



# **St George's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

‘We are learning and growing together as God's family.  
We will always do our best to love and respect each other as we prepare for  
our future’

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its’ own right, and provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”

Chair of Governors.....

Head Teacher.....

Date of review: January 2022

## **Aims**

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive, they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

### **The prime areas are;**

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

### **The specific areas are;**

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and communities, The world and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

At St George's Catholic Primary School 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, 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 children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## **Inclusion**

We value and celebrate the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at St George's are treated fairly regardless of gender, race, culture or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. 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.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe and secure. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

At St George's we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## **Parents as Partners**

At St George's Catholic Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

As a Catholic school we recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents play in educating their children alongside school and parish.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school at a Home Visit;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts school;
- Involving parents in our assessment process by encouraging them to send in photos/comments illustrating an accomplishment of their child towards the Early Learning Goals;
- Inviting parents to view their child's 'Learning Journal' each term and make comments about their Child's learning.
- Holding weekly 'Friday Phonics' sessions which outline learning for the following week in which teachers can show parents how to support phonics and other learning at home. This is also opportunity to share and discuss any upcoming events etc.
- Home learning books. These are sent out half termly (From Autumn 2) and contain topical activities for the pupils to engage with at home.

There are formal meetings for parents each term at which parents discuss the child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive their child's annual school report on their child's attainment and progress in the summer term.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, through positive interactions and taking time to listen to them. Within our Reception classes the EYFS class teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Nursery Nurse. Staff in the Foundation Unit meet weekly to share good practice, learning for assessment and to inform planning and to discuss current issues.

Within St Georges Nursery Dragons we publish a newsletter to inform parents of what their child will be learning and how they can support them at home. At the beginning of each half term we share our mid-term planning. During the Autumn and Summer terms we hold parents' consultations. Parents and Carers are encouraged to contribute towards the evidence gathered towards the Early Years outcomes through incidental discussions with staff, completing 'wow' observations and commenting on 'EYLOG'. There is also the opportunity for parents to share observations from home. The children take library books, song cards and Story sacks home to share. Throughout the year, parents are invited to share their knowledge of their child's learning and development through completing a planning for children interests and needs form which is integrated into our weekly short term plan.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teachers plan activities within classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The children are also involved in using these characteristics to reflect on and talk about their own learning in the form of well-known characters which define each characteristic.

The three characteristics 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.

### **Teaching strategies**

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1, in readiness for the next stage in their education.

### **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play

through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

### **Learning Environment**

At St George's we recognise that the indoor and outdoor environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### **Outdoor Learning Environment**

The Foundation Unit has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and imagination and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning. Practitioners regularly evaluate, plan and adapt provision according to the children's interests, needs and stage of development.

### **Teaching**

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Within Reception classrooms we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught through shared teaching, gathered on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and reading stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag and has a designated time when they will have one-to-one time sharing a book with an adult or in a group reading session.

### **Two year olds Provision**

We aim to provide an effective, high quality provision for two year olds who attend St Georges Nursery- Dragons. We have up to eight children at each session. We understand that the Key person role is central to the child's wellbeing, sense of belong and belonging. Our effective key person approach offers children consistency of care and continuity of experiences which is essential between home and nursery. Every two year old is visited at home by their key person before they start the setting. We have an appointed member of staff dedicated to ensuring the needs of our two year old are met in our planning and resources. The nursery environment supports active hands on exploration. We believe the prime areas of learning, as set out, in the Early Years Foundation stage begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children

with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### **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 are 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.

The Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFSP.

Within the Summer term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. The parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher and both parents and children. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. These are noted as emerging, secure or exceeding for transition to Year 1.

St Georges Dragons planning in the Nursery is in different stages within continuous provision.

#### **Long Term Planning**

Our long term planning promotes learning within the areas of learning and development, tracks the learning objectives that have been covered and highlights any key events to be included.

#### **Medium Term Planning**

Medium term planning shows the key learning experiences for each area of the curriculum. Practitioners use this flexibly, choosing learning experiences to meet the needs of the children, based on cohort and individual assessments. At the beginning of each topic, practitioners lead the children in discussion to identify areas that they are particularly interested in.

#### **Short Term Planning**

Short term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. It includes differentiated adult led experiences for curriculum areas, as well as showing how the learning environment will be set up. Activities are enhanced in response to the observations and assessment of the children and their needs by parents and practitioners.

### **Role of the key workers in EYFS**

Within our EYFS settings each child has a named key worker in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this Policy. The EYFS Leader monitors practice in all areas of Foundation Stage learning and regularly discusses and informs the Senior Leadership Team of necessary changes, areas of strength/ concern. The Head teacher, EYFS Leader and subject leaders carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Next review January 2024