



St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Educate: Create: Witness; Christ At the Centre September 2024

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Our Early Years curriculum has been designed to ensure that children receive their curricular entitlement in a way which is meaningful to their: context, stage of learning, capabilities, interests and prior experiences.

Children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning: Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; Expressive Arts and Design.

Planned purposeful play provides opportunities for teaching, learning and creativity both indoors and outdoors. Children are active learners who learn through first hand experiences. We offer our children a cultural capital as we learn through topics, stories, songs, rhymes, following children's interests and offering play based, adult and child led, learning in our continuous provision.

We provide a teaching and learning environment where learners are cared for, valued and respected. Parents and practitioners work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect within which children can have security and confidence. We place a high focus on key vocabulary and communication and language and hold the ICAN enhance accreditation level as well the Basic Skills Quality Mark for Early Years.

Vision

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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."

Early Years Statutory Framework 2023, Department for Education

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child.** 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 and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebrations and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

- **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. 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 carers.
- **Learning and development.** The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. Cuthbert's Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life as well as preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

A Unique Child

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At St. Cuthbert's Primary School, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

- Work in partnership with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring – Children investigate and experience things. They are willing to ‘have a go’.
- Active learning – Children concentrate and keep on trying if they experience difficulties. They enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children’s interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children.

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as

appropriate. These observations are recorded and used to inform the Senior Leadership Team. The parents and guardians are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage Team each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's early learning goals to parents and guardians.

Learning Through Play

At St. Cuthbert's Primary School, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

The Induction Process

During the Summer Term prior to starting school the following September the following visits are conducted:

- The Reception Class Teacher will contact/visit pre-school settings from which September's intake will be taken if this happens to be different from St. Cuthbert's Nursery.
- Foundation staff will offer each nursery child and their parents the opportunity to visit the setting in a group [during the term before they begin] and individual visits prior to their start date [first week in September].
- Each child and their parents and carers will be invited to spend some time at St. Cuthbert's Primary School in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the Foundation Stage environment.

When children join Nursery or Reception in September there is a staggered intake so that the children can gradually adjust to their new surroundings. During the first week [in Reception Class] parents are also offered a stay and play session to support them to get to know staff, find out about the curriculum and receive information about phonics. Staggered intake supports children's well-being and involvement enabling them to feel confident, secure, happy and supported in their new environment. This is documented each year in the Reception Class and Nursery information booklets.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the schools and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- We will send home an "All about Me" book designed to enable Foundation staff and parents or guardians to record information about children.
- We will publish a "curriculum coverage" document each term for the website.
- We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Foundation staff have

concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

- We will hold “Stay and Play” sessions for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- We will use Class Dojo as an extra means of communicating and sharing information with parents and carers.
- We will conduct a further parent consultation late in the term to inform parents and carers formally of a child’s results and overall progress.
- At the end of term, we will invite parents and guardians to visit the school informally in order to fully appreciate their child’s Learning Journal.

Intimate Care

“Intimate” care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child’s age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

Please refer to the ‘Intimate Care Policy’.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school’s Special Educational Needs Policy. The school’s SEND Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

Please refer to the ‘SEND Policy’.

This policy will be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2027