

# St. Clare's Catholic Primary School

## EYFS Policy



Member of staff responsible: A Scott  
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## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Clare's is a Christ-centred family where everyone is valued and respected. We learn and grow, whilst strengthening our relationship with God and one another. Together in His love, we can achieve our full potential.

Play, learn and grow together with Christ

## **2. Overview**

"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."

*EYFS Statutory Framework 2017 (updated April 2020)*

Foundation Stage learning is based on the principles that:

- every child is unique and is constantly learning
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in environments that enable them to do this

At St. Clare's Catholic Primary School, we recognise and celebrate that every child is unique and made by God. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We want our children to enjoy learning, to be independent and self-motivated learners, encouraging them to think critically, adapt their working strategies, seek challenge and take risks with their learning.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within this policy refers to the teaching and learning of children in Pre-school, Little Saplings and Reception Year, currently taught in 'Rowan Class'.

## **3. Curriculum**

The Children in Pre-school and Reception year group follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework document and Development Matters document. What the children learn is built

around this framework which is based around seven Areas of Learning and Development, within which are three prime areas which focus on the basic which underpin all aspects of learning and support other more specific areas of the curriculum.

The three Prime Areas of learning and development are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

and four Specific Areas which are:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Characteristics of Effective Learning concern *how* the child learns; namely:

- Playing and exploring – engagement. Children investigate and experience things and events around them and ‘have a go’.
- Active learning – motivation. Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking. Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

The EYFS learning environment in our school enables learning through play and exploration, active learning, creating and thinking critically, all of which encourage children to ‘have a go’, be involved and keep trying, explore their own ideas, choosing ways to do things and make links with prior knowledge and experiences.

#### **4. EYFS Learning Environment**

At St. Clare’s Catholic Primary School, Children in EYFS have access to a learning environment in which provision is made for children to actively engage in resources and activities that promote the seven Areas of Learning and Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage *and* develop Characteristics of Effective Learning. This includes indoor and outdoor provision which centres around the classroom base and adjacent outdoor area.

Our ‘enabling environment’ has been created in which children can successfully develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning through providing:

- a happy and welcoming space in which all children are treated as individuals and feel safe, secure and valued;
- an exciting and stimulating environment which motivates children, thus increasing their desire to learn and explore;
- engaging activities that build on and extend their interests and skills, enabling

- them to develop into confident, inquisitive, creative and independent learners;
- a personalised approach to learning, informed by observation and assessment of individual stages of development, ensuring all children are supported at a level and pace that enables them to realise their full potential;
  - inclusion for all children and access to the whole curriculum;
  - a variety of teaching styles, appropriate to the needs of the children and the skills being taught;
  - strong partnerships and positive relationships with parents/carers and feeder settings;
  - embedding of fundamental British Values, thus enabling children to develop a positive sense of self and belonging and so become valuable and fully rounded members of society, who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of background.

## **5. Quality of Teaching**

Learning through play, practical activity and exploration is at the heart of our teaching. Staff ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day, providing plentiful opportunities that reflect the children's interests and to inspire them further, whilst also extending and enhancing skills through direct teaching in phonics, maths, literacy etc.

Staff have a clear and informed understanding of how children learn. They have high expectations of children and work as a team to ensure activities are purposeful and based on their learning requirements. Staff work directly with the children and their play is supported and extended appropriately and sensitively. Space and equipment are used to provide an enabling environment for successful learning. A flexible timetable allows for spontaneity and creativity, with staff keen to explore and maximise learning opportunities as they occur, inside and outside.

## **6. Planning**

Planning aims to provide broad, balanced and engaging learning experiences based on the children's interests but with Development Matters and Early Years Outcomes as a guide. It ensures children are engaged in meaningful and challenging activities, both self- chosen and adult initiated/directed, inside and outside, which support their journey towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. There is a flexible and fluid approach to planning, with staff focused on meeting the individual needs of all children whilst maximising opportunities for learning as they arise. Staff continually discuss and review how children respond to and learn from different tasks and activities and this information is constantly used to plan for next steps. Activities and planning become more structured as the year progresses in readiness for Year 1.

## **7. Assessment**

Before children start school, staff have an awareness of their need and interests through contact and transition documentation from pre-school settings and discussions with parents. Then, as children enter school in September, EYFS staff take time to really get to know the children in their care and observe their learning and behaviours. Within the first six weeks of attending reception children complete the Government Reception Baseline Assessment. In addition to this baseline the school adopts a holistic approach to assessment. The staff identify individual pupil starting points across all 7 areas of learning and development. From then on, regular assessment of the children's learning is carried out to ensure that future planning and our environment supports pupil needs and helps develop their targets.

Assessment is mainly carried out via staff observation throughout the day, during focused tasks and especially in continuous provision, when children are embedding and extending previous learning. More formal assessments of phonic/reading skills and mathematical skills also take place regularly. Assessment data is used to monitor progress towards the Early Learning Goals and informs planning for next steps for learning. Information about the child's 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and examples of their work and development are filed. In June each year the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed, a copy of which is given to parents informing them of their child's attainment at the end of EYFS.

EYFS staff regularly attend moderation meetings with other schools and as clusters to ensure that assessment is robust and accurate. External moderators also visit school to validate judgements as part of the LCC moderation cycle.

## **8. Home/School Links**

Here at St. Clare's Catholic Primary School, we pride ourselves on strong relationships with all those in our school family. We recognise the key role as first educators that parents and carers play in their child's education. We actively seek to work in partnership with our families to ensure that the transition to school and the journey through it, is as seamless, supportive and positive as possible. This includes:

- Pre-school family activities e.g. Open Day, Christmas Fair and Summer Term induction evening once a school place has been confirmed
- Staff visits to or home visits as appropriate
- 'Meet the teacher' and more specific curriculum information evenings
- Progress reports and follow up parents' evenings
- Curriculum overview and additional, updated information on our school website
- Home/school reading records
- School newsletters
- Class blog page

- 'Teachers2parents' text message service
- Regular invitations to parents/carers to visit and be involved in school e.g. themed days, celebrations and assemblies.

Staff are always available at the end of every day to speak to parents. Alternatively, parents can also contact school by telephone/email and make appointments to speak to staff at other mutually convenient times. Parents are informed about their child's progress and attainment via pupil progress reports and Parents Evenings. An End of Year report is also issued in July and parents are invited to discuss this with staff, if they so wish.

## **9. Safeguarding and Children's Welfare**

Rigorous and robust safeguarding procedures ensure that everyone in our school community feels safe, supported and valued (See school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). School safeguarding and welfare arrangements reflect DfE statutory guidance as directed in the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. School has clear procedures for reporting any concerns about child safeguarding and welfare.

We know that children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. Central to this is the continuous development of positive relationships, which is at the heart of everything we do here at St Clare's. In society, as well as in school, there is a need for agreed rules and boundaries which help us stay safe whilst promoting respect for and tolerance of the views of others. These are fundamental British values.

The Supervision model also forms part of our safeguarding procedures at EYFS. It also enables EYFS staff to share knowledge and expertise, voice concerns and seek support from colleagues thus ensuring that 'best practice' is encouraged and provided.