."

We grow in understanding and faith to be the best we can be. We learn about a world outside of our school. We love one another as Jesus taught us through the Gospels. We are united in all that we do. We play together, caring for each other. We pray that we can become closer to God. We want peace in our school, community and world.

Introduction

At St. George & St. Martin we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up" - Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, 2021

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are based upon four principles:

1. **A unique child**

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 and develop a positive attitude to learning.

2. Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

3. Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through play, teaching, interactions and observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities to extend their learning and development.

4. Learning and development

Children in the Foundation Stage learn through a balance of child-initiated play and adult led learning. Play is an essential part of children's learning because it is the way that they make sense of the world, build friendship groups and learn how to negotiate and solve problems.

The Foundation Stage is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. Our early years is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. George and St. Martin Catholic Academy, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their care.

Areas of Learning and Development

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing the Prime areas and the Specific areas:

Prime areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Physical development;
- Language and communication;

Specific areas:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world;
- Expressive arts and design

In addition, as a Catholic academy, we also promote and develop children's spiritual understanding of the Catholic faith.

The Seven Areas of Learning

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

Communication and Language Development

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children developing competence in speaking and listening and acknowledges that all other areas of learning make a vital contribution to the successful development of communication. Language and communication is nurtured and developed through:

1. high quality interactions between both staff and children
2. key vocabulary being planned for each week and shared with parents
3. children being exposed to daily high quality texts, rhymes and poems
4. working with parents and carers through the weekly newsletters
5. working with external agencies such as Stoke Speaks Out and Speech and Language Therapists
6. identified target support for children such as 'Time to Talk' and 'Talk Boost'
7. Foundation Stage staff regularly attend training and have received training from Stoke Speaks Out.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This covers areas of 'Self-regulation', 'Managing self' and 'Building Relationships'.

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. PSED is fundamental to children's all round development and to their future outcomes. Alongside working with parents, a quality transition plan ensures that children settle quickly into school. Our school rules ensure that children are supported to work co-operatively with others, learning how to work and play and function in a group beyond the family.

Physical Development

This covers areas of 'Fine motor skills' and 'Gross motor skills'. Fine and gross motor physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Physical development is implicit in all areas of the EYFS framework. Providing daily opportunities for children to practise and develop physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments will ensure the development of strength, co-ordination, stability, balance and dexterity of all children.

Literacy Development

This covers areas of 'Comprehension', 'Word Reading' and 'Writing'. In addition to communication and language development, the children will be developing skills in reading and writing. Not only are these skills essential for educational success but essential for life skills. In nursery, children have daily phonics sessions where they will learn nursery rhymes, rhyme, alliteration and early blending and segmenting skills. This ensures that all children are

developing essential skills in speaking and listening. In Reception, daily phonics will ensure that children will learn to read and spell supported by a systematic synthetic phonics programme called 'Phonics Bug'. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for spelling are skills that are promoted daily in the Foundation Stage. There are daily opportunities for children to listen to stories and to develop of lifelong love of reading. Local initiatives such as the Stoke 25 Reads are also shared regularly with parents to promote the importance of reading and enjoyment.

Mathematical Development

This covers areas of 'Number' and 'Numerical Patterns'. Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children will be taught mathematical skills daily, such as counting, recognising numbers and using mathematical language. Children in the nursery will become familiar with numbers and the number system using an online programme called 'Ten Town' and following 'Mastering the Curriculum'. In reception, the children follow Power Maths and Mastering Number to build upon the children's mathematical knowledge to ensure they have a deep understanding of number. Children will also develop and practise skills through planned continuous provision and child initiated play.

Understanding the World

This covers the areas of 'Past and Present', 'People, Culture and Communities' and 'The Natural World'. This is a key area of learning and enquiry focusing on children developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. Children will have access to outdoor provision, trips and visits and a breadth of stories in order to develop their knowledge and skills in Understanding the World around them.

Expressive Arts and Design

This covers the areas of 'Creating with materials' and 'Being imaginative and expressive'. This area of the EYFS framework focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways. Children have access to role-plays initiated through topics, children's interests and occupations, daily stories, daily singing and rhymes and access to art activities initiated through topics and continuous provision.

Religious Education (RE)

Within the Foundation Stage, we follow the Archdiocese of Birmingham Catholic

Education scheme of work specifically written for nursery and reception 'Living and growing as people of God.' We also take part in daily worship, weekly prayer & liturgy, assemblies and Mass at church. We use the 'Ten:Ten' scheme of work to support the teaching of Relationship and Health Education. Within the foundation Stage, the main focus is that God created us as individuals to love and to be loved.

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

The characteristics of effective teaching and learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

Playing and exploring - engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning - motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically - thinking

- Having their own ideas

- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Curriculum

The children are taught the skills required in the EYFS through termly topics which are coherently planned to build upon the children's current knowledge and understanding by a cumulative sequence of lessons. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The pupils are encouraged to wonder and ask questions about what they are learning and this information is used to plan subsequent lessons.

The pupils are pre taught any topic specific language to ensure that they can access the topic and build upon their knowledge. Each week the children are also introduced to two new key words to further develop their language and vocabulary.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Staff regularly discuss observations of the children and their next steps.

As part of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), all children take a short assessment within the first six weeks of them starting reception.

Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage teacher each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's progress. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the parents will also receive a summary of whether their child is meeting the expected level of development against the Early Learning Goals or if they are not yet reaching the expected levels.

The Induction Process- Nursery

During the Summer Term all new parents are invited to attend an induction meeting where induction information and early years practice is shared. During this meeting, there is also

the opportunity to meet the foundation stage staff and the Principal. During the summer term, prior to starting school in September, foundation stage staff will visit either a preschool setting or a home setting to get to know the child.

Each child and their parents and carers will be invited to our 'Stay and Play' sessions to spend some time at our setting in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the foundation stage environment. When children join the school in September they can either start full time or take part in an induction process.

Our school induction process is as follows:

During the first two weeks, children will attend for the morning session only. During the third week, children will attend for the morning session and lunch only. During the fourth week and thereafter, children will attend for the full school day unless foundation staff and parents or carers agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child. In this case, the staff and parents will decide upon a suitable transition period, which best meets the needs of the child.

The Induction Process-Reception

As both the Nursery and Reception staff and children work so closely together, the induction for those children who have attended the Nursery is usually seamless. In the Summer term, all Nursery children including those new to the school, spend some time in the Reception class in order to familiarise themselves with the staff and the environment. For any new children who will be joining our school in Reception, a member of staff will either visit them in their current nursery or visit them in their home environment.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents to work closely together in the Foundation Stage. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge. We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents as follows:

1. We will hold parent consultations during the year to discuss children's progress
2. We will send home weekly newsletters to inform parents about what their child will be learning for that week and how they can support their child's learning at home.
3. We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if foundation staff

have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

4. We will conduct workshops, sometimes with outside agencies, for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school.
5. Parents will also have to opportunity to take part in stay and pray, stay and read, stay and do maths sessions within the nursery and reception classrooms.

Inclusion in EYFS

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. Within 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. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning 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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

1. planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
2. using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
3. providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
4. offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
5. employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
6. planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
7. monitoring children's progress, and providing support (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.

Transition to Year 1

The Y1 curriculum builds on and extends the experiences children have had during the Foundation Stage. Before the children move from the Foundation Stage into KS1 the teaching staff meet to discuss the children's progress and share information about the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and whether the children achieved the Early Learning Goals.

Nappy Changing

No child is excluded from participating in our setting who may, for any reason, not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing nappies or equivalent whatever their age. We work with parents towards toilet training at the appropriate age, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time. We make necessary adjustments to our bathroom provision and hygiene practice in order to accommodate children who are not yet toilet trained. We see toilet training as a self-care skill that children have the opportunity to learn with the full support and non-judgemental concern of adults. All staff are responsible for changing children. Children are changed in a designated changing facility and parents will be informed of any issues.

Safeguarding (including mobile phones)

As in line with the school's safeguarding policy; staff, parents and visitors must not use mobile phones within the EYFS setting. Personal phones must be turned to silent and stored away.

Reviewed September 2025

Next review date: September 2026

Agreed by staff.....

Agreed by Governors.....