



# St. Thomas Centre Nursery School

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## Teaching and Learning Policy

At St Thomas Centre Nursery we follow the policies and procedures from Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) which includes the governments PREVENT Strategy.

### *Article 28*

*You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.*

### *Article 29*

*Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.*

Name	
Role	
Date	
Signature	
Next review	

At St. Thomas Centre Nursery School we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. All children will have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. We give children a broad range of knowledge and skills to provide the right foundation for good future progress which ensures school readiness.

The curriculum is delivered within the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Provision

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The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is implemented through planned purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities across seven areas of learning:-

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Communication and Language
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The first 3 areas of learning, known as the *Prime Areas*, are particularly crucial to igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm and is the focus for our Under 3's Curriculum. The remaining areas of learning are known as *Specific Areas*. We believe that children's learning is holistic and are committed to the principals and Characteristics of Effective Learning .

These include:

**Playing and Exploring-** *engagement,*

**Active Learning-** *Motivation,*

**Creating and Thinking Critically-** *Thinking.*

# Children's Learning and Progress

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Through careful and individualized planning, practitioners are responding to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Children learn in different ways and these are reflected in our delivery of the curriculum.

All children are valued. We build upon children's previous experience at home and take into account children's interests and strengths as we plan for them. Our aim is to develop the natural curiosity in children by encouraging them to ask questions and try to find answers. Observation and assessment are used as part of our practice with post-it notes (wow moments) digital and video cameras, to record the learning process.

We follow the statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage which covers children from birth to five years. This underpins learning by supporting, promoting and developing positive attitudes towards learning. Children learn through carefully planned first hand activities, both indoors and outdoors, which are based on their development and interests. Each room has a planning board which is added to on a regular basis to show interests and learning.

Practitioners plan together on a weekly basis. Staff keep detailed observations of children's progress through notes, photographs, video footage and observations. This information enables staff to celebrate children's achievements and assess their learning. Children are 'celebrated' and parents encouraged to contribute to 'Celebration Boards', sharing information about their child's learning and interests. Staff then meet as a team to discuss the child's learning and record a snapshot of their development and progress in the form of a 'Reflection Bubble'. Key workers then share this evidence with parents and together next steps in learning are planned for. These next steps are then incorporated into planning boards.

Details of a child's progress and achievements are shared and the information passed on to their primary school. There are opportunities to meet key workers during the year in addition to informal discussions.

# Special Educational Needs

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All children have access to all areas of the Nursery and learn in an environment where everyone belongs and is valued. We are an inclusive School, which operates a programme of inclusion to meet the needs of all the pupils in our care.

We treat each child as an individual and providing a curriculum and environment to meet individual needs as far as is possible, including children with special gifts and talents. We follow the 'Code of Practice for Special Needs', and have a designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator. If you have any concerns about the progress of individual children these can be discussed with the team leader or can be raised at team meetings or with the SENCOs, Lauren Davidson and Alison Harris.

Staff have developed considerable expertise over the years and we have an increasing number of children who are referred to the nursery from other agencies. Where possible we access additional funding to support children and ensure their individual needs are met.

We work closely with many other professionals and agencies. We are supported by an educational psychologist, speech therapists, visiting specialist support teachers and health visitors. Children may be receiving additional support through Inclusion Support Funding for Early years Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs), Personal Education Plans (PEPs) or via external agencies. Please make sure, by asking, that you have up to date information about your children.

## Parents

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We work closely with parents and carers and welcome their involvement in all aspects of Nursery life. We have an 'open door' policy and we benefit from working with families from a wide range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who contribute to and enrich the lives of the Nursery, the children and staff.

Through the Nursery and wider Centre parents and families are offered a range of services to include: **Stay & Play** and **crèche** sessions; **workshops** that promote creativity and educational activities; a variety of **courses** run by the Children's Centre (for example on parenting issues)

# Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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At St. Thomas Centre Nursery School we aim to prepare our children for their future by helping them to develop their personal, social and emotional skills and give them a joy for learning. We see these skills as being the fundamental building blocks for the children to be able to access the curriculum and to develop as independent learners. We provide them with experiences and support to help them develop a positive sense of self and others; to form positive relationships; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings. We help children to develop a positive disposition to learn and support each child in their emotional well-being in order that they learn to know themselves and recognise their own potential.

## Making relationships

- Providing opportunities for turn taking and collaborative play experiences
- Providing materials which reflect children's family lives and communities
- Giving children practice in resolving social conflict
- Modeling good relationships with others

## Self-confidence and self-awareness

- Creating a climate of positivity and security to encourage children to try new activities
- Providing stimulating activities and materials which encourage independent learning
- Praising children's attempts, initiative and persistence
- Providing materials which promote recognition of emotions e.g. story books, pictures, dolls and mirrors and emotive music
- Providing opportunities to „discover“ items which may provoke an emotive response
- Encouraging children to talk and explain their feelings

## Managing feelings and behaviour

- Providing materials which support children in their

understanding of what is right and wrong e.g. nursery rules and relevant books/pictures to promote discussion.

- Setting clear, reasonable and consistent expectations  
Praising positive behaviour and modeling self-control
- Demonstrating concern and respect for others and the environment

## Communication and Language

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At St. Thomas Centre Nursery we aim to prepare our children for their future by helping to develop their Communication and Language skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes. We aim to provide opportunities and encouragement, support and extension, for our children to learn and become competent in Communicating. We endeavour to foster our children's enjoyment of communication and language by offering a rich language environment and celebrate all spoken languages. Through interesting and stimulating play opportunities we aim to develop their confidence in communicating and build on their skills in expressing themselves.

### Listening and attention:

- Developing positive relationships and interactions with the children so that they respond to eye contact, verbal and non- verbal interactions
- Reading a variety of modern fiction, poetry and traditional stories with repetitive refrains
- Encouraging the children to listen to others and model listening and attending to the communication of others
- Providing a variety of sound lotto games, musical instruments, sound walks and tapping out the rhythms of their names
- Providing opportunities for children to listen in 1:1, pairs, small groups and whole class situations.
- Providing opportunities for children to explore sounds, imitate intonations and participate in meaningful listening activities

### Understanding:

- Extending the children's range of first hand experiences and vocabulary through visitors, visits, experiments and outings, as well as using the internet
- Supporting children in following instructions, offering objects of reference, picture clues and gestures if appropriate
- Displays that remind children of what they have experienced, using objects, artefacts, photographs and books
- Providing props and materials that encourage children to re-enact, using sounds, talk and action
- Modeling and encouraging the children to respond appropriately to what somebody has said
- Asking children to follow instructions
- Allowing the children to respond to and ask questions to clarify the meaning of what has happened or been said
- Sharing experiences and helping children with a range of activities to extend their understanding
- Remembering that the children's understanding of what is being said to them outweighs what they can verbally say

### Speaking:

- Displaying pictures and photographs that show familiar events, objects and activities and talk about them with the children
- Providing a range of developmental opportunities to include role play both inside and outdoors; small world, through puppets and dressing up and props
- Encouraging the children to express their needs and feelings in ways that include in words, actions and gestures.
- Providing time for children to initiate discussions, take turn in conversation and give thinking time for children to decide what they want to say and to describe what they are doing.
- Reading a variety of stories with repetitive refrains, encouraging children to join in with familiar speech sounds, words or refrains.
- Providing collaborative play opportunities such as construction, cooking, turn taking games and large floor puzzles that encourage

speaking

- Extending the children's range of first hand experiences, verbal and non verbal vocabulary through visitors, visits, and other experiences that stimulate conversation, recall and expression.

## Physical Development

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At St. Thomas Centre Nursery School, we aim to support the children to be active, safe and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement through the provision of a variety of opportunities. We believe that physical development may take place across all the areas of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. We aim to support the children in understanding the importance of physical activity, keeping safe and in making healthy choices. We see our physical development curriculum as providing the foundation for being healthy and active with a positive sense of well-being throughout life.

### Movement and handling

- Providing a variety of levels and surfaces within the classrooms and outdoors together with the provision of a wide range of equipment, materials and tools which the children can access independently.
- Providing a range of climbing and balancing challenges for children to experience.
- Providing a range of activities that encourage children to experiment with moving in different ways and at different speeds, as well as encouraging them to move in response to a diverse range of music and to imaginative ideas.
- Modeling, teaching and encouraging children to challenge themselves and use equipment safely.
- Providing an enabling environment of free-flow access between indoor and outdoor areas.
- Organising games which encourage children to use their cognitive abilities within active and energetic play.
- Providing activities that give children the opportunity and

motivation to develop manipulative skills e.g. through cooking, painting, play-dough or clay and playing musical instruments and mark making.

- Providing a range of construction toys of different sizes and materials that fix together in a variety of ways e.g. twisting, pushing, slotting or magnetism and open ended resources for large scale building.
- Teaching children skills of how to use tools and materials effectively and safely and giving them opportunities to practise and refine them to develop their gross and fine motor skills.
- Ask appropriate questioning and praise of attempts, initiative and persistence.

### Health and self care

- Establishing routines that enable children to begin to look after themselves and move increasingly towards independence e.g. putting their clothes and aprons on hooks, washing their hands, pouring their own drinks.
- Modelling hand washing and hygiene routines and offering prompts such as signs and displays.
- Providing opportunities throughout in play for children to be independent in dressing and undressing e.g. dressing up in role play, taking off shoes and sock in outdoor sand/ for PE
- Working in partnership with parents by having flexible routines and encouraging children's efforts at independence.
- Providing opportunities for children to make healthy choices during the day such as the choice of water or milk, toast or fruit .
- Providing a varied lunchtime diet to encourage children to try new foods and textures.

- Providing individual water bottles that can be easily accessed by children when they are thirsty.
- Providing cosy spaces so that children may rest quietly if they need to.
- Providing opportunities for children to take 'risks' whilst ensuring their safety.

## Literacy

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At St. Thomas Centre Nursery School we aim to prepare our children for their future by helping to develop their Literacy skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes. We aim to provide opportunities for the children to start their journey of learning to read and write and to ignite their interest. We aim to create an environment rich in print from a range of places and display different languages where appropriate. Early reading is about children understanding and enjoying stories and rhymes, books (both fiction and fact), and recognising that print carries meaning. Writing is about how children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

### Reading:

- Providing an attractive and interactive book area
- Providing a wide variety of reading matter; fiction and non-fiction books, poetry and rhymes, home-made class books, magazines and comics and ICT
- Providing a range of story props and visual clues to ensure access for all children such as puppets, story sacks, key word cards.
- Encouraging parents to use home/school library loan system, helping their children to select books purposefully and to recall books they have enjoyed together at home.
- Opportunities to explore meaningful print such as a classroom signs and labels, name cards and badges, food packing, leaflets newspapers and magazines.

- Sharing rhymes, books and stories from many cultures, sometimes using languages other than English if appropriate
- Opportunities to recognise their written names, using picture prompts and initial letters as visual cues.
- Making use of environmental signs and logos e.g. in the role play area such as shops/ restaurant names, number plates on bikes,

### Writing:

- Provide a wide range of fonts and scripts and materials that reflect a multi-cultural community
- Drawing attention to writing and signs in their environment such as road signs and shop names
- Providing writing opportunities in the role-play areas both inside and out, for example making shopping lists, taking restaurant orders, a writing area, writing a recipe together, scribing the children's work, or writing the words for a class book
- Encouraging children to recognise and practice writing their own name
- Providing opportunities for non permanent mark making such as dry wipe boards, sand, chalk, water on dry pavement.
  - Encouraging children to have a go at writing the initial sound of the word and other consonants they can hear in the word and playing games that encourage children to link sounds to letters
  - Role modeling writing to children e.g. staff writing observations, messages, marking the register, office staff writing telephone messages.
  - The provision of a wide range of mark making tools, indoors and outdoors; large and small paint brushes, wax crayons, coloured pencils and writing pencils, ball point and felt-tip pens, chalk, oil pastels, charcoal, sticks or twigs in sand or mud, drawing program on the computer, markers for the white board, etc.
  - Developing manipulative skills through, for example, tearing paper, finger paint, clay, play-dough, gluing, shaving foam, gloop, soapy sand and deodorant bottle painting
  - Planning a range of activities that encourage large and fine motor skills such as throwing, kicking, batting balls on string, dancing with

ribbons, sawing and hammering, opening and closing screw topped lids, using tweezers with lentils, beans, etc.

## Mathematics

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At St. Thomas Centre Nursery School we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and provide firm foundations in mathematics for all pupils. We believe that learning should be through first-hand experiences and teaching should allow the children to work to their full potential. Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. We support the children in developing their understanding of mathematics in a range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. It is important that the children are able to practise and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use. Children's mathematical development occurs as they seek patterns, make connections and recognise relationships through finding out about and working with numbers and counting, with sorting and matching and with shape, space and measures.

### Numbers:

- Provide stimulating activities and resources which are readily available and encourage children to be creative in developing their problem solving skills
- Providing equipment which sets appropriate challenges
- Facilitating adult directed challenges, asking appropriate questions and giving time for children to formulate an answer and solve problems before intervening or asking another question
- Modeling mathematical vocabulary and counting in a variety of contexts and providing opportunities for counting and solving number problems in everyday situations
- Providing collections of interesting things for children to sort, order, count and label in their play
- Using mathematical opportunities from stories, number rhymes and explore real-life problems
- Displaying numerals and mathematical concepts in purposeful

contexts

- Making mathematical games accessible and teaching children how to play them which relate to number order, addition and subtraction
- Showing interest in how children solve problems and valuing their different solutions
- Encouraging, valuing and praising all achievements

#### Shape, spaces and measures:

- Providing stimulating activities and resources which are readily available
- Adult directed challenges and equipment which sets appropriate challenges
- Using the potential of the outdoor environment – allowing the children to discover things about shape, distance and measures through their own physical play
- Introducing the children to the use of mathematical names for solid 3D shapes and flat 2D shapes, and the mathematical terms to describe shapes
- Displaying shapes in purposeful contexts
- Role modeling new vocabulary of shape, pattern, position and measures in discussions with children
- Encouraging children to handle and talk about the shapes of everyday objects, shapes they see in the environment and the way they are arranged
- Providing rich and varied opportunities for comparing length, weight and time
- Varying the use of volume and capacity resources in the sand, water and other play areas to maintain interest
- Asking appropriate, challenging questions and encouraging valuing and praising all achievements.

# Understanding the World

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At St. Thomas Centre Nursery School we aim to develop and extend children's natural curiosity about the world, helping children to develop the knowledge skills and understanding that allows them to make sense of their world. We aim to inspire confident, resourceful and motivated learners by providing a stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors. We encourage the development of observation, exploration, prediction, problem solving, critical thinking and decision making skills. We support learning by offering opportunities for children to use a range of tools and ICT equipment safely; encounter creatures, people and plants in their natural environments; undertake practical experiments; develop an awareness of and respect for the similarities and differences between themselves and others; develop a sense of their wider world.

## People and communities

- Celebration of special events in the children's and their community's lives.
- Introducing the children to a range of cultures and religions through different resources and activities e.g. stories, cookery, role-play, music, dance, ICT, creative media etc.
- Visiting places of interest in the local community e.g mosque, church, library,
- Encouraging children to talk about and share memorable experiences of their family or cultural traditions
- Visits from/to different members of the community and religious groups.
- Displaying positive images of all children from a wide range of cultures and including those with diverse physical characteristics.
- Helping the children to learn positive attitudes and behaviour towards people who are different to themselves
- Ensuring that any cultural assumptions and stereotypes that are already held are challenged through play.

## The world:

- Stimulating practical activities illustrating a range of scientific

concepts, which encourage the children to become independent learners, to question, discuss, describe and interpret their findings and develop higher level thinking skills.

- Developing observational skills through close examination of a wide range of living things, objects and materials
- Multi sensory experiences, both inside and in the outdoor environment.
- Providing a range of materials and objects to play and experiment with that have different purposes and work in different ways e.g. whisk, torch, pulley, electricity sets, magnetic objects, construction toys. Children are encouraged to speculate on the reasons why things happen or how things work.
- Exploring the local area, both the built and natural environment. Children are encouraged to discuss, compare and comment on features.
- Providing activities which introduce different environments to the children e.g. rock pools in the water tray, jungle or farm habitats in a small world tray, stories about children in different countries.
- Introducing children to the world as a whole e.g. through stories, discussion about holidays, world maps etc.
- Children are encouraged to look at a variety of maps from a large scale local map to a world map/globe and to talk about and discuss journeys (on a small and large scale).
- Encouraging children to ask questions, suggest solutions and answers.

### Information, communication technology

We provide opportunities for children to find out about and identify the uses of technology. We encourage children to explore all aspects of technology around them and to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through activities based on first-hand experiences exploration and investigation using ICT equipment and programmable toys.

- Providing stimulating age appropriate activities, resources and software which sets appropriate challenges.
- Talking to children about ICT apparatus, what it does, what you can do with it and how to use it safely.
- Drawing children's attention to pieces of ICT apparatus they see or that they use with adult supervision

- Incorporating technology resources in their role play e.g. mobile phones, cameras, typewriters, microwave
- Ensuring safe use of all ICT apparatus and make appropriate risk assessments for their use.
- Using ICT across the curriculum to support, enhance and enrich learning and teaching.
- Developing the use of new technologies to support, enhance and enrich learning and teaching
- Encouraging children to use ICT as a source of information for research and fact finding.

## Expressive Arts and Design

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At St Thomas Centre Nursery School we aim to prepare our children for their future by helping to develop their Creative skills by the provision of support for their curiosity, exploration and play. We provide opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### Exploring and using media and materials

- Singing and reciting traditional songs and rhymes for children to join in with
- Providing a wide range of musical instruments for children to explore including those from different cultures
- Providing resources so that children can create their own musical instruments
- Providing opportunities to dance to familiar and unfamiliar music and with resources e.g. ribbons and streamers
- Providing a wide range of equipment for children to make their own constructions and explore joining items together.
- Providing a wide range of resources for exploring colour
- Providing resources from the natural world for children to observe, feel and discover
- Introducing and modeling relevant vocabulary to help children describe and talk about their observations, experiences and their

creations.

- Developing children's knowledge of different media so that they can find out what happens when they put different things together e.g. paint and sawdust

### Being imaginative

- Encouraging children to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through art, music and role play
- Providing a wide variety of small world toys and equipment both indoors and outdoors
- Providing a wide range of construction including large and small wooden blocks as well as commercial sets and recycled materials
- Encouraging children to make-believe with a range of objects within a range of role play areas e.g. using a cardboard cylinder to make a telescope
- Modeling creative and purposeful play in all role play areas including unstructured areas of sand, water, small and large construction
- Reading a wide range of traditional and contemporary stories and rhymes, providing the props so that children can re-enact them.
- Providing a selection of dolls, including multi culturally diverse reflecting the community of our nursery.