

# St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*"A learning community, celebrating Christ in all, building a kingdom of love, hope and joy."*

### **Aims**

At St. Edmund's we strive 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.'

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St. Edmund's School children are admitted to Nursery at any time following the beginning of the term after their third birthday. Children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences are created in response to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children 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. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both child-initiated and adult-led.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

### **Inclusion/Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

We value all children and their families as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We aim to plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children will be able to achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEND.

All children have equal access to the provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

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.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first educators and we value the contribution they make. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child at a home visit offered shortly before their child starts school;
- offering children and their parents the opportunity to visit the school and meet their teacher in the term before starting school;
- supporting children through the transition from Nursery settings to Reception;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- offering a formal meeting for Reception parents twice a year at which the parents discuss the child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year; Nursery children will have two focus weeks each year where all staff will carefully observe them and feed back through writing observations. Parents will be asked to contribute to their child's focus weeks by putting together a 'Marvellous Me' box and attending a parent/teacher meeting at the end of the week.
- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, etc;
- providing opportunities for informal discussions with staff and the beginning and end of each school session.

### **Enabling Environments**

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. We work to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. Children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up to include all areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journeys.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will intervene in children's play and extend as needed in order to enhance individual learning.

## **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 in order to enable the children to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All 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**

Religious Education is taught in the Foundation Stage Classes as outlined in 'God Matters'. (See RE Policy)

Planning and activities will take into account the different ways that children learn. We support and encourage children in using The Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying when they encounter difficulties. They enjoy achievements;
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.  
(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2017)

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 that 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.

## **Observation, Assessment and Record Keeping**

Electronic Learning Journeys are used to record the learning that occurs over the children's time in Nursery and Reception. We use Tapestry online Learning Journeys which are shared with parents and through which parents can make their own contributions.

Learning journeys will include:

- Photographs that show evidence of children's learning.
- A variety of long and short observations covering all seven areas of learning.
- A balance of adult led and child-initiated samples of work.
- Contributions from parents indicating progress that the child has made at home.
- References to the Development Matters age bands and Characteristics of Learning to make clear the learning that has occurred in each observation.

Reception children have a Maths and Literacy book in which samples of their work are kept. This work will be marked with clear reference to Learning Objectives and outcomes and with 'Next Steps' recorded for some pieces of work.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be working towards (c), comfortably working within (b) or securely working within (a) the Development Matters age-bands.

### **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We aim to create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety and these are followed diligently.

Safeguarding concerns are recorded and reported to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy. In the event of a child being in immediate danger and a Safeguarding Lead not being available, all staff know the procedure to contact MASH.

We ensure that staff to pupil ratios are adhered to as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017).

When attending to children's personal or intimate care needs, we ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity in line with the school's Personal Care Policy.

We promote the good physical health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, making sure that clean, fresh drinking water is available to children at all times, providing many opportunities for physical exercise and by following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Each pupil will be assigned a named key person (usually one of their class teachers or teaching assistants) who will have responsibility for the wellbeing, including the mental health and emotional wellbeing, of each of their key children.

Children who are considered 'missing in education' will be reported following the school's Absence Policy.

In the event of a child not being collected at the end of the day, attempts will be made to contact each of the named contacts on their file. After two hours, if none of the named contacts can be reached, the police will be called.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

#### **Starting Nursery and From Nursery to Reception**

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Nursery or Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and have the opportunity to express any concerns.
- The children are invited to two separate visits to their reception class. One of these visits is supported by parents and the second is without.

In the week before they start school:

- Members of staff make home visits.

Pre-Nursery aged children and their parents are invited to visit school for weekly 'Stay and Sing' sessions in the Nursery classroom and for termly 'Stay and Play' sessions.

### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, learning journeys are made available to the year 1 class teacher. The Reception and year 1 teachers meet to pass on relevant information about the children and assessment data is discussed and passed on. Children are given the opportunity to visit their year 1 class for an afternoon to meet their teacher and become familiar with the classroom environment. Children may also visit the year 1 class for a brief phonics session or maths starter or to join in with story time. Children who may find transition difficult may be given a transition book to read over the summer holiday to help them to get to know their new teachers, support staff and classroom.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years. The Governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the Governing Body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Policy date: **July 2015**

Reviewed: **September 2019**

To be reviewed: **September 2022**