



St Thomas á Becket CE (Aided) Primary School

With faith and nurture we flourish

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework that 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 are ready for school and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. The early years are critical in a child's development and children develop rapidly during this time, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS is based upon four principles;

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

Teaching and Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three *prime* areas are:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, sensory motor skills and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Children are also supported in four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Children are taught to write with a pre-cursive font.
- **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 shape, space, and measure.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing 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.
- **Outside**
We have an outside learning space which children have access to each day. We have all weather clothing and children wear wellies so that they are protected and barriers to learning are removed. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there are a variety of resources which facilitate learning. In this area EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as allowing opportunities for them to make their own choices.

Effective learning:

When planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn. The EYFS sets out three characteristics of effective teaching and learning;

- **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.
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Effective teaching requires:

- Working in partnership with parents.
- Promoting children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
- Modelling positive behaviour.
- Using language that is rich and using the correct grammar.
- Direct teaching of skills and knowledge.

Children teaching each other.

- Interacting with and supporting children.
- Planning the indoor and outdoor environment carefully.
- Observations of the children.
- Assessing children's development and progress.
- Using assessment for purposeful planning.
- Each child to be treated as an individual.
- Celebration of achievement.
- Valuing child initiated learning.

Pupil Activities and Experiences

Learning activities and experiences include planned topic work, following consultation with the children of what they know and what they want to find out about a particular topic. The development of themes is achieved through play, investigation, exploration and problem solving.

Resources

The children have open access to all resources, which are labelled within the classroom and outside area. This ensures children have opportunities for independent learning and choice.

Equal Opportunities

Boys and girls are given equal access to and are encouraged to take part in all activities. Children are given opportunities to explore and enjoy stories, music and poetry from a wide range of cultures. Further reference should be made to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Health & Safety

Children are taught to use equipment safely and are made aware of the potential hazards within the classroom, sports hall and outside area. Risk assessments are routinely carried out for specific areas and activities.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- Children entering school are observed during their first weeks, to provide on entry information.
- Monitoring of each child takes place through observations (individual and group), discussions, photographs, and planned assessment.
- Observations and assessments are made to inform planning and to meet individual children's needs.
- Each child has a learning journey to which teachers, TAs, pupils and parents all contribute.
- There is a 'Wow' board in the classroom which records and celebrates significant achievements at home and school.
- Children take part in 'plan/do/review' sessions to develop creative and critical thinking skills.
- Children participate in weekly show and tell to develop speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers and TAs complete assessment sheets to share learning.
- Children's progress is tracked and recorded termly against the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation stage.
- Parents are regularly informed of ways in which they can support learning through the home school diary as well as communication from the class teacher.
- At the end of the year a report is sent to parents which summarises the achievements from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.