

St John Baptist (Southend) CE Primary School



EARLY YEARS POLICY

Agreed: March 2016

Review: February 2019

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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. 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.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children are invited to join us, full-time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are 5. Children joining our school have experienced a range of pre-school settings within the community and we continue to build on this diverse knowledge within our class.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A UNIQUE CHILD

At St John Baptist School 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St John Baptist School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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 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 the majority of their peer group;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary
- working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met

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."

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 guidelines 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.

At St John Baptist School we endeavour 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.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At St John Baptist School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from experiencing secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. The EYFS is an integral part of St John Baptist School and the children are made to feel part of the wider community of the school by attending whole school activities such as Church services, assemblies and outside playtimes. The children also perform regularly in front of the rest of the school - singing songs, discussing recent learning and acting in family and key stage assemblies.

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 by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school; the teacher visiting all children in their home setting prior to their starting school; providing a 'virtual tour' of the child's new classroom and outdoor area via the 'New Families' page on Fronter
- ensuring the children have the opportunity to spend time with their classmates and staff before starting school during the school's 'Taster Day' session;
- inviting all parents to a 'New Intake' meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- arranging a 'whole class' meeting during the first term to explain what the children will be learning and how the parents can support that learning;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal Academic Review meeting for parents during the Spring term where there is the opportunity for parents, pupil and teacher to discuss the child's learning achievements and progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: eg Class visits, Class assemblies, Sports Day etc;
- providing ideas and home learning opportunities for the parent and child to share on their own Fronter page;
- providing 'WOW' cards for parents and carers to complete celebrating their child's achievements outside of school

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.

The class teacher meets daily with the Nursery Nurse to discuss the progress of the children and their welfare.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At St John Baptist 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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

All Reception class children are assessed using the Government approved Early Excellence Baseline Assessment during the first 10 weeks of attendance at our school. Results are collated by the Government and national comparisons made. Planning and learning linked to children's individual needs are based around these results. The medium term planning within the EYFS is based around core books which have been chosen to support the school's

Irresistible Curriculum. These plans are used by the EYFS staff as a guide for weekly planning, however the weekly plans often alter in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the 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, photos and 'concrete' evidence which involve the teacher and Nursery Nurse as appropriate. These observations are recorded on class lists and within individual pupil folders as part of the 2Build-a-Profile assessment system where each child's level of development is recorded to monitor achievement and progress in:

The three Prime areas:

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

And the four Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding 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. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Assessment data is regularly analysed by the class teacher and gaps in learning are quickly identified and addressed. 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 3 Prime areas.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report to parents, summarising their child's progress against the ELG's. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher at an end of year meeting.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn in a secure and safe environment. There are different areas and zones within the classroom and outdoor area where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find 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 important opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children countless opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are specifically planned by the Nursery Nurse in order for the children to access all 7 areas of learning within the outdoor area.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At St John Baptist School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are connected.

Teaching and Learning Approach

In keeping with the guidelines used throughout St John's school, EYFS staff adhere to the following principles in order to carry out effective teaching and to ensure children are learning successfully. We :

- ensure there is an open and respectful partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- understand how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- have a range of approaches which are used to provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and which will extend and develop play and communication;
- ensure there is a carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- ensure there is provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- encourage children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- support children's learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor resources, facilities and equipment;
- identify the progression and future learning needs of children through observations and assessments.

Play

"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."

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'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 the children explore and develop learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world. They practice 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

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 satisfaction 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 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. Spontaneous learning is encouraged by allowing children access to resources and encouraging them to move around the classroom to extend their learning.

Monitoring and review of this policy

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

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

The Head /Deputy Head teacher and Key Phase coordinator will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the regular school monitoring schedule.

Where possible we will seek to validate our self-evaluation by inviting external professionals to assess or moderate the judgements we have made about our provision for Early Years.

We also fully utilise any judgements made in our Ofsted Report when setting targets for improvement.

Signed

Julie Langridge - EYFS/ Key Stage 1 Coordinator

Approved by Governing Body date:

Review date: