



St Anne's Catholic Primary School Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy reflects the values and philosophy of St. Anne's in relation to the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage.

1.2 The Early Years of childhood (0-5 years old) are a time when all children are eager to learn about themselves and the world around them. Good education during this period can help children become confident in themselves, in relationships, in learning and in the future. The EYFS curriculum is based upon the principles of Inclusion and recognises that each child and their family are unique with different needs and concerns.

1.3 The Early Years are therefore crucial in the development of children.

1.4 The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is based around four themes which are linked to an important principle:

- ✦ **A Unique Child** – Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- ✦ **Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- ✦ **Enabling Environments** - 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.
- ✦ **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).

1.5 There are seven areas of learning which are split into 'Specific' and 'Prime' areas.

1.5.1 The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Physical Development (PD)

- Communication and Language (CL)
- 1.5.2 The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning:
- Literacy (L)
 - Mathematics (M)
 - Understanding the World (UW)
 - Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)
- 1.6 The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. These are called the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**:
- ✦ Playing and Exploring (Engagement)
 - ✦ Active Learning (Motivation)
 - ✦ Creating and Thinking Critically (Thinking)
- 1.7 Children work through the Early Years Outcomes statements throughout Nursery and Reception. By the end of their time in Reception, children aim to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as a minimum.

2 **Our context**

- 2.1 Each child is unique. Children need to develop a positive self-image and build on this in the years to come.

3 **Parents and carers**

- 3.1 We recognise the importance of parents for each child's well-being and as their primary educators. We want parents to see school as a warm and welcoming environment where they are valued.
- 3.2 During the Summer Term prior to the child starting in the Nursery or Reception classes, parents are invited to a meeting where we share our aims and the importance of 'Learning through play'.
- 3.3 Prior to a child starting Nursery, a home visit is arranged. This visit allows us to meet the child in a familiar environment and talk to the parent about their child, their strengths and weaknesses and any medical or special needs.
- 3.4 Home visits are also arranged to the families of children coming into Reception that are new to the school.
- 3.5 At the start of the school year, parents are invited to attend phonics sessions. This provides opportunities for parents to see how their children are taught to read and write. Parents are invited to small group sessions that are designed to help support their child depending on which stage they are in their phonics learning.
- 3.6 Reception classes hold a 'Come to School' week where parents are invited to attend a session to discover what and how their child learns whilst at school. They watch a carpet session and then interact with their child in the different learning areas.

- 3.7 Formal parent conferences are held termly. These allow parents to discuss each child's progress and contribute to identifying strengths and areas for development.
- 3.8 Parents are welcome to discuss any worries or concerns about their child at any time by making an appointment to speak to their child's class teacher or the EYFS Lead.
- 3.9 Parents are invited to join their children on outings.
- 3.10 Observations of the children are shared with parents at parents evening and at different points throughout the year. Parents receive their child's Learning Journey/Books which includes information on which activities the child has chosen to engage in and how the adults have supported their learning 'in the moment.' Parents are informed of areas their child may need support with on a weekly basis.
- 3.11 All parents are invited to connect to their child's Class Dojo profile. It is also used to share photos/messages relating to class activities. Parents are also encouraged to share pictures etc. to support topics.

4 **Key Workers**

- 4.1 In Reception and Nursery the team work collaboratively to support all children and to meet their individual learning needs. Children who need a key worker will be allocated one to support with transitions and activities throughout the day.

5 **Prior Learning**

- 5.1 We recognise many of our children have or continue to be cared for by other adults. Where records of prior learning exist, these are used as a starting point for planning to meet a child's needs. Parents are also encouraged to contribute with their knowledge of the child.

6 **Planning for Individuals**

- 6.1 Each child is an individual with their own needs. Through careful observation and assessment of what each child can do we aim to plan an environment where we can help them progress and plan a balanced curriculum that takes note of their strengths, interests and needs.
- 6.2 Teaching takes many different forms throughout the school day and is the responsibility of all of the adults in the Early Years Team. When interacting with and teaching the children, staff make informed decisions based upon the following:
- an accurate assessment of children's starting points
 - an understanding of each child's interests and fascinations
 - an appreciation of how each child learns best
 - the subject content that needs to be taught
 - the context in which learning should be introduced and developed
 - the child's age and stage of development.

- 6.3 Termly assessment data is analysed and target children are identified for support.
- 6.4 The children take part in 'rewind time' on Friday. This is when the child reflects on their learning from that week. Rewind time gives children the opportunity to consolidate their learning. It also provides opportunities for teachers to help pupils to extend their learning too.
- 6.5 Time is built into the school day for adults to join the children in their play and undertake 'objective led learning'. The adults are aware of the children's needs and use them to support the children in achieving their targets through the child initiated and led play.

7 **Learning Through Play**

- 7.1 Play provides the natural, imaginative and motivating contexts for children to learn about themselves, one another and the world around them. A single moment of sustained play can afford children many developmental experiences at once, covering multiple areas of learning and reinforcing the characteristics of effective learning. We recognise that children learn best when at a self-chosen activity. We spend more time 'teaching in the moment' through these opportunities.
- 7.2 The significance of play in allowing children to learn and develop across such a broad range of developmental areas has long been understood. Its fundamental value is recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

8 **Indoor/Outdoor**

- 8.1 Children have free-flow access between the indoor and outdoor classrooms. The indoor and outdoor classrooms have been carefully resourced with high quality open ended resources. The indoor areas are enhanced weekly to reflect topics being taught or to address needs.

9 **Diversity**

- 9.1 We value the diversity of the children in our care and welcome each equally. We recognise the large proportion of children who speak English as an Additional Language and this has a huge impact on all that we do. We provide opportunities for all children to succeed in an atmosphere of care and feeling valued.

10 **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

- 10.1 For children acquiring English as an additional language, we recognise the need for it to be learnt in context, through practical, meaningful experiences and interaction with others.

11 **Aims**

- 11.1 The aims of the Early Years Education at St. Anne's can be broken down

into seven areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development, Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

- 11.2 None of the six areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are all equally important and depend on each other. One activity or experience can help to develop skills and understanding across several Areas of Learning and Development.

12 **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

- 12.1 Our aim is to prepare each child for life and to nurture the spiritual growth of the individual through the whole school commitment to Gospel values. St. Anne's is a Catholic Primary School and, as such, we will introduce ideas and beliefs as laid down by the Catholic Church. Our religious beliefs are fundamental to all we do and are embedded in all areas of the curriculum. We follow the 'Come and See' scheme of work for Catholic Schools.

- 12.2 We aim to foster within children attitudes and values which will ensure that they become responsible, caring individuals who respect others.

- 12.3 We believe Every Child Matters. Children need to develop and express their own personalities. We aim to enable children:

- ✦ to develop positive attitudes to themselves;
- ✦ to appreciate and respond to the needs of others;
- ✦ to acquire the self-discipline needed to regulate their own behaviour; ✦ to become independent thinkers with a positive disposition to learn.

- 12.4 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. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

13 **Physical Development**

- 13.1 Our aim is to enable children to use their bodies with increasing confidence and skill. We want children to gain confidence in what they can do and to help them to develop a positive sense of well-being.

- 13.2 We support children in developing an understanding of the importance of healthy eating and hygiene.

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences

develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

14 **Communication and Language**

14.1 Many children who enter St. Anne's Nursery and Reception Classes speaking little or no English and need a lot of support in learning English as a second language. Our aim is that children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.

14.2 We place a strong emphasis on developing the children's listening skills and encourage them to develop a love of books and reading which we hope will continue to grow. We do this through our daily story time, regular 1-2-1 reading opportunities, home-school reading books, a regularly updated book corner in all classrooms and the outside area, as well as with listening stations for children's independent use. In all aspects of the curriculum we encourage the children to access a range of texts, from comics to nonfiction.

Communication and Language The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-andforth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

15 **Literacy**

15.1 We offer an environment rich in print and opportunities to write. Our goal is to help children to understand the power of the written word as a basis for communication, knowledge acquisition and entertainment.

15.2 Emergent writing is positively encouraged and a variety of mark-making implements for drawing and writing are offered.

15.3 Children will be taught to link sounds and letters. We follow a tailored programme using Letters and Sounds alongside Jolly Phonics. In Reception

this is covered daily. In Nursery, children have weekly sessions based upon Phase One Phonics. In Spring term they start to learn a letter weekly.

- 15.4 We encourage our children to love and respect books and children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials in both the indoor and outdoor classrooms to ignite their interest.

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

16 **Mathematics**

- 16.1 Our aim is to support children in developing their understanding of numbers and their appreciation of shape, space and measures.
- 16.2 In Reception, equal time is given to Maths and Literacy across the week.
- 16.3 We aim to find interesting and engaging ways to incorporate mathematics into the activities, both formal and informal, that we offer to children.
- 16.4 We follow the White Rose Maths Scheme and adapt lessons to meet our children learning needs.

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

17 **Understanding the World**

- 17.1 Our aim is to encourage an interest in learning about the world using direct experience to develop ideas, acquire skills and participate effectively. In this way, children will be able to make reasoned judgements and solve problems with increasing independence and creativity.
- 17.2 We encourage children to make sense of the world by providing opportunities to encounter people, plants, animals and objects around them.

17.2.1 The children have access to electronic equipment in the classrooms including remote controlled cars, listening stations, computers, ipads and phones (walkie talkies). In Reception the children have weekly Computing lessons in the ICT suite.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

18 **Expressive Arts and Design**

18.1 Children need to express themselves creatively and to appreciate the beauty of the world around them. Our aim is to help them through exploration and play to understand that feelings and emotions can be expressed through painting, collage, music and dance. This helps to develop their curiosity and imagination, skills which can be transferred to small world activities and role play.

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

19 **Teaching and Learning**

19.1 We believe that the atmosphere in all Early Year's Classrooms should be one where young children can feel happy and secure. It should be carefully organised, stimulating, challenging, and aesthetically pleasing. It should provide facilities to enable children to grow and develop as learners.

19.2 Every child's work and contribution is valued and respected fully.

19.3 **Communicating and modelling language** - adults use every interaction as an opportunity to develop children's speech, language and vocabulary.

19.4 **Strong interactions-** interactions between adults and children involve showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, facilitating, encouraging, questioning, recalling and providing a narrative for what children are doing.

19.5 **Setting challenges –** Provision and resources have been carefully selected and planned for to enable opportunities for open ended play.

19.6 **Structures and routines-** Clear daily routines bring a familiarity and sense of calm to a potentially upsetting time of the day when parents leave. Routines throughout the rest of the day give children continued confidence

and security in their environment by establishing a framework to the day. Each classroom has a visual timetable to support this.

20 **Classroom management and organisation**

- 20.1 Children are taught in mixed ability classes.
- 20.2 Each child is viewed as an individual with specific needs being met in appropriate ways.
- 20.3 The EYFS consists of one mixed Nursery/Reception class led by the EYFS Lead who teaches both age groups alongside one EYP and two teaching assistants. In addition we have support staff to work with SEND children if required.
- 20.5 The Nursery and Reception classes are split up into several different learning areas, which are available to children all the time. These areas are designed to allow the children to experience and explore specific skills in literacy, numeracy, construction, ICT, music, etc. Each Area is clearly marked.
- 20.6 A range of teaching methods are used – whole class, group and individual – by:
- ✦ Providing opportunities for open ended activities;
 - ✦ Clear and accurate exposition by the teacher with class or group involvement or 1:1;
 - ✦ Questioning of children to probe understanding and knowledge;
 - ✦ Demonstrations to the whole class;
 - ✦ Differentiated activities;
 - ✦ Discovery learning – child initiated.

21 **Planning**

- 21.1 Planning in Early Years is a team effort.
- 21.2 The long term plan consists of the development matters agenda. Themes and topics are planned for in response to the children's interests and needs.
- 21.3 The Medium Term Plans are produced through discussion and with the co-operation of all the staff within the team and reflect the children's needs and interests based on recent observations/assessments.
- 21.4 The short term plans contain details of work to be completed in one week and include the specific learning objectives of individual tasks. These are in the form of a carpet plan and a provision plan.
- 21.5 RE and PSHE are planned on separate planning formats in line with the whole school.
- 21.6 We recognise that young children experience the curriculum through play. It is through play that children develop skills, concepts and attitudes and therefore opportunities for play are planned for in a structured way.
- 21.7 Children's interests vary on a day to day basis and these interests often lead to valuable unplanned learning so we recognise the need for flexibility and

the value of child initiated learning. We 'teach in the moment' following children's interests immediately when appropriate.

22 **Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (Please refer to separate Assessment in the Early Years Document)**

- 22.1 Information on what children have done and said is gathered through observations of children, recorded by members of staff. This is part of an on-going cycle to develop children's progress. Observations feed into planning to provide opportunities for all children to play, learn and succeed.
- 22.2 On entry to Nursery and Reception children are initially assessed using the school's baseline assessment. The information is recorded on an online system called OTrack. This is used to track the children and the different identified groups. The children continued to be assessed on the school's checkpoint assessment system. After each assessment cycle, we analyse the data and undertake gap/strength analysis. This is used as a whole team to plan strategies and learning opportunities to close any gaps highlighted in each area. Children in Reception take part in the national baseline assessment conducted within 6 weeks from their start date.
- 22.3 Staff liaise with parents and any previous providers to ensure that all of the information available is used to secure the best possible picture of the child.
- 22.4 Each round of assessment is followed by analysis allowing staff to identify areas for development and specific target children for each area.
- 22.5 The ongoing successes and achievements of the children are shared informally as and when appropriate and formally through termly parents evenings.

23 **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

- 23.1 The nature of EYFS allows for all children, regardless of need to be planned for.
- 23.2 Where children have a specific need, such as Speech and Language Delay an individual plan is developed with outside agencies when required.
- 23.3 During the first term in Year One, pupils who have not achieved the ELGs will be monitored and appropriate Waves of Intervention will be planned for.

24 **More Able Pupils**

- 24.1 Planning aims to reflect the widest possible differentiation, or range of opportunity. We recognise Gifted and Talented children can become bored in an undifferentiated environment with lack of sufficient challenge and this can result in poor behaviour and insufficient progress.
- 24.2 Investigations and activities are open ended to allow the children autonomy and opportunities for self-selection.
- 24.3 Gifted and talented children are identified on the schools "Gifted and Talented Register".

25 **Equal Opportunities**

25.1 Early Years practice has a strong influence on the developing child. A child's self esteem is central to their development and our children are treated equally with equal access to resources, facilities and opportunities. We want our children to learn to value diversity in others and to make a positive contribution to society.

26 **Welfare**

26.1 Fresh drinking water, milk and fruit are available throughout the session in EYFS; children are encouraged to help themselves when they wish.

26.2 The importance of hygiene is taught and children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.

27 **Transition**

27.1 At the end of the academic year teachers meet with the new class teacher to share information about each child – extra time is allowed for this to allow the class teacher to explain at what stage each child is working within.

27.2 Where children have not achieved the ELGs in the different areas, teachers need to consider how best to support the children to do this. With this in mind Year One teachers use the EYFS to plan and assess the children for the first half term. After this, children still not achieving the ELGs would be assessed for SEN.

27.3 Learning through practical, meaningful activities must continue if children are to build on their learning in the Foundation Stage.

27.4 An agreed phonics scheme ensures seamless transition from EYFS to KS1 allowing achievements in this area continue.

27.5 Visits to their new class during the Summer Term allows the children to become familiar with their new classroom and teacher e.g. during "Story Time". They will also produce a piece of work which will be displayed in their new classroom in September.

27.6 During the first week in their new class Reception teachers support teachers in Year 1 as the children settle in.

27.8 Children moving from Nursery to Reception do so over a staggered period with children new to the school starting first followed by children from the Nursery in ascending age order. This allows teachers and children time build relationships, make assessments and establish routines. There is also staggered entry to Nursery with the oldest children starting first.

27.9 Nursery children meet their new teacher in an informal way through stay and play sessions held in the term prior to their start date.

27.10 Nursery children are asked to make a picture during the home visit which will be on display for their first day. The home visit also allows the children to meet the class teacher and one other adult from the Nursery in an environment where they feel safe and secure. This gives them time to get to know the adults prior to starting Nursery.

27.11 Children from local childcare provision, for example Ethelred Nursery are invited to spend a session in either Nursery or Reception as appropriate

with their keyworker to allow them to meet staff and visit their new setting.

28 **Related policies**

28.1 See also:

- Curriculum policies;
- Equal opportunities;
- Health and safety;
- Marking & feedback;
- More able pupils;
- Safeguarding;
- SEND;
- Teaching and learning;
- Transition

Date agreed by governing body on 10 December 2024	Signature of Chair or Vice Chair
Date agreed for review Autumn 2026	Frequency of Review Two Years
Responsibility for Review A&C Committee	