



EYFS Policy

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.

At Sacred Heart Primary we admit children to nursery the term following their third birthday and to reception in the September following their fourth birthday. We believe Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Sacred Heart Primary we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We consider the relationship between home and school to be paramount in the development and well-being of children in our care.

Aims & Objectives

We want our little people to leave early years as happy, confident, resilient learners who are kind to others and care for their environment. They will feel safe and secure which will enable them to engage in learning and work independently or collaboratively. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Sacred Heart Primary, we will:

- ✓ Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging curriculum both in the indoor and outdoor classrooms and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- ✓ Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- ✓ Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress against their baseline.

✓ Develop strong, valuable relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

✓ Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

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

A Unique Child

At Sacred Heart Primary we recognise that every child has their own learning journey and therefore progress at different rates. We recognise that children have strengths in different areas and always try to relate learning to their interests in order to support them in developing across all areas. Each child's achievements are celebrated through encouragement from all staff and class rewards. This enables them to develop a positive attitude to learning. Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Sacred Heart Primary are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations set to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

We do this 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 to match the learning styles of our children.

✓ Providing a wide range of opportunities, ensuring children have a good scaffold for future learning.

✓ Adapting our teaching and learning where needed to ensure children make maximum progress.

✓ Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.

✓ Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

✓ Monitoring children's progress and acting to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) through pupil progress meetings and provision mapping.

✓ Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Sacred Heart Primary we welcome families – not just the children. We recognise that children learn to be resilient, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parental involvement - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first educators, and we value having a positive relationship with them in their child's education through:

✓ Contacting parents/carers before their child starts school at our parent walkabouts, induction sessions, welcome meetings, welcome packs and nursery visits.

✓ Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their childcare provision prior to their starting school.

✓ Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.

✓ Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in school before the year starts for a session.

✓ Inviting parents to phonic and reading workshops/ stay and play sessions to see how their children will begin learning.

✓ Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

✓ Sharing photos, updates and achievements via Tapestry, twitter and our class blog.

✓ Sending home 'Star of the Week' certificates to celebrate achievements.

- ✓ Offering two parent/carer stay and play sessions per year at which their child's progress and wellbeing is discussed.
- ✓ Sending a written report on their child's attainment, progress and attitude at the end of their time in reception.
- ✓ Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- ✓ Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, special events, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.

Enabling Environments

At Sacred Heart Primary we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment which is well resourced and organised, enabling them to be independent learning and providing opportunities to extend their own learning. We plan a learning environment using materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. The prime areas (listed below) underpin learning in the specific areas (also listed below), without these children will find it hard to reach a good level of development.

The Three Prime areas are:

- o Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- o Communication and Language
- o Physical Development

Specific Areas:

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

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, 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 of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Reception pupils also participate in a daily Read Write Inc phonics session, following the guidance in line with school policy.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. '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, 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 will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements. '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 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.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. "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 should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning. Planning The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The curriculum within the Foundation Stage is supported by the document Birth to Five matters along with the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. The medium-term planning is based upon a different topic, this.
- **Observations** - Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys. Assessment During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a mixture of the statutory government baseline and also through teacher observations. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We record each child's level of development throughout the year and record whether each child is on track or not on track to meet a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the year in July. Children will be judged at either an emerging level or an expected level in each early learning goal. The exceeding level no longer applies. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure

that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher, teaching assistants, parents and children, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data at the end of the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. The teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work via online journals Tapestry. At the end of the final term in Reception we assess whether each child is emerging or expected in each strand within each area of learning and submit this data to the local authority. This information is also shared with the child's next teacher who uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers detailed comments on each child's holistic progress across all areas of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

- **The Learning Environment** - The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. Children have access to both inside and outside area across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. We also include Reception children in Forest School which they usually start after the first half term. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside. In addition to this forest school encourages and allows children to develop their communication and language skills, personal, social and emotional skills and also their physical development. Forest School also has a positive impact on children's well-being.
- **Teaching & Learning Styles**
The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2. The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:
 - the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
 - the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;

- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
 - the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
 - 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 and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
 - the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents through parents evenings and conversations before/after school
 - the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
 - the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
 - the regular identification of training needs for all adults working in Foundation Stage. Transition Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily. Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an informal meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for parents to:
 - Meet other parents and begin to build a support network within the school environment
 - Ask any questions that they may have about the school or what their child's learning will look like
 - Learn more about the school and what our vision and values are
 - Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
 - Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to reception

New class sessions

The children are given two opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend 2 sessions in their new class. Parents can leave their child during this session. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them. N.B. Prior to the 2021-2022 cohort – COVID restrictions were still in place, which meant that children were unable to complete their usual transition, we did however manage to allow children to visit the classrooms in small groups with their

grown ups to see the indoor and outdoor classroom and meet their new teachers. Arrangements are also made for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting. When visiting the pre-schools and nurseries class teachers take a booklet, along with a covering letter for the child and their parents so the parents are aware of the class teacher visiting and also for the child to look at photos of staff and environment in order to ease transition to school.

September Intake

When children join the school in September the children attend the first two days as half days, then stay for lunch before full days in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)

Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing lunchtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend up to 2 sessions in their new class during the summer term. Reception class teachers will also have had meetings with year 1 class teachers to discuss the characteristics of effective learning of each individual child, i.e., how the child learns best and also their levels in relation to EYFS Early Learning Goals. Safeguarding & 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.' (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

At Sacred Heart Primary we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health including oral health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe

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 and have adopted a thrive approach. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Good Health

All children are offered a healthy snack at least once a day, as well as being given the choice of milk if they are under 5 years old (after this they can still have milk, but parents are asked to pay for it). They have access to water at all times.

Children are encouraged to take part in many physical activities including directed PE sessions, Go Noodle dances and workouts each morning, action songs, the mile a day, active learning during child-initiated play and lunch time play activities. In addition to this teacher directed sessions are also kept active to ensure the children are moving as much as possible throughout the school day.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene, and it is good practise for the school to inform the SENCO of all children requiring intimate care in order to put a care plan in place where necessary. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins reception or when necessary.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2022 or as necessary.