



## **St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School**

### **Early Years Policy**

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

**Statutory Framework 2017**

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Our Aims

At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School we aim to deliver excellent and varied early learning experiences in a loving environment, where every child is unique and matters! The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's knowledge. Through a loving and enabling environment we aim to develop positive relationships and a long life love of effective learning.

- 1.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At our school children join at the start of the Reception year, in which the children turn 5 and complete the foundation stage. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

The Statutory Framework (2012) states that the EYFS provides:

- **Quality and consistency** so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

2. The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on these four guiding themes. They provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should

support the development, learning and care of young children. This policy outlines how we meet each of the four themes.

## 2.1 A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children are unique and so develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from practitioners; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration certificates and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## 2.2 Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. **Positive relationships are:**

- warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging
- sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests
- supportive of the child's own efforts and independence
- consistent in setting clear boundaries
- stimulating
- built on key person relationships in early years settings

### Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- visiting all children in their home setting prior to their starting Reception;
- providing a meeting for parents/carers before beginning reception class;

- offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- Offering parental consultations each term at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress.
- providing parents/carers with a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- facilitating a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers: class assemblies, sports day and workshops to support parents when helping their child at home;
- Sending weekly and half termly curriculum information to parents/carers via newsletters and the VLE.
- Using books for parents to share information about their child's attainment at home.
- Asking parents to complete home/ school diaries and observation forms to collect a complete whole view of a child.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the class teacher acts as 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the teaching assistants who will at times have small group time with house team colour groups.

### **2.3 Enabling Environments**

**"Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers"**  
**Development Matters**

Enabling Environments value all people and value learning. They offer:

- stimulating resources relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- support for children to take risks and explore

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### The Learning Environment

The reception indoor and outdoor classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Equipment is clearly labelled and accessible to children. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and reflective. The environments are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The outdoor area can be accessed at any time and the children regulate their own learning through free flow. . Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

## **3.0 Learning and Development**

We recognise that all children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected. Practitioners use the framework to ensure all children in our early years setting are given opportunities for challenging and playful provision across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

### **3.1 Characteristics of Effective learning**

Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They foster the characteristics of effective early learning

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

### **3.2 Playing and exploring - engagement**

**"Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to 'have a go'"**

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Our timetable ensures that there is a balance of child-initiated and adult led play based activities.

### **3.3 Active learning - motivation**

**"Being involved and concentrating, keeping trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do."**

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning. Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods

### **3.4 Creating and thinking critically - thinking**

**"Having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways to do things"**

Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. When children have opportunities to

play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

#### **4.0 The Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. They are broken down into prime and specific areas:

##### **Prime areas underpin all other areas of learning (3 areas):**

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development;**  
Making relationships,  
Self-confidence and self-awareness,  
Managing feelings and behaviour
- **Physical Development;**  
Moving and handling,  
Health and self-care
- **Communication and Language;**  
Listening and attention,  
Understanding,  
Speaking

##### **Specific areas (4 areas of learning):**

- **Literacy;**  
Reading, writing
- **Mathematics**  
Numbers, Shape, space and measure
- **Understanding the World**  
People and communities, The world, Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design**  
Exploring and using media and materials, Being imaginative

The prime areas underpin the specific areas but none of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

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

Long term and medium term planning is based around the interests and needs of the child. These plans are then used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning. Continuous provision plans are in place to support children during child initiated learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Ongoing assessment and observations will be recorded in an individual Learning journey for each child.

**"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. 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. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share. "**

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Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and progress within the characteristics of effective learning. We then give an additional opportunity for parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS and year 1 practitioners, in a transition meeting before entering year 1.



## 6.0 Inclusion

### "Love One Another"

We are a loving school and our Catholic ethos permeates all that we do. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of any differences. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, age, religion, disability or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We give children every opportunity to achieve their best, by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS 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;
- working in small groups to ensure all children can access learning.
- 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.
- providing opportunities to explore different cultures, customs and lifestyles.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life

skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Safeguarding Policy)

## **7.0 Safeguarding and Welfare**

**“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. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. ”**

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We are required to:

- promote the welfare of children.
- follow Safeguarding policies and have attended child protection training. (These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)).
- promote good health, good hygiene and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure staffing arrangements are organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children.
- ensure visitors and parent helpers wear appropriate ID badges.
- ensure outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys, are safe and suitable for their purpose.
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- ensure only school cameras are used on the premises and not removed from the setting.
- ensure mobile phones are not used to record any images/videos of children in the setting.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements through:

- using the school's Safeguarding Policy;
- providing parents and carers with an updated early years booklet containing all required information;
- having secure premises;
- requesting parents/carers make us aware of who is allowed to collect their child;
- using the school's SEN&D policy;
- having at least one paediatric first aider;
- providing children with fresh drinking water and a healthy snack;
- ensuring our premises are smoke free;
- using the school's behaviour policy;
- having any one who works directly with children CRB checked;
- following the staff to child ratios set out in the statutory framework;
- carrying out a risk assessment when necessary
- complete a daily checklist (risk assessment) for indoor and outdoor learning areas.
- planning to meet children's needs;
- keeping up to date records of children in our setting
- following the school's Educational Visits Policy.

## **8.0 Admissions**

As a faith school all applications are placed according to the school's admissions policy criteria. Admission to our Reception class must be applied for by completing the Local Authority's application form.

## **9.0 Role of Governors**

Governors determine, support, monitor and review school policies. They support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively. They ensure that the building and equipment is safe. They monitor pupil attainment across the school and ensure that staff development and performance management ensure good quality teaching.

**"Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments."**

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### **Evaluation and Review**

Written by Mrs Anslow. August 2017

Next review: Summer 2018