



EYFS Policy

At St Catherine's Church of England School, we strive to educate our children to realise their aspirations and to contribute positively to society guided by our Christian principles.

Our EYFS includes our Nursery and Reception classes, our 2 – 5 year olds. We want to ensure that every young child in our EYFS has a happy, safe and secure start to their school journey This policy outlines our approach to all aspects of the EYFS.

About our Nursery and Reception

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 2 to 5 years. In our school we have our Nursery, offering flexible sessions, from half days all the way to full-time (30 hours) and a full-time reception class.

Nursery :

We offer Nursery places

Reception :

Our Reception class has a full time teacher and a full-time higher level teaching assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity our Nursery and Reception class work closely together and share planning, activities and an outdoor learning opportunities. The Nursery and Reception follow “development matters” as a guide to planning. We also follow our own tailored skills progression curriculum to ensure every child has the opportunity to meet their expected outcomes. Both can be found on the website.

We welcome visits to our Nursery and Reception classes.

Aims

- To give each child a positive start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into confident and independent lifelong learners;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills, such as problem solving and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by creating achievable challenges to stretch learners;

- Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential;
- To ensure every child has the opportunity to be their best and contribute to the school community through sporting activities, choir, local visits and school visitors.
- To ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow curriculum guidance as directed by the Development matters (2020), which is available on the school website. The following policy details the specifics of our school.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at different times. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by many things. We use praise and problem solving to encourage the children to find their own ways to complete learning tasks. With the support of our evidence gathering app both teachers and families alike can capture and share learning opportunities that will create a well rounded picture of each and every child.

Positive relationships

We understand that children learn to be strong and independent by developing secure relationships with the adults and others around them. Every child has a role in society and we aim to teach the children how to become responsible members of their family, school and wider communities. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment in which the children learn is the "third teacher". It plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through ongoing observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development before planning challenging yet achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning for each individual child.

Learning and development

Our foundation stage has one nursery classroom and one reception classroom both with access to outdoor classrooms. All our learning environments are 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 set up daily by staff to encompass all seven areas of learning and gives the children opportunity to be independent and self selective in their learning challenges.

Areas of Learning

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

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At St Catherine's all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow the children's interests to inform us of areas of interest.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practice skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the nursery and reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We encourage children to strive to be their best in all that they do. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of every child as a unique and contributing member to society. We take into considerations race, culture, faith and linguistic needs when planning for each class. We aim to 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

We provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; stimulating and challenging activities for all children no matter their developmental level. . We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Assessment

Throughout nursery and reception children knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in nursery and reception has a 'Learning Journal' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work.

In nursery they children will be supported by a key worker who will plan and assess each child's ongoing development using 'in the moment' opportunities. All observations in both reception and nursery will be added to the child's online learning journal, which parents are encouraged to contribute to. These observations will be sent out termly to parents so that learning can be shared with their child at home.

At the start of both Nursery and Reception children are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any form of testing and parent's/carers' views on their child as a learner will be taken into account. Parents/carers will be given information of these starting points and information about next steps in learning at a parents meeting midway through the Autumn term.

The Foundation Stage Profile, the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning, is a statutory report. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum. Parents/carers will be given information of their child's achievements in a written report at the end of the Summer term.

Throughout the year children's knowledge, skills and understanding will continue to be tracked throughout the foundation stage and assessed against the ELG's at the end of reception to establish an end of foundation stage achievement and learning profile for each child in preparedness for their transition to key stage one.

Transitions

At St Catherine's we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a confusing time for both children and parents. We have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

For children starting in the Nursery we invite the child and their parent/s to have a number of stay and play visits (together) prior to starting their sessions in Nursery.

For children transitioning to Reception we hold a meet the teacher in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. In the summer term we invite the child and their parent/s to have a number of stay and play visits (together) so that they get

used to the staff, classroom and school. There will be opportunities to stay for half and full days during transition as well as experiencing school lunches and playtime on the playground. In addition to this an online transition classroom is set up on our school platform where parents can communicate and ask questions to the reception teacher prior to the summer holiday break.

At the end of the reception year children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on a number of occasions prior to starting Year one. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

During children's time in nursery and reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children in both nursery and reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall and outdoor playing and learning areas for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they start school. Throughout the reception year, when children are ready they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies and after school clubs.

Community Links

At St Catherine's the foundation stage classes enrich learning and encourage strong links with the local area through local visits to the post office, Launceston Castle and Grounds, the Steam railway, the fire station, the local vets and many more. We aim to teach children that every person has a role and responsibility in the community and we will nurture this through regular local trips and by inviting in members of the local community whenever we can.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carer's are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our school. As well as the Nursery and Reception we invite the child and their parent/s to have a number of stay and play visits (together) prior transition visit days we offer daily opportunities for parents to talk to us, as a member of the EYFS team will greet and dismiss children from their classroom door.

We also offers parents a variety of learning workshops throughout the year to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning at home. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. Parents

are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. In nursery and reception all parents are invited to join their child's Clasdojo and Evidence Me platform. We use Evidence me to gather learning observations and encourage parents to use the 'parent share' tool to share wider learning experiences that happen at home. As a school we use Class Dojo to communicate and share learning with families. We advise parents to check this platform daily for class and school updates.