

St Anne's Catholic Primary Early Years Policy



February 2020

SIGNED
HEADTEACHER

DATE:

SIGNED
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

DATE:

Written by A.Jones
November 2020

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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 in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Principles

All children and their families are valued within our school as part of a Faith community, nurtured by our Catholic teaching and the mission of the Shrewsbury Diocese.

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 celebration 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
- **Learning and development:** The Foundation Stage unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in

learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St Anne's Catholic Primary School children are admitted from the half term after they are 3 to our Foundation 1 class then to Foundation 2 in the September following their fourth birthday. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Anne's we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims

- ❖ To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- ❖ To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- ❖ To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop fully socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- ❖ To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- ❖ To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- ❖ To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- ❖ To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Foundation Stage follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf.

This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. However, three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3). They support children's learning in all other areas and are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- ❖ **Communication and Language** - Listening & Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- ❖ **Physical Development** - Moving & Handling and Health & Self care
- ❖ **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - Making relationships, Managing feelings & behaviour and Self-confidence & Self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are;

- ❖ **Literacy** - Reading and Writing
- ❖ **Mathematics** - Numbers and Space, Shape & Measures
- ❖ **Understanding the World** - People and communities, The world and Technology
- ❖ **Expressive Arts and Design** - Exploring and using media & materials and Being Imaginative

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to the children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some instances, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the summer term in Foundation 2 the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

What is a play based curriculum?

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. Play based activities may also allow the children to develop their fine and gross motor skills in readiness for writing in Foundation 1 and to improve pencil control in Foundation 2. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience activities at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Foundation classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more

traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our physical development, literacy and maths skills, phonics and speaking and listening. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc... We are a Catholic primary school and the children's faith journey is a priority at St Anne's. Children follow 'The Way the Truth and the Life' syllabus from Foundation Stage 1, this journey begins by teaching simple concepts, through story, role play, video clips and pictures. Alongside this, children participate in daily prayers and songs about God or Jesus throughout the day.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms go through a great deal of change during the year. Our settings reflect our children's greatest needs and are looked at and evaluated on a half termly basis. Once we have assessed our children we use our evidence and findings to develop a 'Gap's Analysis'. The areas that are identified, which the children may have made less progress, are then catered for within the environment to enable the children to access resources and activities to 'plug' their gaps. For example, if the children are showing there are gaps in 'Being Imaginative' our environment will then change to ensure the children can access a number of activities to encourage their imagination such as role play, small figures, stories and costumes. By ensuring a 'Gap's Analysis' is completed half termly the children are accessing the areas that they need within the play environment. A graph depicting the 'Gap's' for the half term is displayed within the room. Key aspects such as, Reading, Writing, Maths, Speaking and Listening will always be underlying in all areas within the classroom.

30 Hours Provision

From September 2017 we have offered our F1 children 30 hours' provision. For those parents who receive the funding, eligibility codes need to be applied for and given to the school office to ensure funding is received. We are also offering a paid option for those parents who may not be eligible for the funding. Each afternoon session runs from 12.15-3.15pm and costs £10 (this will be reviewed annually in April). Parents are required to book their children in the week before and pay for their sessions. Our afternoon session is run with 2 members of staff and has been planned for using the EYFS curriculum. The afternoon session for 30 hour children encompasses a more creative approach with the opportunity for working in much smaller groups and provides opportunity for a more creative curriculum.

Behaviour

At St Anne's we believe developing key learning skills is vital for every child. Throughout the school we promote the 5Rs. These include Readiness to learn, Responsibility, Resilience, Respect and Resourcefulness. These are displayed in our classrooms and promoted throughout our teaching and school. These skills are developed from Foundation 1 where they begin to look at Readiness Rabbit before embedding this along with the other 4Rs in Foundation 2.

Assessment, observations and learning journals

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in a variety of different ways. These include children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings after school each day and inform staff for their planning the following week. Staff have their own iPad which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. As a unit we are beginning to develop a more online learning journal with the majority of the children's work being photographed. On entry to F1 and F2 we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits half termly assessment data to the Head Teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. However, assessments are continually updated to inform planning and next steps and this can be accessed through Target Tracker. At the end of Foundation 2 the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the F2 child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Foundation 2.

Role of staff and key person

Staff

- **Alison Jones** - EYFS Lead and F2 Teacher
- **Rachel Leeson** - F1 Teacher Mon-Wed

- **Margaret Ballard** - F2 TA Level 3
- **Claire Lyon** - F2 Teacher Wed-Fri
- **Joanne Barber** - F1 TA Level 3 & 30 Hours TA Level 3
- **Kathryn Plant** - 30 Hours TA Level 2

Children are allocated a key person within the setting. One of the role's of the key person is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant together help the children become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. Our meetings which are held before the children start have proved a vital link between home and school and we have seen the positive impact they have had on how the children have settled into school. For F1 children, the class teacher and Mrs Hampson, our home school development worker, are both part of this meeting, which enables them to begin the relationship with parents in a positive way. In F2, the class teachers visit at any of the external settings they may be at before the children start in September. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the F1 and F2 meetings, we offer a transition session for parents at the end of the previous academic year and offer 'stay and play' sessions for parents throughout the year. Transition is an important process at St Anne's and changes depending on the need of the cohort each year. Please see our separate transition policy for more information. We also have available to support our families at St Anne's Mrs A. Hampson, our home school development worker. To further develop our home-school link we regularly post photos on Facebook and Twitter to enable the parents to see what is happening in school. We also hold termly 'Stay and Play' sessions which all parents or grandparents are invited to.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring

for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the EYFS.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's learning journals, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme on a daily basis. Each class share their snack together on a daily basis to encourage speaking and listening and taking turns. At times children may have the opportunity to try different foods as part of a wider learning experience. We will always inform our parents when this will happen to ensure that they are aware and happy for their child to be involved.

We take all accidents seriously and always log any incident immediately. If we feel it is necessary we will always contact home and ask that someone can come and check their child. We take part in whole school fire alarms which are held regularly in line with school policy and we follow school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Mrs Prescott headteacher is the named Child Protection Officer and all concerns are discussed with her. We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.