

St Clements Catholic Primary School



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

February 2021

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 it’s own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St Clement’s children join our reception classes in the September following their fourth birthday.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child;
- Positive relationships;
- Enabling environments;
- Learning and development.

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A UNIQUE CHILD

At St Clement’s 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, 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 assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at St Clement’s are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school community.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this 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;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping (e.g. multi-cultural materials and resources)
- 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.

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. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s safeguarding policy.

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 St Clement’s we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2013. 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 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.

We prioritise any issues relating to children’s welfare and endeavour to meet all these requirements at all times.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At St Clement’s 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.

Parents as partners

We recognise and share the Catholic Church teaching 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:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the teacher offers to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's settling in (Autumn) and progress (Spring and Summer) with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;

All staff involved within the EYFS strives to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'key person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the teaching assistant.

The EYFS team will make a home visit prior to children starting school. They will liaise with nurseries where a child has an identified need to ensure that there is a smooth transition into school for SEND pupils.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At St Clement's 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.

Observation, assessment and planning

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Development Matters statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. In the EYFS, assessment of attainment and progress is based on observation, discussion, questioning and evidence of children's independent learning. Valuable evidence of children's learning is obtained through observation of independent and targeted learning. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and are recorded in a variety of forms using an online secure system called Tapestry and in the children's individual learning folders. Each child's progress is also recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the ELGs (Early Learning Goals)

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 and others where they can be quiet. The classroom is set up in zoned learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own 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 opportunities 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 (detailed below).

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At St Clement's Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the world
4. Expressive arts and design

Teaching and Learning Style

We recognise that features of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

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.

Active 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.”

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.

Creativity and critical thinking

“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.”

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults 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.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor discusses EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provides feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and EYFS leader carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Reviewed & Updated February 2021