

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”

Aims

- To provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced learning environment both inside and out, which meets all the individual developmental needs of young learners and underpins all future learning.
- To enable children to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.
- To enable their early development to take place within the caring and nurturing environment of St Thomas More School, in line with the ethos and values, which the school upholds and promotes.
- To develop independence and individuality, whilst fostering respect and tolerance for others irrespective of ability, race, creed, gender or background.

Principles:

To achieve the aims as outlined, St Thomas More Catholic Primary school staff and governors will provide a curriculum for the last year of EYFS (Reception) based on the following principles, which will establish the foundations that underpin all future learning:

- At the core, place the development of positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning and foster the development of positive behaviour and social interaction skills;
- Promote and develop personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Encourage the development of self-confidence and positive self-awareness;
- Enable children to develop the skills of attention, concentration and persistence;
- Place speech, language and communication at the heart of learning;
- Lay the foundations for developing reading and writing;
- Develop early mathematical skills and concepts;
- Develop an understanding of the world in which children live;
- Enable children to be creative in their responses to their world and in their development of skills;
- Encourage children to develop their imagination through the exploration of media and materials;
- Promote healthy and safe physical development – both gross and fine motor;
- Encourage independence and ownership of own learning.

The needs of young learners:

All children require:

- Adults who are sensitive to their differing needs, abilities, backgrounds and previous experiences to teach, support, care and offer equal opportunities for them all to develop.
- Adults who will respect them and value their ideas and opinions recognising that every child is an individual.
- A challenging and diverse curriculum offering ample opportunity to practise and develop skills and learning. This includes rich and positive learning experiences with plenty of first-hand experiences, varied to include all learning styles and including regular opportunity to explore and learn through practical and play activities.
- Opportunities to make decisions and to take responsibility - both for their learning and behaviour. The curriculum is founded upon offering opportunities for the development of personal qualities, social skills, and positive attitudes towards learning. This includes the

chance to make mistakes in a forgiving environment and to realise that making mistakes is a learning experience.

In summary, a well-planned, carefully structured programme of academic and personal development, building on past experiences and achievements - delivered in ways appropriate to their age and stage.

The Curriculum:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, all children join us, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS principles guide the work of all practitioners, there are four themes:

- a unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments
- learning and development.

The curriculum consists of seven areas of learning - three prime and four specific. These are related and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. The seven areas consist of a total of seventeen Early Learning Goals:

Prime: 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, work together, and move through to support development in all areas.

The **prime** areas are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development -:

- Making relationships
- Self Confidence and self-awareness
- Managing feelings and behaviour

Communication and Language -:

- Listening and attention o Understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development:

- Moving and handling (gross and fine motor)
- Health and self-care.

Specific:

The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. They grow out of the prime areas and provide important contexts for learning.

Mathematics-:

- Numbers
- Shape, Space and Measures

Literacy -:

- Reading
- Writing

Understanding the world -:

- People and communities
- The world
- Technology

Expressive arts and design comprising:

- Exploring and using media and materials
- Being imaginative

In EYFS we practice cross-curricular teaching and learning, which encourages children to make links and practise skills in a relevant and interesting way.

St Thomas More staff and Governors believe that all individual learning styles should be recognised and honoured in a creative learning environment. The way in which we learn is as important to progress and success as what we learn.

Inclusion in the EYFS

At St Thomas More we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child's special educational need(s), disability, gender, creed or ethnicity. Consequently, we aim to be a fully inclusive school - as described in the school's Equality Policy. We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's learning style, communication needs, disability and range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

Assessment at the end of the EYFS:

Each child will be assessed in their first half-term at school. Through observation, staff will assess their attainment in the three prime areas and the four specific areas against the Early Learning Goals. On-going assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff are involved in daily observations and assessments throughout the Reception Year; they include child-initiated tasks and teacher led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs are recorded in each child's Learning Journal. Data is entered electronically onto the data-tracking programme online at the end of each term. The EYFS Profile will be completed at the end of the Reception year; data will be sent to the LA who will then pass it onto the Department for Education (DfE).

Reporting: The class teacher will report to parents/carers whether children are "meeting" or "exceeding" expected levels of development, or "emerging" - not yet reaching expected levels - at the end of the Summer term. This is in line with the reporting requirements from the DfE. Within the seven areas of learning there are seventeen statutory "Early learning goals", which establish age-related expectations for children to reach by the end of EYFS. These provide the basis for planning the teaching and learning programme in Reception.

Progress will be shared with parents and carers during the autumn half term, in the spring term and at the end of the summer term through Parent Consultation Evenings. All attainment data is shared with the Year1 teacher for continuity at the time of transition.

Learning and Teaching

The fundamental principles of teaching and learning which are detailed within the Teaching and Learning policy are applied within the Foundation Stage. The core purpose at St Thomas More is to teach for enjoyment and progress, ensuring that all children steadily acquire and improve skills, knowledge and understanding.

In EYFS children join a community of lifelong learning - children and adults alike. High quality expectations for teaching, learning and conduct is established in EYFS and is consistently and clearly applied throughout the school. The more specific features of good practice which apply to the EYFS are as follows:

- the very close partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to develop a positive self-image of themselves as learners and, therefore, to feel secure and confident at school;
- the understanding that teachers have of early child development and special educational needs and how this relates to teaching and learning;
- a kinaesthetic and visual approach to curriculum delivery, which provides rich and varied opportunities for 'small world' play - using toys and models which replicate real life activities -

and for role play (involving areas inside and outside the classroom which simulate real life situations and provide opportunities for imaginative play);

- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences; give clear explanations; make appropriate interventions; and establish and develop the children's ability to play, socialise and communicate with others;
- a very strong emphasis on communication - including speech therapy as required - to generate a language for learning; to seek every opportunity to talk with children about their learning, encouraging them to listen and respond productively as appropriate to their level of need;
- the carefully planned and well-resourced curriculum and schemes of work that help children to maximise their potential against the Early Learning Goals. This includes off-site visits and drawing on the resources of the local and wider community;
- A safe, high quality-learning environment - both indoors and outdoors, available throughout all seasons and weathers;
- the assessment, through observations, of children's achievement, progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers, and the appropriate resourcing and training of staff to meet the children's needs;
- the good relationships between St Thomas More school, other educational and early years settings and other agencies.

Safety:

Children are taught to stay safe through the Personal Social Health Citizenship education programme, which is a fundamental part of the whole school curriculum. "Staying safe" is a clear expectation laid out in Every Child Matters document (2003) and is a requirement within the school curriculum. Aspects of personal safety awareness within the reception year will be identified in the curriculum plan and taught explicitly.

St Thomas More takes safety of its pupils very seriously and various related safety policies and procedures are available in the school office and published on our website. The Headteacher or the Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety will be happy to discuss these in more detail should a parent / carer wish to do so. Specifically, the following procedures must be observed:

- Security systems operate throughout the day. A visitor can only gain access to the teaching parts of the building via the school office and foyer, requiring a staff member to open security doors. All parents must leave promptly at 8.55am.
- No child will be handed over to the care of any adult other than a parent / carer or person nominated by the parent and known to the Reception class staff
- No mobile phones / cameras other than the designated school mobile phone and cameras may be used in EYFS. Visitors including parents are expected to respect this.
- The EYFS learning environment is checked frequently for health and safety and this is recorded in a log scrutinised regularly by the Headteacher. The Health and Safety governor and School Business Manager monitor any repairs and maintenance and ensure that they are undertaken in a timely manner.

Induction and Home-school links:

A Parent information evening is held in the summer term for parents of the prospective Reception group. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to the St Thomas More family, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasize the vital importance of home-school co-operation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all our children.

Several events take place during the second half of the summer term prior to the child's admission in September; these include a range of taster sessions built around the Peterborough START initiative, home visits and nursery visits. The purpose of a home visit is to see the child in their own familiar setting, where they are confident and comfortable. S/he will be encouraged to share a favourite toy or game and provide a chance for parents to ask individual questions pertinent to their own child and their needs.

Further communication systems include:

- Daily opportunity for brief updates at the point of dropping off or collecting children. Anything more than a few minutes' conversation will require an appointment to be made through the school office;
- Opportunities to join the school approximately every half term on a Friday afternoon for a Class led assembly where children will share their learning and celebrate their achievements. Exact dates will be published on the school app and website.
- Home/school reading record book.
- Tapestry – an online learning journey which enables parents to immediately see children's learning and provides opportunities for parents to celebrate achievements in the home environment.
- School app;
- Stay and play session every half term where parents /careers experience the EYFS first hand.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and EYFS Phase Leader will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

EYFS Policy –September 2023