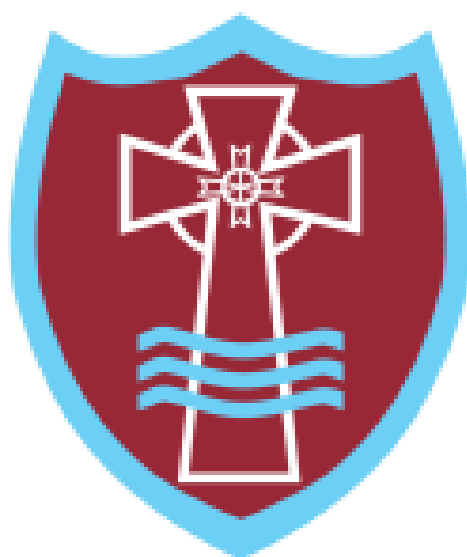


St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy



Early Years Foundation stage policy

Amended: September 2023

Review date: September 2024



Mission Statement

“Together we all enjoy learning, achieving, sharing and praying. Let Jesus’ love shine through in everything we do”

Our school vision statement

Here at St Aidan’s we are passionate about our children being happy, safe and healthy. We aim for children to learn in an inclusive, engaging environment; enabling them to be lifelong learners who know more, remember more and can do more in the wider world.

Early Years Foundation Stage Vision Statement

At St Aidan’s, we are committed to providing high quality inclusive care and education for every child, we achieve this by providing a safe learning environment that protects their well-being. We believe children learn best when engaged in play and that they should be supported to develop independence and autonomy to lead their own learning, while being adequately challenged through the support of experienced staff. We value the importance of providing high quality cultural capital learning moments for all children, this is through providing engaging experiences and opportunities to help them progress and achieve success. We are passionate about creating a well thought out environment that acts as a third teacher, which is stimulating, purposeful and accessible to all. We aim to foster every child’s awe and wonder and support them to develop a lifelong love for learning. We value and welcome parents to work in partnership with us to create a learning community where the child is at the heart of everything we do.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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. (The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE, September 2021).

The overall aims of this policy are;

- To enable their early development to take place within the caring and nurturing environment of St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy, in line with the ethos and values, which the school upholds and promotes.
- To provide a stimulating and safe learning environment both inside and out which meets all the individual development needs of 'young learners' and promotes children's independence and autonomy.
- To ensure that the outdoor and indoor area is viewed as one learning environment which will encourage all children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experiences.

The term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, the children join us in either Nursery or Reception classes. In Nursery children can start in the term they turn three, which then means they can have a longer period of time in Nursery. Children and their parents do multiple stay and play visits in smaller groups at the school prior to the child starting, if it is at the beginning of the academic year, this is to build the relationship and communication between child, parent and Nursery staff. In Reception the children have stay and play sessions and drop and play sessions; this takes place in their new class. Reception children then start full time on their first day.

Depending on how children settle in both Nursery and Reception, parents may be asked to support with a longer settling in period and a transition plan. At St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy we have:

- Two Reception class with one class teacher and four learning support teachers across both classes.
- Two Nursery class which start from 8.45am till 11.45am and 12.30 – 3.30pm. There is the additional option to attend full day; 8.45am – 3.30pm. There is a mixture of Nursery aged pupils and Rising threes in both morning and afternoon sessions. Some of the children are still 2 years old when starting Nursery. There is one class teacher and three support staff, both holding at least level 3 or higher.
- The classrooms have continual, supervised access to the outdoor learning environment.
- The Nursery teacher is EYFS phase lead.

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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Three Characteristics of Effective Learning (Revised EYFS):

- Playing and Exploring – do they investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.

- Learning Actively – do they concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically – do they have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

A Unique Child:

At St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy, 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, at varying rates. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations of work and achievements and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion:

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

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are 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 vital that all children in school are safe. Within our nurturing environment we provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves 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 needs to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

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.” (The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE, September 2021).

At St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. 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 endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships:

At St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners:

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.
- Communication and visits to nurseries and pre-schools to visit children and communicate with their key person.
- Home visits for Nursery to enable children and parents quality time to get to know their teacher and TA before starting school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Involving parents in their child's learning in school, providing us with information during their child's focus week, as well as regular discussions with parents about child's learning.
- Parents receive a report on their child's progress at the end of each school year. Alongside this they receive regular updates of their child's progress and learning opportunities in school using Tapestry app.
- Offering workshops to parents throughout the year to demonstrate how they can support their child's learning at home, such as phonics, reading and using Tapestry workshops.

- Encouraging parents to share their children's home achievements by completing Wow cards or contributing to Tapestry.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Christmas performance, Sports Day, school trips etc.
- We also provide parents with weekly newsletters, which provide them with information about success and achievements, future learning and also key dates such as parents evening, class performances trips or stay and learn sessions.
- School website has a separate EYFS part that shares information around past and present learning that is happening.

Enabling Environments:

At St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child-initiated activities where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We treat the environment as the third teacher and strive to provide high quality resources and experiences for children within the setting. We review our provision in terms of levels of involvement. If an area or a resource is not engaging children in purposeful play, then we remove it or change it.

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults." (*The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE, September 2021*).

In the Moment Planning:

"Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development." (*The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE, September 2021*). Our practitioners continually plan "in the moment". Each time they interact with a child, they are observing, planning for, and responding to, that individual child.

By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always be ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment).

The aim is to organise the setting – including the time, the resources and the adults – to ensure that the majority of the children display deep levels of engagement for the majority of the time.

From day one, the children are supported to explore the environment to see what is available, to select the resources they would like, to use them appropriately and to tidy when they have finished.

The sessions are organised to maximise the amount of 'free-flow' time available. Adult-Led learning takes place at specific times, for example; soon after arrival, just before the end of the session or lunch. These group times may be used for phonics, stories, maths, songs etc.

The weekly organisation is as follows; Each Friday 3-5 children are selected who will be the "focus children" for the following week. These children are given a form to take home for their parents to complete – asking about current interests of the child, any special events in the family and any questions the parents may have. Families are encouraged to add photos to Tapestry.

The Tapestry Learning Journey becomes a wonderful individual record, entries on Tapestry are often accompanied by a photo.

Teachers will have discussion with parents on regular basis and in particular during the week when their child is a 'focus child'.

In almost all cases, the 'next step' is completed immediately.

"In the moment" planning is a very simple idea – observing and interacting with children as they pursue their own interests and also assessing and moving the learning on in that moment. The written account of these interactions becomes a learning journey. This approach leads to deep level learning and wonderful surprises occur daily.

Learning and Development:

At St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

Areas of learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

The prime areas

- Communication and Language (CL)– listening, attention and understanding, speaking.
- Physical Development (PD)– gross motor skills, fine motor skills.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) – self-regulation, managing self, building relationships.

The Specific areas:

- Literacy – comprehension, word reading, writing.
- Mathematics – number, numerical patterns.
- Understanding the world – past and present, people, culture and communities, the natural world.
- Expressive Arts and Design – creating with materials, being imaginative and expressive.

These areas can overlap which allow children to make meaningful connections which they can apply to self-directed and adult focused learning opportunities. It is through providing high quality provision that children will thrive, be self-motivated and fully engaged in real learning which fosters positive relationships and progression.

We provide and plan for all areas of learning. We ensure that there is a combination of planned adult led and child initiated activities. TAs are utilised effectively to carry out Communication and Language intervention programs to ensure that children are given every opportunity to reach or exceed their full potential. Learning is fun, engaging and meaningful in the Foundation Stage. We strive to ensure that the characteristics of effective learning are enabled by offering high quality resources that are well organised and accessible to all.


The EYFS classes have their own outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more

opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together. Children will have opportunity to experience all seven areas of learning whether they decide to learn indoors or outdoors.

Religious Education:

The Early years follow the new RE curriculum, *To know you more clearly - The Religious Education directory*. The Early Years lead is working in partnership with the schools within the Good Shepherd Trust to develop a consistent and exciting curriculum plan for both Nursery and Reception. The curriculum has 6 branches (topics), one branch is taught in each half term. The curriculum clearly outlines the learning objectives for each branch. There are RELG – Religious Education Early Learning Goals which the children should achieve by the end of Reception.

This policy has been agreed by:


.....Date: September 2023
Headteacher


.....Date: September 2023
Chair of Governors