



EARLY YEARS POLICY

Version: 6

Name and Designation of Policy Author(s)	J McCormick, EYFS Leader & Assistant Headteacher		Is this a Statutory Document
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Approved By (Committee / Group)	Curriculum		
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Links to Other Strategies, Policies, Procedures, etc	SEND Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Safeguarding Policy		

Version History

Date	Ver	Author Name and Designation	Summary of Main Changes
May 2015	1	Janet Hickman (EYFS Teacher) & Mandy Harris (Deputy Head Teacher)	Policy using new format (hence version 1)
Sept 2016	2	Jenny McCormick (Early Years Leader)	Changes made by new Early Years Leaders in line with advice from consultant to bring up to date with current practice.
Jan 2018	3	Jenny McCormick (Early Years Leader)	Updated with aims of EYFS. Minor changes to the use of photographs to include social media and keeping safe/health and safety, as well as changes since the implementation of 30 hours funding.
Jan 2019	4	Jenny McCormick (Early Years Leader)	Updates regarding Nursery provision, due to increased numbers.
Jan 2020	5	Jenny McCormick (Early Years Leader)	Updates regarding to developments in outdoor provision & new assessment tool Evidence Me.

Sept 2021	6	Jenny McCormick (Early Years Leader & Assistant Headteacher)	Updated with key information for new EYFS framework and Reception Baseline, statutory from September 2021.
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Monitoring Compliance with the Policy

Describe Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target	How will the KPI be Monitored?	Which Committee will Monitor this KPI?	Frequency of Review	Lead
The policy is available on the website for staff, parents and governors and is in date	100%	Check of the website once each term and reported annually	Curriculum Committee	Annually	Assistant Head
Record of EYFS staff training in health & safety/safeguarding are readily available in the school office	100%	Check of the records once each term and reported annually	Curriculum Committee	Annually	Assistant Head
All staff are up to date with training relevant to EYFS	100%	Continuing professional development plans and records reviewed and reported annually	Curriculum Committee	Annually	Assistant Head
Parent views on EYFS are collected systematically	Ongoing	Termly discussion with EYFS Governor	Curriculum Committee	Annually	Assistant Head
All staff engaged involved in EYFS provision have appropriate DBS clearance	100%	Check of the records once each term and reported annually	Curriculum Committee	Annually	Assistant Head

Mission Statement

Our school community is rooted in the Gospel and the vision of St. Catherine of Siena. This inspires each of us ***'To be who God wants us to be and so set the world on fire.'***

- We are called to love one another as we seek to be the best in all that we learn and do.
- We celebrate and nurture the gifts, talents and skills of everyone.
- We commit ourselves to grow together in faith, love and service.

Introduction

St. Catherine's School endeavours to create a Christian environment in which young people are encouraged to grow in faith and moral responsibility and to develop as whole persons striving to reach their potential through hard work and service to others in response to Gospel values. The Catholic Ethos and Values at St. Catherine's School require that all children and adults engaged with this community are safeguarded from emotional or physical harm of any kind. This duty of care is shared by all in the manner appropriate to their needs and level of responsibility.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling environments
4. Learning and development

In addition to part-time places, from September 2017 full time Nursery places have been available in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Full Time Nursery places: Monday to Friday 8.50am-2.50pm
- Part Time Nursery places:
 - NA: Monday 8:50am-2:50pm, Tuesday 8:50am-2:50pm and Wednesday 8:50am-11:50am
 - NB: Wednesday 11:50am-2:50pm, Thursday 8:50am-2:50pm and Friday 8:50am-2:50pm
- Two Reception Classes, up to 30 children in each, full time provision.

Full time places have been offered in Nursery as a result of entitlement to 30 free hours funding. Parents have the option to rank their preferred choice of provision for their child and are categorised according to the schools Admissions Policy. Alternatively, parents can purchase the additional 15 hours directly from school. The maximum capacity in each session is 39 children. If spaces are available for children to move to a full-time place from a part time place mid-way through the year, this will be offered to all parents and will begin at the start of the next term. If more parents apply than there are places, the school admissions policy will be used, to offer these places to children.

At times, the EYFS will have visiting students working in the setting alongside the staff. Other professionals and volunteers may also work within the setting throughout the year. All parties will have an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate.

All Nursery and Reception staff work together closely as part of an effective EYFS team. Children from all the classes have opportunities to work together during continuous provision, accessing shared learning environments. The EYFS staff work in harmony to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related activities to suit all of our children. Children are also taught within their own class groups in a variety of ways:

- In whole class groups, Key Person groups, small/ focus groups, pairs and individually.
- The team are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and education to all children in our setting.

Staff have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating young children. All staff are committed to continuing professional development and regularly attend up to date courses and in-house training sessions relevant to their needs.

The EYFS provides a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the younger child. Children are provided with a stimulating environment, including maximum opportunity for self-expression, using a variety of media and materials to extend

imagination and understanding. Through planned play and conversation young children learn about themselves and the world around them and are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and so develop personal, social and emotional skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff continually observe children in the learning environment and use these observations as a tool for careful planning and assessment, specific to each child's needs.

The EYFS staff aim to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. It is important that the children feel valued, safe and secure and have the confidence to become active learners. First hand, interactive experiences are key to this. Through play and discussion, children are encouraged to engage with others, to move about and explore a wide variety of learning situations. Direct teaching, through focus whole group times and smaller guided activities also allow children to develop and prosper. There is a balance between adult led and child led learning to allow for the best possible outcomes for all children. The learning environment is carefully planned to maximised the experiences and learning of all children, indoors and outdoors. It is important to everyone at St. Catherine's that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

Aims in the Early Years

At St. Catherine's we:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and giving them the support and challenge to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

In the Early Years, the education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers.

The EYFS Curriculum

At St. Catherine's Religious Education drives the whole curriculum. The Come and See framework gives children the opportunity to learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them as they develop their religious knowledge, skills and understanding. Religious education makes an active contribution to all the Early Years areas of learning outlined below. Prayer and worship is also an integral part of daily life in Early Years. At various times throughout the year children are given opportunities to participate in school productions and worship.

The Nursery and Reception use Development Matters as guidance to support and implement the requirements of the new statutory framework. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document is available on the school website.

The new Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas (known as the prime areas) are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive.

The Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development which are split into 17 aspects of learning that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- **Communication and Language:** Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, the Early Years team will build children's language effectively.
- **Physical Development:** Gross motor skills and Fine motor skills. Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood as children are supported to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Self-regulation, Managing self and Building Relationships. Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the

important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy:** Language comprehension, Word reading and Writing. It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
- **Mathematics:** Numbers and Numerical patterns. Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.
- **Understanding the World:** Past and present, People, culture and communities, The natural world. Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems fosters their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating with materials and Being imaginative and expressive. The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, as well as practitioner modelling and scaffolding to support learning.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with

these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. These characteristics are reported on in the end of Reception report as children leave the foundation stage and enter Key Stage 1.

The three characteristics of effective learning 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.

Outdoor Provision

In recent years, significant improvements have been made to the EYFS outdoor provision, including resurfacing, new climbing equipment, a mud kitchen, a stage and an outdoor shelter. Bikes and scooters have been purchased and new equipment and resources have been carefully chosen to extend and build upon learning opportunities in the provision. Literacy and Maths sheds have been developed to promote and encourage these aspects of learning in the outdoors. More recently, new bike track markings and signs have been implemented, to give this area of the outdoors a more purposeful learning opportunity.

Children have access to the outdoor provision throughout the day. They are encouraged to bring all weather clothing and wellingtons, coats, sunhats (as appropriate) so that they are protected against the elements ensuring there are no barriers to learning. The outdoor area is an extension of the classrooms and there are a diverse range of resources to extend and promote learning. In this area, the EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as opportunities to make their own choices and ensure the quality of teaching and learning is as high outdoors as indoors.

Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Planning objectives are taken from Development Matters. A two year topic cycle is in place and a new topic is introduced each half term. Topics also stem from the children's own interests. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning in literacy, maths and phonics, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure there is evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS a range of strategies are used which come together in their individual portfolio. These include:

- Knowledge of the child
- The child's view of his or her own learning
- Information from parents and carers, fed through baseline, regular updates and next steps
- Information from other relevant adults
- materials that illustrate the child's learning journey such as:
 - Photographs,
 - Significant observations of day to day interactions
 - Video tape/electronic recordings
 - Next Steps

Within the Early Years at St. Catherine's, the electronic system 'Evidence Me' by 2 Simple is used to collect evidence for each child's learning journey. Staff are able to make notes on the observations they have taken and link any relevantly achieved aspects of learning. Observations of children are then shared with parents instantly and parents have the opportunity to comment on the observations they receive.

For new children starting at St. Catherine's, a 'Baseline Assessment' is completed within the first six weeks of starting in Nursery and within the first six weeks of starting in Reception. Assessments are updated on a termly basis.

At the end of Reception, children are assessed against the Early Years Profile. Pupils are judged to be 'Emerging' or 'Expected' in each of the aspects of learning as the 'Exceeding' judgement has now been removed. However, there is still an emphasis on identifying and challenging more able children.

Assessment principles are underpinned by:

- Reliable and accurate assessment. This relies on the practitioner's knowledge of the child.
- Responsible pedagogy, enabling each child to demonstrate his/her learning and development fully.
- Embedded learning, identified by assessing what a child can do consistently and independently.
- A holistic view of a child's learning and development.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment consists of two reception classrooms, a Nursery classroom and a shared outdoor learning environment. Each classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas of learning, where children can be active, be creative, be quiet, etc.

Children have access to both the indoor and outdoor learning environments at various points throughout the day. Within each learning environment, children are encouraged to be selective in their choice of activity in their chosen area. Equipment and resources are located with easy access for children to learn and explore.

Intimate Care

Teachers and Teaching assistants employed in the EYFS are responsible for personal hygiene assistance. Details of this are contained within the Intimate Care Policy.

Use of Photographs and Videos

At the beginning of the year, parents and carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed or videoed during their time at school. These images are used in the classroom, as part of displays, on their child's electronic learning journey and on the school website or social media. The school E-Safety policy states that any images, videos or text will not be uploaded onto the internet through the school website or social media platforms without the permission of parents. Children who are 'looked after' or whose parents make this request, will not have their photograph put on the website or any public flyers.

Partnership

The involvement of parents in school is welcomed as this partnership is crucial. Parental involvement with school begins before children start Nursery or Reception with an invitation to visit school and meet their child's teacher and the EYFS team.

Parent consultation meetings are held in the autumn and summer terms, at which parents are invited to discuss their child's progress. A report is sent out during the spring term and parents are invited into school to discuss the report if they wish.

Parents are also invited to contribute to their child's online learning journey and next steps with relevant observations from home. They can do this by downloading the 'Evidence Me' by 2 Simple parent App. Once they have done this and registered, they can create observations, add evidence and photos. Observations will then be automatically uploaded to the school's account. Parents regularly upload photos and videos of their children, sharing their achievements at home and in extra curricular activities. Staff are able to comment on these observations too, meaning there are strong links between home and school.

Teachers or Teaching Assistants are available on a daily basis to talk with parents at the beginning and end of the day. However, it is important that if parents are concerned in any way about their child they should call in or telephone to make an appointment to discuss concerns with the class teacher or the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader in the first instance.

Parents are kept informed on a regular basis through newsletters, the website and social media.

Parents, carers and grandparents are also invited to attend 'craft' and 'come and play sessions' throughout the academic year, where they can interact with their child in their learning environment. Notice of these events is sent out via Parentmail and is contained within newsletters. Parents are also invited to various celebrations, worship and productions throughout the year.

Transition

Starting Nursery

The following procedures are in place to ensure an effective and smooth transition into Nursery.

- During the summer term, prior to children starting in Nursery, parents are invited to attend an information evening focusing on the Early Years curriculum, assessment opportunities, parental involvement and how they can support their child in getting ready for starting school. This is also an opportunity for parents to meet with their child's teacher and other staff who work in the Early Years and look around the learning environment.
- Home visits also form part of the transition process. This gives staff the opportunity to exchange information and get to know the child in their home environment, where they feel most comfortable.
- During the first few weeks of September, Nursery children have a phased entry into school. This starts with an initial stay and play session, with a small group of children. Parents are also invited to attend this session as it provides an opportunity to speak to and provide key information to the class teacher.
- The following week, children attend Nursery on a part time basis, i.e. half days, to help them settle and feel safe and secure in their new learning environment.
- On the third week, children attend Nursery on a full time basis.

Starting Reception

Transition into Reception starts during the summer term prior to children starting in September. The following procedures are in place to ensure an effective and smooth transition.

- Parents are invited to attend an information evening where they are told about the Early Years curriculum, assessment opportunities, parental involvement and how they can get their child ready for school. This is also an opportunity for parents to meet their child's teacher and look around the learning environment.
- Members of staff within the EYFS make visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.
- Feeder settings are also asked to complete a 'Setting to School' document, providing details of the children's current attainment, their characteristics of learning and general comments about the child.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting. Often these children will have been identified as requiring additional support. These children coming into Reception will also have a gradual part time entry that suits their needs.
- Children make a visit to their new Reception classrooms for a stay and play session.

- During the first week of the new term, children initially start on a part time basis for the first four days in order to settle in and get to know one another in small groups. On the fifth day, all Reception children will attend school together.

Moving into Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, assessments are completed for each child against the Early Learning Goals. Children are assessed as 'Emerging' (not yet reaching the expected standard for the end Reception) or 'Expected' (met the end of Reception expectation).

On transition, parents and carers, staff and teachers are provided with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against the expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. This includes information on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.

For children who haven't met their expected standard for the end of Reception, 'Diminishing the Difference' planning is shared by Reception teachers with Year 1 staff. Tracking documents in Reading, Writing and Maths are also completed to show children's attainment, learning priorities and additional provision they made need to support learning and development. Children also spend time in the Year 1 classroom and playground to prepare them for their move into Key Stage 1 in September.

Parents are also invited to attend an information evening where they are able to meet the Year 1 team.

Safeguarding

The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. The requirements detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) is followed in addition to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (2021)

The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and applies to the Early Years as well as Key Stage 1 and 2. It includes procedures and protocols relating all areas of safeguarding including E-Safety, handover of children, and the acceptable use of IT. This is available through the School Office and website.

Any concerns are reported to the Safeguarding Designated Person, the Headteacher Miss Chwastek and details will be recorded and reported as necessary. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance.

Equality and Diversity

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances.

Gifted, talented and able children and those with Special Educational Needs and disabilities are appropriately provided for and the curriculum adapted to suit all levels of ability. The school operates a full Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Nursery age onwards. A parent will be informed at an early stage if a child has a special need. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. Partnership with multi-agencies ensures the best possible provision and outcomes for each child. When necessary and appropriate their involvement will be required to support certain children. Parents and carers are always be informed if an outside agency is assisting to support their child. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy is available from the School Office and on the website.

Keeping Safe

It is important that all children are safe in school. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and help them to understand why they exist. Children are provided with choices to help them develop this important life skill. They are encouraged to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

All staff give high priority to health and safety and are fully aware of their responsibilities through the Health and Safety policy. There are designated people responsible for first aid at the school. All EYFS staff have paediatric first aid training which is regularly updated. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and to be aware of safety issues. Learning environment audits are carried out regularly and health and safety checks are carried out daily throughout the indoor and outdoor learning environment. Risk assessments are undertaken before after-school activities take place and before embarking on school outings. The Health and Safety policy is available via the School Office and on the website.

Adult ratios must be followed both in class and on educational visits.

Within Nursery there is a ratio of 1 adult to 13 children.

Within Reception there is a ratio of 1 adult to 15 children.

The Manchester guidelines for educational visits state that in Years 1 to 3 the ratio should be 1 teacher or adult for every 6 pupils. However, it also states that under fives may need higher ratios, for example a ratio of 1 to 2 is recommended for farm visits.

At St. Catherine's recommended ratios for an educational visit in Nursery and Reception should be 1 adult to every 4 pupils. Where there are additional risks identified the staff/pupil ratio may need to be higher, as agreed with the Headteacher.

Allergies

Parents and carers are asked to inform us of any foods to which their child is known to be allergic, or any foods or beverages that they do not wish their child to eat or drink. A list

of children with allergies and other medical needs is on display in both the Nursery and Reception areas as well as the Dining Hall, School Office and Outdoor Area.

Medical Needs

A detailed list of children with any medical issues including allergies is kept up-to-date. Inhalers are kept in a safe, easily accessible, designated First Aid Area within the classrooms. Epi-pens and other medication are kept within the First Aid container in the Nursery kitchen, out of the reach of children. All staff within the EYFS are made aware of the individual needs of each child. There is a rolling programme of First Aid Training in place for all EYFS staff and other training, for example, epi-pen training is provided regularly.

Snack Times

There is a snack area in both the Nursery and Reception classes which all children are actively encouraged to use. Snack time is seen as a social event, a time where children enjoy a drink of milk or water, piece of fruit or a light snack together. This time of the day is ideal for the development and enhancement of children's social skills and for encouragement of interaction and conversation with their peers and adults while sitting together. Children are also encouraged to take turns and to share.

Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle and can have access to this throughout the session as and when they want a drink. Water is always available within the learning environment.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all those working in EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader, along with senior staff, will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.