



Saint Michael Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

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Introduction

We aim to provide a safe, happy and inspiring environment in which the children in our care can learn and thrive. Every child is an important and distinct individual and we ensure that we get to know each one in order to help them to achieve their full potential.

Our legal responsibilities are set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. Teaching in the Reception class follows Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012.

EYFS Themes

The EYFS themes that guide our work are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Michael's we recognise that all children are made in the image of God. They are unique and develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning can be influenced by others; we use praise and encouragement, stickers,

certificates, 'well done' assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St Michael's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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. We plan 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 for whom English is an additional language.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- organising the year group into two classes based on the children's age
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a 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
- planning challenging activities for children
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

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 the EYFS 2012)

We are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as laid out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. 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

We aim to teach children boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

Positive Relationships

At St Michael's we recognise the importance of Positive Relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. All children are expected to follow the school rules set out in our behaviour policy and clearly displayed in the classroom. At our school the EYFS teachers act as 'Key Persons' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

Parents as Partners

'When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning.'

(Every Child Matters 2002)

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and that good communication between home and school is vital. In order to promote and assist this process we:

- have a welcome meeting and induction for new children and parents in the term before they begin school
- provide the opportunity for children to meet their teacher before starting school through home visits
- invite all parents to fill in a questionnaire about how their child has settled in
- encourage parents to use our open door policy and talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- invite parents to come into the classroom with their children in the morning to settle them into class at the beginning of the year

- have a 'wow' box in the classroom for parents to tell us what their child can do at home to inform our assessment
- provide a 'week ahead' newsletter every Friday to help parents support their children's learning the next week
- have an EYFS curriculum evening to explain the curriculum and to tell the parents what we cover so they can enhance learning at home
- hold formal parents meetings in November and March, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- provide a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year
- arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Mass, Class assembly, Sports Day , PTA events
- publish a Foundation Stage curriculum newsletter every term
- publish the whole school weekly newsletter from the Head Teacher giving notice of forthcoming trips, events, sports fixtures and achievements.
- publish a curriculum newsletter every term with important information on the curriculum
- conduct parent surveys twice a year

The full Parental Involvement Policy is available on the school website and from the school office.

Home Visits

We understand that starting school can be daunting for everyone involved, so with this in mind, we want to do all we can to make the process as stress free and enjoyable as possible for families and their children.

Our school will work in partnership with parents. As parents are a child's first educator, this will help ensure the best outcomes for the children. The first step of this partnership is a home visit for every family before a child starts at school. We believe that this enables parents and children to meet members of staff in the place where they feel most at ease, at home.

Your child's class teacher and teaching assistant will carry out the visits in September. Parents will be notified of the visit in the summer term before the child begins school.

The teaching assistant take a small selection of activities to complete with your child during the home visit while the teacher completes any necessary paperwork and addresses any queries you may have.

If staff are aware of special circumstances or arrangements for home visiting, these must be discussed with the Headteacher in advance who will decide on the necessary additional arrangements required to carry out the visit.

It is expected that parents ensure the staff members are kept safe and secure during the visits.

Enabling Environments

At St Michael's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning interesting and challenging activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

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 or quieter. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently if required. The EYFS class has its own outdoor area and a covered area, with equipment and resources that mirrors the inside classroom. This has a positive effect on the children's development. 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, use their senses and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At St Michael's we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are inter connected.

“Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”
(Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

Learning and development is underpinned by the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- *playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';*
- *active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and*
- *creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.*

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development. The prime areas run through and support learning in all other areas;

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are;

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are all important and depend on each other. The areas of learning are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We recognise that every child progresses at a different rate and by observing and working with the children we are able to continuously assess progress and plan for next steps in their learning, providing support or extra challenges. 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.

COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoor and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources.

PERSONAL. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children's centres and places of worship in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self image.

LITERACY

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and cursive letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given many opportunities to listen to stories told by the staff.

MATHEMATICS

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS and DESIGN

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching. Through various times during the year children are given the opportunity to participate in school productions and assemblies.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We use the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile to record assessments of progress towards the Early Learning Goals (taken from the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage). Children are assessed through observation of child initiated activities as well as during class and focus group work sessions. Information is also provided by parents and other settings. The information is continuously used to inform planning for each child's next steps and is logged in each child's Learning Journey.

Within six weeks of the child starting they will be given a 'baseline' assessment. During the final term of EYFS, we will assess the children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are Emerging, Expecting or Exceeding. We will provide a written summary to parents. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher. These assessments are used to provide valuable transition information to Year 1 staff and those children who are not ready to be assessed against the National Curriculum and will continue to be assessed against the Early Learning Goals.

Safeguarding Children

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available on the school website and from the school office.

Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before after school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. A full Health and Safety Policy is available on the school website and from the school office.

Allergies

Parents/carers will be asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept in the Dining Hall by the lunchtime supervisors and the kitchen staff. All adults involved are informed.

Medical Needs

We keep a note of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers, piriton, epipens and insulin in the school office and in the class so everyone is aware of the individual needs.

Equalities and Disabilities

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. The curriculum is adapted to suit all levels of ability. We have a full Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy available on the school website and from the school office.

Special Educational Needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Nursery age onwards. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have links with various agencies and when necessary their involvement may be required to support certain children.

Parents/Carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. The full SEN Policy is available on the school website and from the school office.

Monitoring and review

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

There is a named Governor for the EYFS. The Head teacher (and EYFS Leaders)

will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

References.

Throughout this policy The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 and Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 documents are referred to and quoted.