

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

We grow and learn as a family in the footsteps of Jesus

Date: June 2021

Review: June 2023

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Learning and Development	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. Planning	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Assessment.....	5
6. Home/School Links	6
7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures	7
8. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and SEND.....	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	8

I. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

- We adhere to The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage September 2021, and the four overarching principles that shape practice in Early Years settings. These are:
 - every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
 - children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
 - children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
 - importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

2. Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. 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.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The Specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Reception pupils also participate in daily phonics sessions following the Read, Write Inc programme.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. 'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and

preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.' Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. The EYFS staff understand that children's play reflects the children's own interests and experiences. The staff also understand that children learn best through play and in environments where the children can lead their learning and their play by following their own unique interests. The staff skillfully interact with the children to develop children's play by observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching, extending and developing play to help children learn skills, knowledge and language.

- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. 'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.' Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. "When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions." Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Outdoor Learning

Learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons. Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness.

The outdoor environment also offers more space than indoors and therefore is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement. For many children, this may be the only opportunity they have to play safely and freely while they learn to assess risk and develop the skills to manage new situations

All children at St Augustine's have the opportunity to explore the outdoor learning environment where they will have the same opportunities to access the curriculum as inside. Focused teaching occurs where children have opportunities to interact with members of staff - practitioners joining the child's play and skilfully using questioning to move children's learning forward.

Children are encouraged to find and use equipment and resources independently. These are organised to allow all children including those with disability and/or SEND to explore and learn in a secure and safe space for most of the day. Children are able to flow freely between indoor and outdoor areas whilst remaining in ratio following statutory guidance for the EYFS.

3. Planning

Planning in the EYFS aims to;

To provide a broad and balanced curriculum

- To plan according to the 7 areas of learning
- To have sound learning objectives using the EYFS
- To have thorough planning as a guide, while also being mindful of opportunities as they arise and 'planning in the moment.'

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics and maths sessions. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards National Curriculum standards.

Observations

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys in their online journal, Tapestry.

4. Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (2021). These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. The

teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting. Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

5. Home / School links

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early year's settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We develop this by:

- Outlining the Reception curriculum to parents during the new parents' meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- Home-School Communication – regular posts on Tapestry about the children's learning.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner in addition to the regular Parent's Consultations
- Sharing progress at school and encouraging parents to comment on their child's achievements.
- Inviting parents into class to share in their children's learning.
- Inviting parents to help in the Reception class or other classes in the school
- Encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading record
- Encouraging relevant learning tasks to be continued at home ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- Providing an annual written report to parents in July summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and giving an outline of their child's Characteristics of Effective Learning

6. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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 EYFS Statutory Guidance (2021)

- Children enjoy daily fruit/vegetables and are encouraged to drink water throughout the day
- Free school lunch is available to children
- Risk assessments are carried out when children go on a school visit in line with our Educational Visits Policy
- Transition is carefully planned for the children from Reception to Year 1
- Pre-school/nursery visits are conducted at the beginning of the Autumn Term in order for us to gather and exchange important information that will help children settle well into Reception.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At St Augustine's, we provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

INCLUSION and SEND

Children with additional educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio. The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

Useful documents linking to this policy include:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- EYFSP Handbook 2021
- EYFS ARA 2021
- Reception Class Long Term Planning
- Home School Agreement
- Induction Pack for new parents
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Governing body of St. Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy every 2 years and updated when necessary to reflect changes in statutory guidance.