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EYFS POLICY

2019 - 2020

Legal Status: Statutory

Adopted: September 2018

Version Date: September 2019

Next Review: September 2020

Responsible Person: Headteacher

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The community of St Mary's Catholic Primary School owes its special character to its belief in God and its commitment to him. The school's life is inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ. We work together to create a happy, secure caring environment where everyone is of equal importance, is valued and is given every opportunity to develop their spiritual, academic, physical, and social potential.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Foundation Stage extends from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the Reception school year in which the children are 4/5

1.2 The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

1.3 Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational 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 activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing:

- Communication and Language: Listening and attention, understanding and speaking
- Physical Development: Moving and handling and Health and self-care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self-confidence and Self-awareness, Managing feelings and behaviour and Making relationships
- Literacy: Reading and Writing
- Mathematics; Numbers and shape, space and measures
- Understanding of the World; People and communities, the world and technology
- Expressive arts and design; exploring and using media and materials and being imaginative

3 Teaching and learning style

3.1 The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

3.2 The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers;
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

4 Play at the Foundation Stage

4.1 Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

5. Inclusion at the Foundation Stage

5.1 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 (see our policy on inclusion).

5.2 In the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the expected level by the end of the stage. Some children exceed 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.

5.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources that reflect diversity and that avoid 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 providing support (such as speech therapy), as necessary.

6. The Foundation Stage curriculum

6.1 Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

6.2 The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children.

6.3 Planning is done as a team based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of the EYFS. These plans then inform our weekly planning which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's

responses. Children have whole class and small group times, which increase as they progress through the EYFS. These include phonics session using 'Read Write Inc.', Mathematics and Literacy. At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

7 Assessment

7.1 The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning divided into the prime and specific areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. 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 both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage is a statutory requirement.

7.2 During the first term in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the information contained with our parents at our parental consultation meetings and online through the 2Simple secure Parent share programme.

7.3 The teacher completes an assessment each term, and then updates these assessments on Pupil Asset. At the end of the final term in Reception, we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental weekly consultation meetings.

7.4 Each teacher keeps a folder of with independent samples of work. These folders contain a wide range of evidence that show the individual child's progress. We share this with parents and carers at each parental consultation meeting.

7.5 Parents and carers receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents and carers in mid July each year.

8 The role of parents and carers

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

- Talking to parents or carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school through 'stay and play' sessions;
- Inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- Arranging for children to start school over the first two weeks of term, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school;
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourages collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;
- Providing a weekly EYFS newsletter for parents with information about what the children have been learning and ideas for activities that can be conducted at home to consolidate this learning.
- Providing various activities that involve parents and carers, i.e. regular communication with home through the child's online learning journey, and inviting parents and carers to curriculum evenings, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking.

8.2 There is a formal meeting for parents and carers each term, at which the parents/carers discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents and carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

9 Resources

9.1 We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.