



OUR MISSION

“Love One Another As I Have Loved You”

Introduction

Active learning experiences out of doors are essential for young children as it promotes physical growth and development, health and fitness, personal and emotional wellbeing, self-esteem and socialisation in a freer context, real life experiences and curriculum access and equality.

“Children learn by moving, and movement needs space. Only through ready access to the outdoors and stimulating outdoor provision can a child’s physical development, personal, social and emotional wellbeing and learning across the curriculum to flourish.”

Marjorie Ouvry, 2001

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles:

- **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 and 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 and rewards to encourage and 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, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and development.** The Early Years classrooms 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 unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. Wilfrid’s Catholic Academy we greatly value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the Early Years Foundation Stage as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Early Years Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

Outdoor learning is an integral part of play and learning provision for the EYFS. Children will be allowed daily access to the outdoor environment for both continuous provision and focussed activities. Planning recognises the outdoor classroom is an area to provide different opportunities on a larger scale.

The outdoor learning environment should be set up daily as a stimulating and inviting space, which supports learning across all areas of learning, both prime and specific. Areas included are sand, water, digging, number, role play, mark making, art, large physical and climbing and balancing.

Children and staff are required to provide suitable clothing and footwear so that the outdoors can be accessed in all weathers. This must include wellies, suitable coats and spare clothes. Parents are asked to provide wellies at the beginning of the year. Children who become wet or muddy must change their clothes when they go inside.

Daily visual risk assessments are carried out to ensure the area and equipment are safe. The area is checked for litter, animal faeces and the safety of the equipment. Gates are checked to ensure they are securely locked/closed. Any issues are reported immediately to the teacher in charge and/or the site supervisor.

Children have as much access to outdoors as the setting can provide. Staff will facilitate and extend play during outdoor provision but also ensure children have adequate opportunity to demonstrate their own creativity and knowledge.

In the event of a fire alarm sounding, children will stop what they are doing immediately. They will then line up, exit the playground and be escorted to the assembly point by the staff member and meet the rest of the class.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Outside

In the outdoors we aim;

- To provide opportunities for all children to access a well-planned outdoor environment and to meet their needs and interests through a range of resources and experiences.
- To provide equipment, which not only develops physical skills, but also skills across the whole curriculum.
- To create a stimulating outdoor environment in which children can feel safe, secure and confident to use the activities.
- To develop or change activities to further stimulate the children.
- To make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.
- To provide opportunities to work independently and collaboratively with enthusiasm and perseverance.
- To support the children's learning in the outdoors by sharing in their experiences and interests.
- To provide appropriate adult intervention to help the children make progress in their learning and to develop and enhance the children's learning through play.
- For children, appropriately dressed, to access the outdoor areas and activities in most types of weather.
- To provide the opportunity for children to develop their gross motor skills and their general health and fitness in the outdoor environment.
- To promote social and emotional development and negotiating skills through talking with friends and sharing in their outdoor play.
- To provide outdoor learning experiences, which compliment and extend indoor provision.
- To ensure health and safety at all times e.g. area is supervised, equipment is checked regularly, parents are kept informed of issues e.g. sun awareness, suitable clothing.

The Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing the prime areas of:-

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

And the specific areas of:-

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

In addition, as a Catholic academy, we also promote and develop children's spiritual understanding of the Catholic faith.

The Seven Areas of Learning

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

PRIME AREA: Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This area has three sub sections. These are Making Relationships, Self-confidence and Self-awareness and Managing Feelings and Behaviour. The outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.

PRIME AREA: Communication and Language (C and L)

This is broken down into three sub sections. These cover Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children's developing competence in speaking and listening and Understanding. Other areas of learning also make a vital contribution to the successful development of literacy.

PRIME AREA: Physical Development (PD)

This covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. Physical development is implicit in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Teaching concentrates on children's developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

SPECIFIC AREA: Mathematics (M)

This is broken down into two sub sections. These are Number and Shape, Space and Measures. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Mathematics. They focus on achievement through practical activities and are using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

SPECIFIC AREA: Literacy (L)

This area of learning has two sub sections of Reading and Writing. The objectives ensure success in early reading and writing skills. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for writing are skills that are promoted daily in the Early Years Early Years Foundation Stage at St. Wilfrid's Catholic Academy.

SPECIFIC AREA: Understanding the World (U the W)

This covers the subjects Geography, Science, DT, History, RE and ICT. This is a major area of learning and enquiry focusing on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world.

SPECIFIC AREA: Expressive Arts and Design (CD)

This covers art, music, and drama. This area of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage we follow the Archdiocese of Birmingham Catholic Education scheme of work specifically written for Nursery and Reception- 'Living and Growing as the People of God.' Within the Early

Years Foundation Stage the main focus is that God created us as individuals and recognising differences. Please see the RSE policy.

Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the Early Years Foundation Stage is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the Early Years Foundation Stage team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may need to alter these in response to the needs 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 Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. The parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the Early Years Foundation Stage Team each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's early learning goals to parents and carers.

Play in EARLY YEARS EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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.

Inclusion in EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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 we are planning for their learning.

At the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning 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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress, and providing support (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.

Policy Review

This policy was reviewed in March 2022.

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