

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE *in love*
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1. Vision Statement

At St. Augustine's, we believe that every child deserves the best start to their education. The early years of a child's life are crucial for their future development, laying the foundation for their academic and personal growth. Children learn at a rapid pace from birth to five years old, and the experiences they have during this time shape their future potential.

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that promotes the holistic development of each child. We focus on building their confidence, curiosity, and independence, preparing them to be successful learners in school and beyond.

2. Intent

At St. Augustine's, our goal is to create a nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating environment where every child develops a love for learning through curiosity and creativity. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is designed to foster independence, resilience, and critical thinking through meaningful, hands-on experiences. We focus on nurturing each child's uniqueness and celebrating diversity, preparing them for future learning by developing key skills in communication, literacy, numeracy, and understanding the world. We aim to inspire happy, confident, and independent learners by building on each child's unique knowledge, interests, and experiences, and by fostering essential skills in communication, problem-solving, and collaboration. Through positive relationships, enabling environments, and an inclusive approach, we ensure every child feels valued and supported in their journey of growth.

3. Implementation

Our EYFS curriculum is delivered through a thematic approach that integrates storytelling, songs, role-play, and hands-on exploration. Key areas such as communication and language, literacy, mathematics, and expressive arts are interwoven with topics like "All About Me," "Toys," and "Our Wonderful World."

Children engage in structured and exploratory play, enriched by special events, visits, and opportunities for parent involvement. Daily routines include phonics, outdoor learning, and cross-curricular activities, ensuring progression and skill development for all learners.

Our curriculum is implemented through a play-based learning environment, combined with focused whole class and small group teaching, to ensure children make swift progress and are well-prepared for Year 1. Children engage in planned, focused activities as well as self-initiated, free-flow activities, both indoors and outdoors. Adults facilitate high-quality communication opportunities and challenge children to extend their knowledge and develop their existing skills through the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

First-hand experiences and purposeful activities are planned across the curriculum, ensuring learning is relevant and that children have high levels of engagement. Learning is linked to the seven areas of learning and development within the Early Years Framework, which are split into three prime areas and four specific areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):** Opportunities for children to be active and interactive, develop coordination, control, and movement, and to understand the importance of physical activity, and make healthy choices.
- **Communication and Language (C&L):** Opportunities to experience a rich language environment, develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in various situations.
- **Physical Development (PD):** Helping children develop a positive sense of themselves and others, form positive relationships, develop respect for others, social skills, manage feelings, understand appropriate behaviour, and have confidence in their abilities.

As children progress in the prime areas, they naturally develop skills within the four specific areas:

- **Literacy:** Encouraging children to link sounds and letters, begin to read and write, and access a wide range of reading materials.
- **Mathematics:** Providing opportunities to develop skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and describing shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the World:** Guiding children to make sense of their physical world and community through exploration, observation, and discovery.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, and encouraging them to share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings through various activities.

Children learn to read using the Read Write Inc validated, systematic, synthetic phonic scheme, with daily lessons tailored to their phonic knowledge.

To support our wider curriculum, we provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to engage in their children's learning, share their work, and celebrate successes. We keep parents informed through our online learning platform Seesaw and meet regularly to ensure a positive EYFS journey, including home visits, drop-in sessions, curriculum evenings, Reading Cafes, reports, and parent consultations, as well as frequent informal communication to suit individual families.

4. Impact

The impact of our EYFS curriculum is evident in the happiness, confidence, and independence of our children, who are inspired and excited about their learning. We work diligently to ensure that children become confident and positive learners, eager to embrace new challenges.

Our goal is for children to achieve a good level of development and meet all the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, equipping them with the essential skills and knowledge for continued success in Year 1.

Key indicators of success include:

- Progress in early reading, writing, and numeracy.
- Observed resilience, problem-solving, and social skills.
- Positive engagement in play-based activities.
- Feedback from parents, pupil voice, observations, and monitoring data.
- Governor monitoring.

5. Learning and Development

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**

Collectively the team 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**

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 through 'having a go'. 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 independently create as well as alongside other children. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. The EYFS team understand that children's play reflects the children's own interests and experiences. We also understand that children learn best through play and in environments where the children can lead their learning and play by following their own unique interests. We skillfully interact with the children to

develop play by observing, modelling, facilitating, 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. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need independence and control over their learning. As children develop 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 thinking, make links between ideas, and develop strategies. When children have opportunities to play in different situations with a variety of resources, they make connections and come to a better understanding. Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. We support children's thinking and help them make connections by 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.

6. 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 provides children with contact with the natural world and unique experiences, such as direct interaction with the weather and seasons. Outdoor play supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, providing rich opportunities for developing imagination, inventiveness, and resourcefulness.

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

At St. Augustine's, all children have the opportunity to explore the outdoor learning environment, where they can access the curriculum just as they do indoors. Focused teaching occurs as children interact with our team, who join in their play and skillfully use questioning to advance their learning. Children are encouraged to find and use equipment and resources independently. Children can flow freely between indoor and outdoor areas while remaining within the required ratios as per statutory EYFS guidance.

7. 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 for individual children and groups of children. At the end of the final term in Reception, we send a summary of the 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 at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report in July that details of their child's progress.

8. Transition

At St Augustine's we understand the importance of getting transition right. To ensure a successful transition to the EYFS we provide:

- An information evening for parents prior to their children starting.
- Community open mornings.
- Drop-in visits all through the school year.

- Additional drop-in visits during the summer term to include staying for lunch.
- Nursery visits by school staff- to gather information from a child's previous key workers.
- Home visits.
- Additional transition sessions as appropriate for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

In addition, we also understand that moving on to Year 1 can be daunting for some children and therefore we:

- Invite the children to visit their new classroom throughout the Summer term. EYFS and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.
- Additional transition work will be arranged as appropriate for children with SEND.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years' 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 the summer term prior to children starting school. This helps to enable parents to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Home-School Communication – regular posts on Seesaw 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.
- 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.

9. 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 for children.
- Risk assessments are conducted 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.

10. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion, and SEND

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.

11. 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. Monitoring of the EYFS curriculum and its implementation will be conducted through regular observations, assessments, and feedback from staff, parents, and governors. The EYFS lead will oversee the monitoring process, ensuring that the curriculum is effectively delivered and that children are making good progress. Regular reports will be provided to the senior leadership team and the governing body to ensure continuous improvement and adherence to the EYFS framework.