



**The Federation of Sacred Heart RC  
and St Mary's RC School**

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Date: April 2017**

**Reviewed (date)**

**Signed (Chair of Governors)**

*“Every Child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to reach their full potential.”*

**(The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)**

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to all children from birth until the end of the Reception Year. In Sacred Heart School and St Mary’s RC Primary school, children may join our Nursery on a part time morning or afternoon basis or on a full-time basis. Children will usually join our Nursery shortly after their third birthday. Children will continue their Nursery education for between three and five terms.

Children join the Reception classes during the academic year that they will turn five. Entry is staggered during the first week of term so that children join the Reception classes in September. Applications to Reception classes is made separately to that of the Nursery, in accordance with Government policy and procedure; therefore our Reception classes are usually made up of children transferring from other Nurseries within the borough as well as from our own.

**15 Hours**

All part time nursery children are entitled to 15 hours of education per week. We ensure that all families are able to take up their entitlement by offering each part time child one day per week full time at Nursery. Parents may take up this opportunity either at the beginning of the academic year or when they feel their child is ready to spend a full day in school. All 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to 15 hours of funded term time childcare. Since September 2017, some working parents will be able to claim an additional 15 hours of funded childcare. Staff from each school support parents with applying for the additional funding providing they met the given criteria.

**The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:**

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments with strong partnerships.**
- **That children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

In line with our Mission Statement, we at Sacred Heart and St Mary’s RC Primary Schools aim to support children to learn and develop in an environment within which Christian values are central to and celebrated, and where each child is loved, appreciated and affirmed, recognising 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 different rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, rewards and celebration assemblies to promote a positive attitude towards learning.

### **A Unique Child - Inclusion in the Foundation Stage**

*'Providers have a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. Practitioners should focus on each child's individual learning, development and care needs by':*

- Removing or helping to overcome barriers for children where these already exist.
- Being alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary.
- Stretching and challenging all children.

We value the diversity of individuals and embrace differences. All children, families and staff are valued within the school. Partnership working underpins successful delivery of the EYFS in a number of different ways. At Sacred Heart and St Mary's, we ensure that:

- Where children have received education and care in more than one setting, practitioners ensure continuity and coherence by sharing relevant information with each other and with parents.
- Foundation Stage practitioners develop positive relationships and **strong partnerships** with parents to ensure early identification of children's learning needs and to ensure a quick response to any area of particular difficulty. We recognise that parents and families are central to a child's well being and practitioners should support this important relationship by sharing information and offering support for learning in the home.
- Practitioners work with professionals from other agencies, such as local and community health services, or where children are looked after by the local authority, to identify and meet needs and use their knowledge and advice to provide children's social care with the best learning opportunities and environments for all children.
- Practitioners will refer to 2 year Progress Check when provided and use the information to inform effective planning and support for the individual child.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning for activities which are differentiated to ensure all children are able to succeed. This includes support for EAL, SEN and extension for our more able children through opportunities from sustained shared thinking.
- The use of 'I can' statements on plans and within the environment ensures that all staff are aware of what we are hoping individual children will achieve.
- Recognition of individual learning styles is key and when planning learning experiences practitioners try to ensure all learning styles are incorporated – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic (VAK).
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Provide a range of opportunities to motivate and support children to help them learn effectively.
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Careful assessment and monitoring of children's progress, learning and development.

At Sacred Heart and St Mary's we strive to ensure all children feel safe and secure. We aim to educate children and help them to understand that there are behaviour expectations and why boundaries exist. We support children to develop strategies for managing their own and other's behaviour. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

***Please see EYFS behaviour code and welfare requirements policy.***

### **Positive Relationships**

At Sacred Heart and St Mary's, we recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and that when parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. We aim to:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere with approachable staff to create effective communication. We do this through our Nursery Welcome programme, Reception

welcome meeting and transition days. We also hold a FS BBQ in the Autumn term to welcome all parents and children to our Foundation Stage on an informal basis.

- We talk to all parents on an individual basis before their children start school in order to find out about our children and families and provide information on a 1:1 basis.
- We make ourselves available to talk to parents on an informal basis each day and are happy to arrange appointments for more in depth discussions.
- Twice a year we have a formal meeting time between parents and teachers/key persons to discuss children's learning and development, share children's profiles and identify next steps.
- At the end of the academic year we provide parents with a written report about their child's learning, development, interests, achievements and targets.
- We work with parents to obtain information about their child's learning and development within the context of the home. Parent's observations are valued and feed directly into the assessment process.
- We provide 'drop in' sessions for parents where they can observe practitioners teaching phonics and maths and provide materials to enable parents to support their children at home.

At Sacred Heart and St Mary's, all staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. All children are allocated a key person and parents are made aware of whom their child's key person is.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Sacred Heart and St Mary's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting children's development and extending their knowledge and understanding. This begins with careful observation, evaluation and assessment of children to identify individual children's learning and development, interests and their next steps for learning. This in turn will inform planning for an effective and relevant curriculum.

In the Foundation Stage a range of assessments are gathered by all practitioners to provide as complete a picture as possible. These include:

- Anecdotal observations
- Incidental observations
- Timed observations
- Work samples
- Photographs
- Videos and voice recordings
- Discussions amongst members of the FS team.
- Discussion with parents and carers and observations made by parents.

Assessment information is gathered by all members of the team and this is stored within the child's individual learning profile or at Sacred Heart School, within their 'best book' which they take home as a memento of their time in the EYFS at the end of the Reception year.

Baseline information is collected at the end of the child's first half term in school and learning and development is then tracked throughout the Foundation Stage to ensure continuity and progress and to identify any areas of development that may require further support.

All information gathered whilst a child is in the Foundation Stage is used to inform judgements made on the EYFS Profile which are made throughout the Reception Year and completed by the end of the Reception Year. EYFSP results are submitted to the local authority in July and individual children's progress is shared with parents via a written report. **Our long term plan is taken from the The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Setting the Standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five, DfE, 2012 and EYFSP.** Medium term plans, (MTPs) are based around a theme, usually beginning with Ourselves in September. Once children have settled into the Nursery or Reception subsequent MTPs are based around children's learning and development needs and interests. Frameworks from weekly plans are taken from the MTP; however we aim to be flexible, reviewing planning on a daily basis and adapting where necessary to meet the needs of the children.

We recognise all children as having individual learning needs and styles and work to provide an environment which is stimulating and motivating and we want children to feel safe, secure and happy to explore and learn. Equal emphasis is given to both indoor and outdoor learning and we plan weekly learning opportunities covering all learning areas for both our indoor and outdoor classrooms. **There are areas where the children can**

**be active or be quiet;** the classrooms are organised into learning areas and children are encouraged to explore independently using all of their senses and to access equipment and materials for themselves.

### **Learning and Development**

At Sacred Heart and St Mary's we recognise that all children are individuals, developing in different ways and at different rates. We recognise that active learners need to have some independence and control over their learning to keep their interest and develop their creativity. Children are encouraged to make decisions about their learning and are introduced to the concept of self-assessment. Strategies for self-assessment are extended as children progress through the Foundation Stage and children are encouraged to identify what they enjoy and/or are doing well at, what they would like to learn next and what they may need to do in order to achieve their goals.

Children use a thumbs up/thumbs down approach to self assessment in the nursery progressing to the use of traffic light smiley faces in the Reception class - green for I can..., Orange for I need a bit of help/practice, Red for I found it tricky. Other children will continue using traffic light self assessment throughout the Reception year moving onto 2 stars and a wish in Year 1. The class teacher will decide when a child is ready to progress in their self-assessment.

#### *Creativity and Critical Thinking*

**Adults will reflect in their practice the different ways that children learn:**

- ***Playing and Exploring***
- ***Active Learning***
- ***Creating and Thinking Critically.***

*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.' (EYFS, 2008)*

We recognise that children have to experience play physically and emotionally and aim to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between child-led and teacher-led activities. They need time to explore, with others or on their own and to be able to build ideas, concepts and skills and to make connections in their learning and lives. Children need time to rehearse and practise their skills; they need to be given time to

sustain and extend their learning and be supported to develop their ideas through opportunities for sustained shared thinking with other children and practitioners.

**The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development. These are divided into three prime areas:**

- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Personal and Social Development**

**and four specific areas:**

- **Personal and Social Development**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. At the end of the Foundation Stage (the educational year in which the child turns five) children's learning and development will be assessed against the early learning goals, defined as either, emerging, expecting or exceeding the ELGs. Parents will be provided with a written report highlighting their child's achievements at the end of the summer term.

Monitoring of the principles and practise of the Early Years Foundation Stage is carried out by SLT, the FS manager, and Literacy/Numeracy Coordinators. Monitoring will take the form of lesson observations, reviewing of planning, assessment procedures and individual children's profiles, discussion with practitioners, child conferencing, observation of the environment including accessibility and displays, pupil progress meetings, performance management and analysis of data.

***I have read and understand The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy***

Signed: ..... (FS Manager)

Date: .....

(FS teacher/nursery nurse, teaching assistant, lunchtime meals supervisor/volunteer helper) Please delete those which do not apply.

Signed: .....

Date:.....