

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The policies of the Governors of the Federation of St Mary's and St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary Schools are intended to ensure that the children rejoice in their dignity as children of God and as a unique creation of God's love. The policies are written so as to support the most effective teaching and learning that we can provide. It is our intention that every aspect of school life will support this fundamental aim.



Approved by: Alex Pettitt, Co-chair of governors

Date: 17th May 2023

Last reviewed on: April 2020

Next review due by: May 2026

Revision Record

Revision No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved By	Comments
1	27 th April 2020	AL/MS	FGB	Amended page 2 para 2 to read The Statutory Framework for EYFS Page 6 second bullet point delete first sentence and add Photos of children (using school equipment).
2	17 th May 2023	MS	C&D	No changes except to dates

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our children in the Federation of St. Mary's and St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary Schools join the Reception class in the year that they turn five years old. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

The Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 is based upon four overarching principles:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- 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 build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

We recognise that “every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential’ we understand that ‘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’ Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021

Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use positive praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and house points, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All children and their families are valued in both our schools. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage.

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.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in our 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 our children.

“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.” EYFS framework 2021

At our schools, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection 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 all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for 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.

Positive Relationships

The Federation of St. Mary’s and St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary Schools 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.

Parents as Partners

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

- An information event for parents in May / June where they receive information which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the parents of the schools’ vision and aims.

- An opportunity to talk to the Reception team and representatives from other areas of school life e.g. FOSMA and FOSTA, Governors and Chartwells
- Asking parents to sign permission slips for visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Early Reading, Maths and Phonics.
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during taster sessions.
- There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents / carers: topic related activities, class assemblies, Sports Day etc;
- Inviting parents/carers to make comments relating to the children's achievements, both in and out of school, using Dojo or WOW moments
- Written contact through reading diaries.
- Inviting parents/carers to share in their child's learning in class

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 schools, the EYFS teachers with the EYFS Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) act as 'Key Persons' to all children in EYFS. We have good links with the feeder preschools, particularly St Mary's own preschool, and visits are undertaken by the EYFS practitioners to these settings before children start in Reception. Staff and children from the preschools are invited to school events.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure that current interests and experiences are followed and developed.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas

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

The specific areas

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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development is assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

Planned and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn. We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- **Playing and Exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2021)

Religious Education – The Federation of St Mary's and St Thomas of Canterbury follows the Catholic scheme of work 'God Matters'.

PSHE is also taught in the Reception classes

Baseline Assessment – The Government has introduced a Baseline assessment from September 2020. This will involve children participating in a number of activities at an age appropriate level. They will do these with the EYFS staff, within the first six weeks of being at school. The information gathered at this point will provide the Government with a start point for the child's education. The school staff will complete their own day to day assessments throughout the year so that the children are given opportunities to develop their learning skills.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.

Health and Safety

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- Water and fruit are available during the morning session. Milk is available at lunchtime
- A first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.
- Fire and emergency evacuation procedures are taught to the children early in September.

- Photos of children (using school equipment) and/or their work constitute a vital element of recording their achievements and are added to Clasdojo/WOW moments or their learning journals.
- Any concerns staff may have about a child are recorded on CPOMS and the appropriate actions taken.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or take things more quietly. The classroom covers all learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. In the Federation, each EYFS class has its own large enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the ability to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities are planned and accessible resources provided both indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Transition

From Preschool/Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and to express any concerns they may have about their child starting school. Individual meetings with the class teacher can be arranged if appropriate at this time.
- The children are invited to a number of visits throughout the summer term to their Reception class. Towards the end of the summer term the whole school have transition events when the new children are invited into school for a morning without parents or preschool support.
- Members of staff from the Federation make links to feeder settings. The number of meetings/visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents, carers and staff with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the transition meeting between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Review: this policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner as and when Government guidance and statutory frameworks change.