

ST MONICA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



'Strive to succeed in the presence of God'

Together – as a Catholic community

Everyone - children, staff, parents, carers and parish

Achieves – in their unique way and tries to be

More – like Jesus

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between teachers, nursery nurses, other staff and families
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

In addition, the curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional wellbeing;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- social skills,
- attention skills and persistence,
- language and communication,
- reading, comprehension and writing,
- mathematics,
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development;
- creative and expressive development.

Throughout the EYFS we plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning will take place within the classroom and outside areas.

Within these areas children will participate in a variety of activities, both with an adult and independently.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

St Monica's has two Reception classes of thirty children; we do not have a nursery. There is one class teacher and one nursery nurse for each class and a part-time Teaching Assistant (TA) is shared between both classes.

The Reception year is for children who are aged 4 years on the 1st September of the academic year that they are starting.

In the Reception year the children have a 'soft start' which means that they can arrive at any time between 8:50am and 9:00am. The school day finishes at 3:15pm. The Reception children are able to attend our breakfast and afterschool club. Breakfast club starts at 7:30am and after school club runs until 6pm.

Children have lunch between 11.45am and 1.15pm, the Government funds lunches for Reception children and you will be able to book this in advance however you may prefer to send your child to school with a packed lunch. You must not send in any products containing nuts and we encourage healthy packed lunches. There is a fruit snack available for the children throughout the day.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development (as set out in the list below) that are equally important and inter-connected. However, the first three areas in the list are known as the prime areas and seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

In planning and guiding children's activities, teachers consider the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. These characteristics of effective teaching and learning are;

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things and have a go.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

4. 1 Teaching and Learning

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. The features apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Teachers respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs - providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may involve outside agencies, speech therapy or tiger teams.

4.2 Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school 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 planning for their learning. (See our policy for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.)

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond the ELGs and start on parts of the Year 1 curriculum. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children's interest and their current needs provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Phonics and Literacy is taught using the RWI programme. We use 'White Rose' for Mathematics as a planning structure, in line with the rest of the school. The Birth to 5 Matters and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile also provide a basis for our curriculum. Teachers use the Early Learning Goals to support planning fun, effective and challenging lessons. Our curriculum map is completed at the beginning of the year and identifies the intended learning. Weekly plans enable us to build on the children's interests at the time to engage them further in their learning and move them onto the next steps. The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives for the curriculum. By the end of the Reception year in our school, children are prepared in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics and ready for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

5. Assessment

At St Monica's School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. We also use the RWI assessments to assess their phonics ability termly.

During the children's first half-term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using the statutory baseline assessment. We use the results to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort of children. We use this information to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

All staff will carry out formative observations and assessments throughout the year which record each child's attainment. This is recorded termly onto the school's assessment tool Scholarpack.

The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share information from this with the children's parents/carers at parents' evening in November and also in March.

Across the year observations, photographs and examples of children's work are shared on Tapestry to show the parents their child's learning journey. This is also used as a way to keep the parents informed of what the children are learning at the time, as well as to track attainment. We also have literacy and mathematics books. These books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with children and parents.

Parents receive an annual report that allows them to see whether their child is at the expected level or not for each area of learning. The report highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in the summer term and send them out to the parents in July.

6. Working with parents

We believe that all families have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that families have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- visiting the parents/carers at their home and talking to families about their child before their child starts in our school;
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during class visits;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the summer term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class and encouraging parents to be involved in the assessment process. Parents also comment on their child's learning journey through Tapestry and share any progress they have made at home;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first two weeks of term. We begin with half day sessions with only 15 children in each class for the first week, so that the teacher can get to know each child individually. We encourage parents to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;

- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents (such as our Mother's day tea party and Dad's 'Stay and Play');
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home. We invite parents to Parents' Evening to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in Reception and what the curriculum looks like.
- we support parental understanding of the curriculum through parent workshops sessions held during and after school for Literacy and Maths.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Early Years Lead and Headteacher.