**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” Mark 10:13-16

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At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, we implement our mission statement by…

* Ensuring the transition into Early Years is successful and happy.
* Making the child’s first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
* Ensuring that all children feel secure and valued.
* Providing a broad and balanced curriculum incorporating well planned activities that cover the seven areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
* Providing a rich and varied indoor and outdoor learning environment.
* Establishing positive relationships with parents.
* Valuing children’s interests and providing a balance of direct teaching and child initiated activities.
* Making careful observations and setting targets to support and extend children’s learning appropriately
* Helping children develop self-control and to respect the feelings, needs, cultures and abilities of others.
* Helping children develop a positive attitude towards good health and wellbeing, by encouraging healthy eating, drinking and exercise.
* Developing key skills in communication, literacy and numeracy that will prepare young children for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.
* Ensuring that children with special educational needs are identified and receive appropriate support.
* Liaising with external agencies in support of staff, pupils and parents to ensure that all pupils regardless of race, sex, disability or background have the opportunity to develop.
* Creating a partnership with parents to support and enhance their child’s development.
* To provide a positive transition into Year 1 and the onset of the National Curriculum.

“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 it’s 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 for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012: Setting the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to five.)

**The Curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of Early Years.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

* A Unique Child
* Positive Relationships
* Enabling Environments
* Learning and Development

**A Unique Child:**

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We also 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/ sharing circle times and reward stickers, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

**Positive Relationships:**

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School 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.

**Enabling Environments:**

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School 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.

**Learning and Development:**

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School we teach children by ensuring they have opportunities to engage in challenging, playful experiences across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

**We foster the characteristics of effective early learning**

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

**The Learning Environment**

The EYFS learning environment 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 environment is divided into area of continuous provision where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Reception has access to their own 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 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 7 areas of learning and development.

**Play and exploring**

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and pre occupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.” (Statutory framework for EYFS: 2012).

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School we support children’s learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

**Active Learning**

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 satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

**Creativity and Critical Thinking**

Children should be given opportunity 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 (e.g. what, why, how). Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

**Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** areas of learning:

* Communication and language
* Physical development
* Personal, social and emotional development

**Four specific** areas of learning:

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding of the world
* Expressive arts and design

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.

**Starting in Early Years**

All Early Years children are admitted at the beginning of the Autumn term in three groups. One group will attend Tuesday and Friday, one Wednesday and Friday and the third on Thursday and Friday. This happens for the first two weeks. There is a new parents’ meeting in the Summer term where all parents have the opportunity to meet the Reception staff, the Head teacher, and other early years professionals and outside agencies. All children who have been allocated a place at The Cathedral Catholic Primary School are invited to attend a transition day in the Summer term. In addition the Reception staff will visit the children in their pre-school setting or at home depending on their families’ wishes. This is the beginning of our home –school- parish relationships on which we pride ourselves.

Once a parent accepts a place for their child, the child will be invited to a series of induction sessions which aim to introduce the children to the adults, peers and provision in their new setting.

**Admission and induction**

* The Reception teacher will contact the setting where the child has experienced pre-school education and collate any necessary information from them that can help to paint a fuller picture of the child and where they are at in their development.
* During the last half term the children in reception will spend time with their new teacher in their new classroom on ‘transition day’. This gives them the opportunity to become familiar with the setting and the adults.

**Transition to Y1**

* During the final term in Reception, the EYFS profile is completed for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, their characteristics for learning and their readiness for Year 1.
* Each child’s level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, if they are exceeding expected levels, 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 characteristics of learning. This informs the dialogue 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.
* Children spend half a day in the Year 1 classroom with the Year 1 teacher towards the end of the summer term and they will start to have combined playtimes in the Key Stage 1 playground during the summer term

**Inclusion**

**Vision**

‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’ Galatians 3:28

The Cathedral Catholic Primary School is founded on faith in Jesus Christ and the life of the school is centred on His presence. At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, every member of the school family is regarded as being of equal worth and importance. We endeavour to make sure each class teacher and subject leader understands the meaning of the word inclusion, which recognises differences, meets the needs of individuals and takes positive action, so that everyone has the opportunity to meet their full potential across the curriculum.

**SEN**

We recognise the importance of ensuring all children can access the EYFS framework and can succeed and make progress. We ensure children of all abilities and disabilities are included by

* Providing a positive learning environment which provides security and consistency through continuous provision. This provision is enhanced to meet the interests of the children and individuals can be targeted through independent or 1:1 learning.
* Providing scaffolds for learners to ensure they can achieve at their level. e.g. providing microphones and mirrors for children to see what their mouth and tongue do as they make different sounds.
* Providing a variety of different surfaces to develop gross motor skills and encourage crawling, tumbling, rolling and climbing.
* Provide opportunities to experience learning on a large scale first before fine tuning skills e.g learn to measure mass on a large outdoor balance before using class balances and scales.
* Use good quality artefacts which develop pupils’ observation skills and use of language.

Please refer to Inclusion policy for further information.

**Able, Gifted and Talented**

We recognise the importance of providing challenge for those children who are able, gifted or talented. There are many approaches to providing challenge, some of which are outlined below:

* Encouraging children to extend their learning by suggesting further connections they could make e.g once they have created their puppet show suggest they perform it for others and encourage them to make tickets and give them out or make a poster advertising what time it will start.
* Providing visual prompts for learning within the environment e.g. show them a 100 square and encourage them to look for and continue patterns in the number system.
* Extending their learning with word problems and investigations e.g. if I had three more two-pence’s, how much would I have altogether?

**English as an Additional Language**

We recognise the importance of providing a rich language based curriculum so that EAL children make progress and can access all aspects of the curriculum. We understand that children who have EAL may go through a silent stage when they are listening and internalising language but not yet speaking it.

* We use actions, non-verbal gestures, images and simple words to convey messages and meaning
* We ensure children understand the routine of the day and give them a ‘buddy’ who will confidently show them where they need to be and when.
* We quickly teach symbols and words for survival language such as ‘Hello’, ‘Goodbye’, ‘Can I go to the toilet / have a drink?’ etc
* We use puppets and small world resources to support story telling as well as pictures and texts.
* We encourage language development through action rhymes, finger rhymes and songs
* Once children begin to use social language we model correct English e.g. ‘Mummy here soon? ‘Yes, Mummy ***will be*** here soon’
* We display new vocabulary related to thematic learning and share with all children and parents.
* We plan for children to be included in smaller groups which include children who are fluent English speakers.

**Pupil Premium**

We recognise the importance of providing rich opportunities for those children who are entitled to Pupil Premium Grant and endeavour to provide them with a rich learning environment. We engage disadvantaged families in learning by:

* Inviting parents and carers to information sessions to develop their knowledge and understanding of how and what their child is learning.
* Ensuring key professionals build strong relationships with families e.g sharing daily learning, communicating verbally, inviting them to come into class and share stories and rhymes etc
* Providing opportunities to learn in and outdoors according to the child’s preferred learning style.
* Providing opportunities to engage in first-hand learning based on real experiences e.g. going to the park and kicking up the leaves in order to learn about Autumn.

**Mobility**

We recognise the importance of welcoming all children to The Cathedral Primary School regardless of how long the children remain at our school. We provide support for these children by

* Welcoming the family and taking time to invite them to stay to experience part of the session in reception with their child.
* Providing the child with a buddy for their first few days so that they feel secure and able to participate in the school day
* Communicating with the child’s pre-school setting (if appropriate) to gain insight into the child’s previous learning experiences and quickly provide the child with what they need.
* Using the visual timetable to enable the child to become quickly familiar with the school day and reception routines.

**Health and Safety**

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, an annual risk assessment is conducted of the EYFS classroom and environment to ensure the safety of the children.

Specifically…

* There is a whole school medicines policy. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the parent and / or carer.
* Fresh drinking water is available at all times ,
* Children’s dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
* There is a snack area and sink area where we provide healthy snacks and drinks.
* A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.

**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.”

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We understand that we are required to:

• Promote the welfare 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 are 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.

**Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The planning within the EYFS follows the schools’ Long Term Plan alongside Short Term (weekly) Plans which are based around the individual children’s needs and interests. These plans are used and implemented by the teachers who have a good understanding of their 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 observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children’s individual online Profile (Earwig) and additional evidence in books. They also contain information provided by parents and other settings.

**Planning**

Long term planning:

There is a yearly long term plan linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage which forms the framework of learning objectives for Early Years. This includes predictable themes such as autumn, Christmas etc.

Medium term planning: The Reception teacher plans 2 or 3 week themes based on the areas of learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage framework with activities linked to learning objectives and includes the interests of children.

Short term planning: Weekly plans link activities to learning objectives in the areas of learning, focusing on day to day teaching. This allows for revision and modification of learning activities informed by ongoing assessments and observations. These plans show how adults are to be deployed to focus on targeted groups for guided differentiated teaching, and how independent learning activities will be managed.

**Parents as Partners**

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

* An initial home (or pre-school) visit prior to the children starting school.
* Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
* Giving children the opportunity to spend time with the Early Year’s staff during induction sessions.
* Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress and allowing access to their children’s observation via Earwig.
* Encouraging parents to talk to their child’s teachers about any concerns they may have.
* Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, Early Years staff and parents. For example, fund raising days, themed activity days, concerts including a Harvest Festival, class worship assemblies, The Nativity, Easter celebrations and Sports Day to which all family members are invited.
* Encouraging parents to support learning at home especially reading and phonics.

**Equality**

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking into account gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, 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 and multi-faith society

**Complaints**

Should parents feel they have questions or concerns about their child’s education they should speak to a member of the Early Years team in the first instance. Most things can be easily addressed through good communication and openness. However if a parent wished to discuss an issue and felt unable to do this with the staff they should contact the Early Years leader or the Head teacher.