

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School



Early Years Policy

Mission Statement

"At St Bernadette's Catholic School you will find us caring, hardworking and cooperative. We follow the ways of Jesus using our talents and gifts to make our school special. We show respect to all and welcome you."

Aims

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, we will:

- 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.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child 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.

The early-years education we offer our children seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.' (DFE, 2014)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these principles.

A Unique Child

At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, stickers, prizes, positive reinforcement, good role models as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude and love of learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St. Bernadette's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- regular, detailed reporting to parents about their child's progress and feedback from parents about their child's development;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

In line with guidance from the EYFS and in line with the SEND Code of Practice we will strive to:

- Be alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and respond quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary;
- Stretch and challenge all children;
- Encourage children to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children;

- Maintain records suitable for sharing with colleagues in an inter-agency team while acting as a point of contact for a child and their family;

Where staff feel that a child is not progressing in line with his/her peers they will speak to parents in the first instance to seek their opinion and to discuss how the child can best be helped. Where children are identified as needing extra support within the setting this involves the SENco, the parents/carer's and the child's key person working together to write a plan to identify how the child will be given extra support. We liaise very closely with the outside agencies, including Health Visitors, the School Nurse, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Educational Welfare Officers, Social Workers, Foster Carer's, Paediatricians, Dieticians, GP's and anyone else we feel will be able to support and help the child and their parents or carer's.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is defined as:-

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. St Bernadette's Catholic School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils/students. We believe that:
 - All children/young people have the right to be protected from harm;
 - Children/young people need to be safe and to feel safe in school;
 - Children/young people need support that matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse;
 - All children/young people have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs;
 - All children/young people must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other;
 - All children/young people have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, and social needs as well as their educational needs – a happy, healthy, sociable child/young person will achieve better educationally;
 - Schools can and do contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk taking behaviours; and
 - All staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children and protecting them from abuse.

St Bernadette's School will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:-

- The most recent version of Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE)
- The most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE)
- The Procedures of Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board
- The Education Act 2002 s175 / s157

- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Departmental Advice (DfE 2014)

(Please see whole school Safeguarding Policy)

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. (See whole School Safeguarding Policy and EYFS risk assessment)

'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.' (DfE, 2014)

At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children;
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children;

Good Health – All children are provided with a snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

Intimate Care – "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child (See Intimate Care policy and Safe Changing of Soiled Children Policy for more detail).

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

The use of mobile phones in classrooms or public places around school is prohibited when children are on the premises. Staff should not use their mobile phone during the hours of directed time. Taking photographs of children using a personal mobile phone/device is not permitted under any circumstances. Photographs of children should only be taken

using equipment owned by the school. This equipment should not be removed from the school premises unless being taken on class trips or visits. Photographs should be uploaded to the school's server and not saved on personal or home computers (See whole school ICT acceptable use policy for more detail).

Positive Relationships

At St. Bernadette's School 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 have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Transition Day', through visits to school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are two formal meeting for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Stay and Play sessions, behaviour assemblies, Nativity play, Maths Open Week, Sports Day etc;
- operating an open door policy for parents with concerns or queries;
- Providing parents with 'Proud Clouds' so they can comment on their children's achievements at home. 'Proud Clouds' are where significant events that happen at home can be recorded, they are available in each cloakroom and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff.

Key Person

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. Throughout our Early Years, all children are allocated a 'Key Person' within the first six weeks of starting school. The key person is assigned to each child based upon the relationships that develop between them.

'Each child must be assigned a key person. Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.' (DFE, 2014)

Enabling Environments

At St. Bernadette's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the school's Curriculum Map which is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of both formal and informal observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's Learning Journey (Tapestry). They also contain information provided by parents and other settings. At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, we use 'Classroom Monitor' to track the progress of pupils through the 'Early Years Outcomes' attainment bands. This information feeds into the formal reporting of attainment at the end of the Reception year through the EYFS Profile. Within the final term of reception, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals. The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels, exceeding them or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 ELC. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. We also send a summary of these assessments to the Local Authority for analysis.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Nursery and Reception have their own enclosed outdoor space. In Nursery, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. Reception have a smaller outdoor area so often have more physical play during break and lunch time, they have two P.E. sessions a week and occasional extra sessions on the Nursery playground. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access the outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. In the outdoor environment we provide children with a wide variety of adult led and child initiated activities and opportunities for the children to work independently and collaboratively both on large and small scales. We value the outdoor environment as an integral learning area for all children with unrestricted access. The outdoor area is used in all weather helping children to develop their skills and knowledge of the world around them. The area promotes creativity, investigation, problem solving, enables them to build and practice skills, develop communication, collaboration, active learning and enjoyment. (Please see EYFS risk assessment).

Learning and Development

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. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

- **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.

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Knowledge of the world**
- **Expressive arts and design**

We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in the children's play, extending it where possible. Throughout the year, the children in Reception will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

At St. Bernadette's we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

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.

- **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.

The School Community

The routines in the Foundation Stage are clearly set out giving children clear guidelines and expectations. They are still very flexible and change to meet the needs of the children. The Reception classes are more involved in whole school activities attending a weekly act of worship, becoming involved in more formal teaching of Phonics through the RWInc programme and Mathematics, as the year progresses. These more formal teaching sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc. St. Bernadette’s is a Catholic school with well-established links to the local church of Holy Family. We attend a termly service at the church and the church is also used as a resource when children learn about the locality in which we live. At St. Bernadette’s we embrace the Catholic ethos but also ensure our children learn about the wide variety of cultures and beliefs of all the faiths within our diverse society at an appropriate level for Foundation Stage children. The Governing Body take an active role in all aspects of School life and the governors liaise with the Foundation Stage Team to ensure that they are fully up to date and kept informed of the changes and developments that affect Early Years.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child’s new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag
- Explain the arrangements for the induction in to Reception

New class sessions – The children are given an opportunity to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend an afternoon in their new class and children from our school Nursery will spend a day in Reception. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) – Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a day in their new class during the summer term.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Team to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and Foundation Stage Manager in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and Middle Leaders will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

E.Finnegan

EYFS Co-ordinator

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Department for Education, 2014. *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. London: Department for Education.