

# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY



'Treat others as you would like to be treated'

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*"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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."* (DfE, 2014)

## 2. PRINCIPLES

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child:** 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 and 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 and develop a positive attitude to learning
- **Positive relationships:** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families
- **Enabling environments:** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning

- **Learning and development:** The Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Reception to take on the opportunity of building upon that prior learning and experience from external settings. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and all school staff work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

### **3. AIMS**

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

To meet our aims we:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- work in partnership with Parents/Carers and value their contributions

- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

#### 4. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the Reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document (DfE, 2014).

The seven areas of learning and development are:

##### Three Prime Areas:

- \*Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- \*Physical Development
- \*Communication, Language and Literacy

##### Four Specific Areas:

- \*Literacy
- \*Mathematics
- \*Understanding of the World
- \*Expressive Art and Design

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School we believe all seven areas are of equal importance and fully ensure that the three prime areas are embedded in the four specific areas. All the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

## 5. PLANNING

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in Reception class at St Kentigern's are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

- **Long Term Planning:** We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage.
- **Medium Term Planning:** We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.
- **Short Term Planning:** We identify specific learning objectives and plan activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. Planning reflects and supports the characteristics of effective learning and the different ways children learn: play and exploration, active learning and creative and critical thinking.

## 6. ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND MONITORING

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Within the Reception class we use two types of assessment:

- **Formative assessment:** This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on continual observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations and other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. Each child has an individual online Learning Journey which all evidence relevant to achieving ELG are stored. Maths book, Literacy book, RE book and a Topic Book in which adult led evidence is stored. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning. All of these assessments are recorded and a regular report is sent to parents.
- **Summative assessment:** At the end of the Reception year the EYFS Profile is completed online which provides information of a child's knowledge, understanding and their progress. The Profile reflects the on-going observations and assessments which have been made during the year.

Evaluations are made in each of the 7 areas of learning, assessing against the early learning goals criteria. Each child will be assessed as either 'meeting expected levels', 'exceeding expected levels' or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) in each of the 7 areas of learning.

Teaching and Learning is monitored in line with the School's Monitoring Policy by the literacy and mathematics subject leaders through lesson observations, pupil interviews and whole school work sampling. Other areas of learning and development in the foundation stage are monitored by the respective leaders on a rolling programme as outlined in the School Development Plan. The Senior Leadership Team monitor teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage throughout the year and analyse the EYFS Profile data. There is also a specific EYFS Governor who monitors EYFS across the year.

## **7. LEARNING THROUGH PLAY**

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play by getting involved in the play themselves.

## **8. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

We create attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environments which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into different zones in order to fully support all seven areas of learning. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

## **9. LIAISON WITH PRE-SCHOOL SETTINGS AND INDUCTION**

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, we have close links with the local pre-schools/nursery's. Reception practitioners utilise the transfer records from pre-school settings to inform them about each new intake. During the Summer Term, the EYFS teacher and nursery nurse undertake home visits and visits to the feeder nurseries and play groups, to meet the children in a familiar setting. In addition, all prospective children have the opportunity to visit the school and their classroom for a 'taster' sessions. Outside agencies also attend as part of the information sharing practice. Children are inducted on an increasing attendance programme beginning with mornings or afternoon only then increasing to include lunchtimes and finally full-time attendance by the end of the third week of the new academic term. This allows the children to feel secure in their new environment and gradually build up to full-time attendance.

## 10. RECEPTION TO YEAR 1 TRANSITION

Reception and Year 1 work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At St Kentigern's Primary School:

- children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception year
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- Reception children meet Year 1 teacher regularly during the Reception year for shared learning with Year 1 children
- EYFS Profiles are passed on to Year 1 teacher
- an EYFS Profile/Characteristics of Effective Learning is passed on to the Year 1 teacher
- Reception and Year 1 teacher meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a session in July
- the 'Letters and Sounds' approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout Year 1 and 2
- there is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into Year 1
- there is an overlap in approach and routines, e.g. behaviour systems, timetables, etc
- where possible, the Year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually become more formalised towards the end of the academic year

## 11. HOME/SCHOOL LINKS

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We develop this by:

- sending home an outline of topic activities
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- sharing progress at school and encouraging parents to comment in their child's 'Memory' books
- inviting parents to help in the reception class or other classes in the school
- encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school contact book
- encouraging relevant learning tasks to be continued at home ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- providing an annual written report to parents in termly summarizing the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales

## 12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School we provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

### 13. INCLUSION

Children with additional educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio. The school's SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

### 14. SAFEGUARDING AND 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."* (DfE, 2014)

At St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School we provide a welcoming, safe, secure and stimulating environment enabling all children to develop into independent and confident individuals.

Please also refer to the Safeguarding Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

Policy Reviewed: March 2018

Policy to be renewed: September 2020

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Head: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor: \_\_\_\_\_