



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

St. Peter's Catholic Academy



OUR MISSION

“Together One Family, One Community in Christ.”

St. Peter's Catholic Academy recognises that gospel values and the teachings of the church are central to the life of the school. The school aims to create an environment where children can develop physically, emotionally, socially and morally fostering co-operation and communication between home, school, parish and the local community. Together we hope to lead our children towards understanding, tolerance, justice and sensitivity to the needs of others.

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.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage. March 2021

“The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage. March 2021

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 Foundation Unit 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 unit is

set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. Peter's Catholic Academy we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

Aims of the EYFS

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing the prime areas of:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- physical development;
- language and communication;

and the specific areas of:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world;
- expressive arts and design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring.
- Active learning.
- Creating and thinking critically.

In addition, as a Catholic academy, we also promote and develop children's spiritual understanding of the Catholic faith.

The Seven Areas of Learning

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

PRIME AREA: Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Self-regulation, managing self and building relationships all form part of PSE development. PSED is fundamental to children's all round development and to their future outcomes. Alongside working with parents, a quality transition plan ensures that children settle quickly into school.

Our schools four rules 'Respect God' 'Respect others' 'Respect oneself' and 'Respect property' ensures that children are supported to work co-operatively with others, learning how to work and play and function in a group beyond the family.

The outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.

In line with the new curriculum there is a great importance placed on oral hygiene as well as teaching and encouraging the children to demonstrate positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life.

PRIME AREA: Communication and Language (C and L)

This is broken down into two sub sections. These cover Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children's developing competence in speaking and Listening and Understanding. Other areas of learning also make a vital contribution to the successful development of literacy.

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children developing competence in speaking and listening and acknowledges that all other areas of learning make a vital contribution to the successful development of communication. Language and communication is nurtured and developed through children being exposed to:

- daily high quality texts, rhymes and poems
- key vocabulary being planned for
- high quality interactions between both staff and children and children and children is scaffolded
- high quality role play within the indoor and outdoor ensures that children can use and develop language effectively
- Partnership working with parents and carers
- Partnership working with external agencies such as Stoke Speaks Out and Speech and Language Therapists
- Identified target support for children such as 'Time to Talk' and 'Talk Boost'

PRIME AREA: Physical Development (PD)

This covers both fine and gross motor development.

Physical development is implicit in all areas of the EYFS framework. Teaching concentrates on children's developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments.

Providing daily opportunities for children to practise and develop physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments will ensure the development of strength, co-ordination, stability, balance and dexterity of all children. Please refer to the 'EYFS Outdoor Policy' for further information.

SPECIFIC AREA: Mathematics (M)

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children will be taught mathematical skills daily, such as counting, recognising numbers and using mathematical language. Children will also develop and practise skills through planned continuous provision and child initiated play. Children in the nursery will become familiar with numbers and the number system using the on line programme 'Ten Town' and "Master the Curriculum"

Reception follow "Power Maths" and Mastery Number which is taught daily, in line with the new curriculum this focuses on teaching and developing a "mastery" approach and deepening children's knowledge of number.

SPECIFIC AREA: Literacy (L)

In addition to communication and language development the children will be developing skills in reading and writing. Not only are these skills essential for educational success but essential for life skills. In nursery, children have daily activities associated with “ Phase 1’. This ensures that all children are developing essential skills in speaking and listening. In Nursery, daily phonics is also taught which includes Phonic Bug Phase 1 sequence of lessons.

In Reception, daily phonics will ensure that children will learn to read and spell supported by a systematic synthetic phonics programme, ‘Phonics Bug’. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for spelling are skills that are promoted daily in the Foundation Stage at St. Peter’s. There are daily opportunities for children to listen to stories and to develop of lifelong love of reading.

Daily Whole class reading is also taught in small groups and supported by the Phonic bug programme. The focus for these lessons is to develop key vocabulary and language, alongside hearing sounds in words blending and segmenting orally.

SPECIFIC AREA: Understanding the World (U the W)

This covers the subjects Geography, Science, DT, History and RE.

This is a major area of learning and enquiry focusing on children’s developing knowledge and understanding of their environment and the natural world, other people, cultures and communities and the past and present.

SPECIFIC AREA: Expressive Arts and Design (CD)

This covers art, music, and drama. This area of the EYFS framework focuses on the development of children’s imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

Religious Education

Within the Foundation Stage we follow the Archdiocese of Birmingham Catholic Education scheme of work specifically written for nursery and reception ‘Living and growing as people of God. We also take part in daily worship and assemblies. We use the ‘Life to the Full’ scheme of work to support the teaching of Relationship and Sex Education. Within the foundation Stage the main focus is that God created us as individuals by God to love and to be loved. Please see the RSE policy or the school website.

Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child’s learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child’s characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child’s next stage of development and future learning needs.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to ‘have a go’

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage Team each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's early learning goals.

The Foundation Stage leader analyses the EYFS data termly. This data analysis dictates priorities for teaching in both the Nursery and Reception class. 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 already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are 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 needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

Play in EYFS

Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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.

The Induction Process- Nursery

During the Summer Term all new parents are invited to attend an induction meeting where induction information and early years practice is shared. During this meeting there is also the opportunity to meet the foundation stage staff and the Principal.

During the Summer Term, prior to starting school in September, foundation stage staff will visit pre-school settings from which September's intake will be taken. The safeguarding officer and Nursery teacher will also complete home visits. Each child and their parents and carers will be invited to spend some time at our setting in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the foundation stage environment.

When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply so that the children can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- The children will start an induction process into school, starting with either mornings or afternoons. This will then be increased to include lunch within school and then move towards full time.
- This process is flexible and can be as personalised as to meet the individual needs of the children.

The Induction Process-Reception

As both the Nursery and Reception staff and children work so closely together, the induction for those children who have attended the Nursery is usually seamless. In the Summer term, all Nursery children including those new to the school, spend some time in the Reception class in order to familiarise themselves with the staff and the environment. In the Summer term, all new parents to the school are invited for a meeting with the EYFS lead. The purpose of this session is to share information on your child's new school, routines, expectations and induction information. There is also opportunity to meet the foundation stage staff and to have a tour around the foundation stage environment.

Home and School Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the schools and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will hold a parent consultation during the year to discuss children's progress
- We will invite parents into school termly to share and discuss their child's learning journal along with their child. Parents also have the opportunity to contribute to these journals with wow moment of their learning journey from home.
- We will publish a theme topic leaflet detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term or half-term.
- We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We will conduct workshops, sometimes with outside agencies, for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.

Inclusion in EYFS

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 we are planning for their learning.

Within the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural

backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.

Nappy Changing

No child is excluded from participating in our setting who may, for any reason, not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing nappies or equivalent whatever their age. We work with parents towards toilet training at the appropriate age, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time. We make necessary adjustments to our bathroom provision and hygiene practice in order to accommodate children who are not yet toilet trained.

We see toilet training as a self-care skill that children have the opportunity to learn with the full support and non-judgemental concern of adults.

All staff are responsible for changing children. Children are changed in the class toilet. Parents will be informed of any issues.

Safeguarding (including mobile phones)

As in line with the school's safeguarding policy; staff, parents and visitors must not use mobile phones within the EYFS setting. Personal phones must be turned to silent and stored away in the office. Class I-pads are used to capture evidence of learning to inform children's learning and development. Please refer to the 'Early Years Use of mobile Phones and Devices Policy'

Policy Review

This policy was reviewed in June 2025