



“Christ’s ministry, as recounted in the Gospels, and the values he promoted through his teachings are fundamental to the life of our school in fulfilling its purpose as a Catholic institution.” (Mission Statement)

EYFS Policy

“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.”

(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. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years.

Aims

At St. Aidan’s Primary School Foundation Stage we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

We will 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 cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school

The Curriculum

Reception follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

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 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.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our learning environment is 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 seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

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. Aidan's Primary 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 a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

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 practise 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.

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 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 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 boys and girls, children with special

educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. 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 will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; 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; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. 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.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout Reception children's 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 reception has a 'Learning Journal' on the iPads in which we record our observations and we also keep samples of the children's work.

From September 2015 reception children will be assessed during the first 6 weeks of school against learning statements in maths, literacy and PSED to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. This is a statutory assessment which will be reported by the end of the children's first half term in school. Judgements will be based on the NFER baseline assessment.

2015/16 is the final year for the statutory reporting of the Foundation Stage Profile, the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning. 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.

From September 2016 our 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

How Children Start School

At St. Aidan's a "new parents evening" is held in the Summer Term prior to the children beginning school in September. This is to inform the parents of various aspects of 'School Life' e.g. uniform, times, school dinners etc. and to meet the EYFS team.

They are also informed about how the children start school. In the first week of the Autumn Term all the parents are offered a home visit by two members of the EYFS team. Then, for the next two weeks, children attend for half-days only:

9.05 – 11.35 a.m. (younger children)

12.55 – 3.25 p.m. (older children)

The older children are then expected to stay for the whole day for the next week. Then the following week, the younger children are also expected to stay for the whole day. This helps the children to settle quickly and confidently into two smaller groups and also helps the team to get to know them and begin to assess their learning.

We also hold a parents' curriculum evening in Sept/Oct to inform parents about the teaching and learning strategies used in reading, writing and number. Following this evening, parents are invited to spend a morning or afternoon session observing and participating in EYFS classroom.

Links with Foundation Stage 1

Although St. Aidan's does not have a Nursery it has strong links with its main feeder settings. The team belongs to a local cluster group that is for all EYFS settings and works in partnership with Croydon Catholic Primary Schools. As well as meetings during the year to discuss aspects of teaching and learning, records are shared at the end of the academic year to achieve consistency of learning throughout the EYFS.

At St. Aidan's Primary we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end 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.

At the end of reception children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on various 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.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers 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 setting.

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 reception parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities.

At St. Aidan's Primary we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. Formal parents meetings are offered termly, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journals. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

Health & safety and safeguarding

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.