



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Early Years Policy

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Introduction

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve 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 it 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." (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us, fulltime, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

Aims

At St Patrick's 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.

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 and/or carers
- 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 purposeful learning activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

Early Years 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

Within these seven areas the 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. More information on the areas of learning and developmental stages can be found by accessing the 'What to expect, when?' guidance:

(https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/4Children_ParentsGuide_2015_WEB.pdf) produced by 4 Children and supported by the Department for Education.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristic of effective learning outlined within the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St. Patrick's Primary School and Nursery are treated fairly regardless of race, religion 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.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs 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 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.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. 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 wellbeing of all children. (See Whole School Health and Safety policy and Safeguarding Policy)

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At St. Patrick's Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. 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.
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We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching , or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out for themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, after they have been to the toilet or changing underwear after an accident. We actively encourage parents to start helping their children become independent with these tasks prior to starting school.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs. It is important that staff and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child. Please see our 'Toileting' Policy for further clarification.

Planning

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 are reviewed by the Early years Subject Leader and the Senior Leadership Team. 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 at St Patrick's and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group activities which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Jolly Phonics', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared 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 supported by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to set the children Next steps in their learning, which will then inform our future plans. We record our observations using the 2 simple and Target Tracker ipad applications and by hand, linking every observation to the Development matters expectations and the characteristics of learning presented by the children.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute to both formative and summative assessments and discussions take place to ensure a holistic approach is taken to assessment. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which parents and teachers can use and contribute towards. Every term parents are invited to attend a parents evening to formally share and discuss assessments.

Within the final term in Reception Class, we provide parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and

the characteristics of learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Class teacher in preparation for Year 1.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and also areas that they can be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The Reception class and Nursery Class have separate outdoor areas which children can access at various points throughout the school day, and the school have developed an outdoor classroom which is often used. This has a positive effect on the children's development and ability to care for their living environment. At St. Patrick's we use the outdoor classrooms to encourage children to gain understanding and confidence. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore and use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Parents as Partners and the Wider context

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 have played, and their future role, in educating the 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 during the term before their child starts school;
- inviting parents to Maths and Literacy workshops created to inform parents of how they can support learning at home
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns and use the reading diary as a means of communication.
- There is a formal meeting for parents each term 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: Charity events, Christmas productions, Sports Day etc;

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transition

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. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery and Reception Class to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive a small booklet containing photos and complete an 'All about me' sheet. See admissions policy for more information.

In the final term in Reception Class, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. Also during the last term in Reception there will be more of a shift in the structure of teaching and learning where the children will be encouraged to become more independent in their learning preparing them for more formalised learning in year one.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS Staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Head teacher and subject coordinators will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This Policy was approved by the Mission & Ethos Committee on:

Signed

(Chair of Committee)

Date

To be reviewed every year. Next review date: February 2019