

# Early Years Policy



September 2020

Review date: September 2021

## **EARLY YEARS POLICY**

### **Introduction:**

At St.Patrick's we believe that early years education should be appropriate to the emotional, social physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of all the children admitted to our school.

Early years education represents the first steps in a continuous and progressive programme of education that is offered to the children at St. Patrick's.

Early childhood education is valued in itself and should not be seen merely as a preparation for the next stage in learning.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. We will provide a warm, secure, happy Catholic atmosphere.

We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. We all work for our school to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected, as children follow our Going for Gold Policy, (please see our Behaviour Policy and Going for Gold), and all children enjoy their educational journey. At St Patrick's Catholic Primary School we believe in nothing but the best!

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

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

### **Effective Early Years Education**

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. At St Patrick's Catholic Primary School we believe that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Therefore, practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. Early years experience should build on what the children already know and can do. No child should be disadvantaged. Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

To be effective, the early years curriculum should be carefully structured (recognising different starting points; relevant to levels of need). There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate for themselves. Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn. Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process. For

children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised. Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioner.

### **The Early Years Framework**

The Early Years Framework in its current form became statutory in September 2012. At St Patrick's Catholic Primary School we adhere to this new framework. All children in the EYFS have access to a broad, rich topic based curriculum both indoors and outdoors. The seven areas of learning and experience, ages and stages, and the Early Learning Goals now provide a National Framework for individual schools and other pre-five settings in planning, teaching and assessing the early year's framework. They also provide an essential link between the pre statutory framework and the Key Stage One programmes of study. We have adopted these areas of learning and experience and the national ages and stages, as the basis for our planning as they provide a framework which enables us to achieve our aims for under five provision.

### **The Seven Areas of Learning**

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

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

This area has three sub sections. These are Making Relationships, Self-confidence and Self-awareness and Managing Feelings and Behaviour. 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.

#### **PRIME AREA:** Communication and Language (C and L)

This is broken down into three 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.

#### **PRIME AREA:** Physical Development (PD)

This covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. 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. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life. The child's pencil control and letter formation are also developed in this area.

#### **SPECIFIC AREA:** Mathematics (M)

This is broken down into two sub sections. These are Number and Shape, Space and Measures. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Mathematics. They focus on achievement through practical activities and are using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

#### **SPECIFIC AREA:** Literacy (L)

This area of learning has two sub sections of Reading and Writing. The objectives ensure success in early reading and writing skills. We use Read Write Inc Phonics which 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 Patrick's Catholic Primary School.

**SPECIFIC AREA: Understanding the World (U the W)**

This covers the subjects Geography, Science, DT, History and computing. We use the 'Come and See' Scheme of work to teach RE. This is a major area of learning and enquiry focusing on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.

**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.

**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

**Planning**

At St Patrick's Catholic Primary School planning is divided into long term, medium term and short term. Long term plans state the topics to be covered for each year. Medium term plans illustrate the objectives being taught each term. Short term or weekly plans, show specific activities planned to achieve the objectives. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity during the week, although they may not experience them each day.

A mixture of directed and free choice activities are planned and children's choices are carefully monitored to ensure a balanced programme. The children begin the year by having free choice of activities for most of the session. This free programme is gradually directed by staff as children get older and more mature, so that as they approach transfer to Key Stage One, they are prepared for the Key Stage One framework.

### **Admission Arrangements**

The children enter the Foundation Stage in the academic year of their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Please see Admissions Policy and supplementary forms for more information. Places are offered in accordance with the School's Admissions Policy. Supplementary forms should be submitted directly to the school as well as a Local Authority application being completed.

We aim to support children to make an effective transition from home to school by carrying out home visits, liaising with pre-school settings as well as working closely with parents and carers.

### **The Organisation of Classes**

St Patrick's is a 2 form entry school; the intake for Foundation is 60 places.

Within Foundation there are 2 classes, with 2 teachers and 2 full time support teachers. For the first two weeks in September, the children have a part-time timetable. The children are placed in a group and the timetable will be:

Week 1	Week 2
Group 1 attends in the morning	Group 2 attends in the morning
Group 2 attends in the afternoon	Group 1 attends in the afternoon

The aim of the staggered intake is to settle the children into the routine of the school quickly, with less children in order that they get to know each other and the teachers. By week 3 all children will be in school full time. During this time they are able to access both classes and be taught by both teachers before they are set into a class. Classes will be set by October half term once the teachers have developed good relationships with all of the children attending Foundation. Each child is allocated a Key Worker.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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 the Foundation Stage 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;
- Providing a wide 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 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.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by staff provided opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. As children all develop differently it is recognised that a significant lack in achievement after the initial settling in period represents initial concern and careful monitoring. Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents, SENDCO, and advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service. In the Foundation Stage we give all children the opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their range of life experiences, and abilities when planning for their learning.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All areas of provision will be made accessible to all children regardless of age, sex, gender, creed, race, ethnicity, or ability.

### **Safeguarding**

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 in school for parents to read if they wish.

### **Parents as Partners**

We value the involvement of parents in school. Parental involvement with school begins even before children start with invitation to visit the school, meet the teachers and visit the classrooms. Foundation parents are invited to an Induction Evening in the summer term to provide them with essential information for the next academic year. Teaching and Learners Conferences (TLC) are held throughout the year at which parents are invited to discuss their child's progress.

The School endorses an open door policy, teachers will make themselves available to parents after school to speak to any parent or carer.

Two reports are sent out to parents, at the end of the autumn and summer terms, parents are invited into school to discuss this report if they wish. Parents are kept informed of all happenings in the school by regular newsletters. The Parents are informed via notes, text messages or emails. Parents are invited to various assemblies and functions throughout the year.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Development Matters statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, by every adult that works with a child as well as parents. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways, and contribute to the child's individual 'Learning Journey' profile book. At the end of the reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The Foundation Stage has enclosed outdoor areas, and children are able to free-flow between the classes as well as the indoor and outdoor spaces.

Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.