



ST.THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Foundation Stage Policy

Mission Statement

- We are a Roman Catholic Community committed to:
- Mutual respect, positive encouragement and participation.
- Recognising the different personal and educational needs of all pupils.
- The delivery of the full national curriculum together with religious education syllabus approved by the Catholic Church.
- The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.
- Maintaining a supportive partnership with parents, guardians, the parish and the wider community.
- The professional development of all staff.

Introduction

The Foundation Stage applies to children from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. In our school, all children join us the term after they are three for Nursery and at the beginning of the school year in which they are five for Reception. (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.) Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Aims of the Foundation Stage

At St Thomas of Canterbury School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS '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.'

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.

Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult.
- Adults develop close relationships with individual children.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

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 are the prime areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

Play in the Foundation Stage

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.

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 on school inclusion).

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that they all reach their full potential. 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.

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 involves speech therapy for some of our children.

Assessment

Throughout the foundation stage, as part of the learning and teaching process, we assess each child's development in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage. These assessments are made on the basis of our accumulating observations and knowledge of the whole child. By the end of the final year of the foundation stage assessments are finalised summarising each child's development. Assessments are completed throughout the year to track individual achievements and set future targets in the autumn, spring and summer terms. End of year results are passed onto the Year1 teacher to help with transition and future planning.

The role of parents

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

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting and providing them with a "Welcome Pack" before their child starts school.
- Open mornings for parents to meet the teacher and see their child in the classroom.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our nursery and Reception classes.

- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's contact book. We send home housekeeping letters to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the reception and Nursery class.

Resources

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.

Special Educational Needs

Early years teachers have a key role to play in identifying learning needs and responding quickly to any area of particular difficulty, to develop an effective strategy to meet these needs so that later difficulties can be avoided. At St. Thomas' School we aim to identify areas of need as early as possible, using both the Early Years Foundation Stage and professional judgement, in order to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to progress according to their individual level of ability.

Health and Safety

The school will endeavour to provide a safe environment in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.

Reviewed: January 2018

Next review date: January 2021