



Saint Edmund's Catholic Primary School

'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration'

EYFS Policy

Committee responsible for policy	Curriculum and Achievement Committee
Approved by Committee /FGB	October 2023
Statutory/Non-statutory	Non-Statutory
Frequency of Review	Free to determine – 3 years
Date of last review	September 2019
Date of next review	September 2026
Purpose of policy	To set out a framework within which staff can operate and give guidance on planning, teaching and assessment in the Early Years
Consultation	All staff SLT Achievement Committee
Links to other policies	Planning Assessment and Marking Teaching and Learning

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy reflects the school's values and philosophy in relation to the teaching and learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It sets out a framework within which staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. In partnership with parents and carers, we endeavour to ensure the children's "school readiness" and give them a "broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress through school and life." (Statutory Framework, EYFS, 2021)

The Early Years applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
2. Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming confident and independent.
3. Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child
4. Learning and developing – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

In the Early Years we aim to provide:

- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning
- A secure foundation of knowledge
- A strong partnership with parents
- Equal opportunities for all children
- A safe, happy and enjoyable environment where children feel valued, loved and secure and able to share their feelings and concerns.

The Early Years support the seven areas of learning and development:

Prime Areas	17 Early Learning Goals
1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation
	Managing Self
	Building Relationships
2. Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills
	Fine Motor Skills
3. Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding
	Speaking
Specific Areas	
4. Literacy	Comprehension
	Word reading
	Writing
5. Maths	Number
	Numerical Patterns
6. Understanding the World	Past and Present
	People, Culture and Communities
	The Natural World
7. Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials
	Being Imaginative and Expressive

The teaching in the EYFS also encourages three characteristics of effective learning which underpin the learning and development in all areas and supports the child to remain an effective and motivated learner:

Characteristics of Effective Learning	
1. Playing and exploring – engagement	Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to “have a go”
2. Active learning – motivation	Being involved and concentration Keeping trying Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
3. Creating and critically – thinking	Having their own ideas Making links Choosing ways to do things

Aims

At St Edmund’s the Foundation Stage covers the child’s education in Nursery and Reception Class. Children will experience a broad and balanced curriculum based on the seven areas of learning, which are also underpinned by our Catholic identity and British Values. Our aim is for the children to become independent and autonomous learners over the course of the Foundation Stage. Activities are planned to provide a stimulating learning experience for the children where they can explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Children’s own needs, interests and learning styles are taken into account and they work at their own pace.

Planning and Organisation

Planning is based around the seven areas of learning using the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023). Medium term and weekly plans link directly to the ages and stages of the child. Learning outcomes are cross-referenced to the activities planned, ensuring a comprehensive progression towards the Early Learning Goals while providing opportunities for teacher assessment.

Plans are developed to ensure:

- There is strong evidence of cross-curricular links and hands-on learning wherever possible.
- There is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Children work in a variety of ways: independently, in groups or pairs and as a whole class.
- All children have access to the areas of learning both inside and outside the classroom.
- Learning and development opportunities are planned around the needs and interests of the children and are assessed and reviewed constantly.
- Practitioners work in partnership with parents/carers.

The teaching of reading and writing:

- The teaching of phonics in EYFS and Key Stage 1 follows systematic, synthetic phonics programme and is taught daily.
- A phonics and reading workshop is held to support parents so there is consistency between teaching at home and school.
- Early reading includes sharing decodable RWI books linked to what they are learning in class.
- Children are assessed regularly to ensure they are at the right level and early writing is linked so that it is a complete programme.

Assessment, Record Keeping, Reporting and Target Setting

In line with the Foundation Stage ethos most assessment is formative. This is ongoing and carried out by staff who work in close partnership. Anecdotal evidence, contributed by parents and other adults in the school is considered valuable assessment material. This informs planning and target setting. Some summative teacher assessment is carried out by way of observation, either 1-1 with pupils or in small groups.

A profile (or Learning Journey) is kept for each child and contains annotated work that can be used as evidence, along with photos to support teacher assessment and judgements; the staff collect evidence for this. Learning journeys include a range of evidence that incorporate both adult-led, child-initiated activities and a variety of observations.

Every child is assessed/ observed informally against the seven areas of learning and development. During the summer term, each Reception child's level of development is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if the children are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile and is shared with parents in the form of their end of year reports.

Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the Foundation Stage curriculum and resources, regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. Displays and references show positive role models of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability and social circumstance. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)

All children and their families are valued at St Edmund's Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of sources, to ensure that any child with a potential special educational need is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's Inclusion Manager is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are then taken in accordance with the school's SEND Code of Practice.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

The first of the seven areas of learning is Personal, Social and Emotional Development and it is through activities planned in this aspect of the Curriculum that practitioners nurture the confidence and social skills of the pupils. Through topic work, the children learn about their immediate environment and the world spiralling outwards from this starting point. Religious Education is taught in the Early Years and is based on the Curriculum Directory and supported by supplementary materials. The needs and beliefs of others are discussed, recognised and valued; ensuring children have a concept of the world beyond their own. Children are encouraged to understand the need for class and school rules and they are guided in making choices based on this knowledge; thus gaining a further understanding of right and wrong. Good behaviour is modelled by all adults (please see the Behaviour Policy).

Positive Relationships

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

‘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 will have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child’s experiences before their child starts school.
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions.
- Inviting Reception parents to an induction meeting prior to starting school, a pre-school information evening and again through a taster session with their child.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns before or after school.
- Inviting parents to a formal meeting twice a year at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child’s progress and new learning targets.
- Providing parents with a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Ensuring that staff in the EYs provide a range of opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents: stay and play sessions, class assemblies, school visits, parent workshops, sports days and the parent career talks.
- Providing home learning books which link to the current topic and provide activities for the children to complete linking to each of the 7 areas.

Health and Safety

At St Edmund’s, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which include procedures for keeping children safe during off-site activities. Children’s medical and dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. Children are offered fruit and milk at specific times during the day. (See whole school Health & Safety Policy for further details).

Safeguarding

In accordance with current legislation for all schools, should any concerns arise regarding child protection – including radicalisation - then we will seek advice from the appropriate authority. All staff have received Child Protection and PREVENT training. All EY staff and volunteers follow the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (please see separate policy).

Transition

From Pre-school /Nursery settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Nursery or Reception classes, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Children and parents are invited to a 'Stay, Play & Talk' session in nursery so that the child can familiarise themselves with their new surroundings.
- Children starting Reception will be invited to visit their new Reception class and meet their teachers.
- Reception parents are encouraged to write a prayer for their child as they start school.
- Children requiring extra support may receive additional visits in their pre-school settings but these will be on an individual basis and pre-planned.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the Early Years Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities; their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observations, which are passed on.

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation activities is to raise the overall quality of teaching and levels of pupil attainment. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator monitors planning, children's work and teaching on a regular basis. The Senior Management Team oversees the work of the co-ordinator and also carries out monitoring activities in line with the school's policy for monitoring.

The Foundation Stage is also monitored by the Governing Body through the work of the Curriculum and Achievement Committee.