

St Nicolas' Church of England Voluntary Aided  
Combined School



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### ***St Nicolas' Church of England Vision***

**Jesus said 'I am the vine and you are the branches'.**

Our school is rooted in the Christian Faith. Nourished by God, we want to grow together drawing on His strength to live out our Christian values so that we can reach out to others in our community. We are all unique but together with God we want to be the best that we can be. As we learn together in a supportive and nurturing school, we will thrive and be ready to face the challenges of life.

#### **Members of staff responsible:**

**HeadTeacher:** Mrs Clare Wagstaff

**Date of policy: Autumn 2020**

**Review : Autumn 2022**

#### **Aims**

To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can

- establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

#### **The Curriculum**

- The Reception class follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage(EYFS) document.
- The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three 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 and support children's learning in all other areas. These areas of learning are known as the Prime areas. At first, the focus is very much on developing children's skills in the Prime areas before moving onto the specific areas.

**The prime areas are:**

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding, Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling, Self-Care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour,
- Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The Specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

**The Specific areas are:**

- Literacy – Reading, Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers, Shape, Space and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and Communities, The World, Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and Using Media and Materials, Being Imaginative

Another important part of the EYFS curriculum is the **Characteristics of Effective Learning.**

The Reception teacher plans activities 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.

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.

**Teaching**

- The Teacher ensures that there is a balance of Adult-led and Child-initiated activities across the day.
- When the children are choosing their own activities, 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 value, model, facilitate, demonstrate, question and extend what the child is doing.
- Learning through play is an important part of the EYFS.
- We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Teachers use children's interests as a starting point from which to provide stimulating, active experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world.

- Children will have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They will be able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives pupils the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children will learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.
- Learning experiences are carefully planned for every day to enable teachers to develop children's specific skills and knowledge in each area of the curriculum.
- In Reception the learning experiences should incorporate all seven areas of the curriculum, and include a daily structured Phonics session and Maths session.
- The EYFS curriculum should be enriched through a wide range of visitors, experiences and trips, such as meeting farm animals, drama workshops, parents sharing their cultural and religious celebrations, visit from police/firefighters/doctors, local walks, regular cooking activities, off site trips to enhance a particular topic.

### **Classroom organisation**

- The Early Years classrooms should have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure the children can access them easily. Reception is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms should have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, sand and water area, malleable play area, music area and outdoor area.

### **Planning**

- Staff should plan short thematic topics designed to inspire, fire the imagination and enthuse the children.
- Topics should be derived from children's interests with the staff team working closely together to ensure planned activities closely meet the children's needs. Planning will include Adult directed activities and enhancements to the continuous provision that the children can access during their Child-initiated activities. The children and staff should work together collaboratively to come up with creative ideas for how the continuous provision and role play area can be adapted for each topic.
- In Reception, Phonics lessons should be planned and taught in ability groups using RWI programme, to develop children's skills as rapidly as possible from their starting points on entry.
- Children's progress will be monitored closely throughout the EYFS, enabling the staff to respond quickly to any gaps in skills or understanding through Adult Directed lessons that focus on particular areas of weakness. Individual and group support will be provided to help children make rapid progress with key skills.

### **Assessment**

- On entry to Reception, a baseline assessment will be carried out on each child against the Development Matters age bands and recorded.
- Ongoing 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 document a child's learning and progress in the EYFS, teachers will collect samples of children's work, photos and observations, which form their Learning journal and create a detailed picture of the child. This will be entered into Tapestry. Each child has a folder where they can also put any special pieces of work into it.

- This learning, together with staff knowledge of each child, and with any parental involvement sent through on Tapestry, will enable each child to be assessed termly against the Development Matters age bands and assessments recorded. The progress being made by the cohort and individual children should be analysed at regular points in the year and any necessary implications for planning and teaching noted.
- At the end of the Reception year, class teachers must assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and report to the Local Authority on whether their development within each ELG is either 'Emerging', 'Expected' or 'Exceeding'. This information will be communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and shared with Year 1 teachers in handover meetings.

### **Partnership with parents and carers**

St Nicolas' believes that the involvement of parents and carers in a child's education is crucial and therefore staff should work very closely with parents and carers to ensure they are involved in their child's education. Staff offer an open-door policy where parents and carers are always welcome to discuss any queries or concerns.

A well-planned transition process is in place to support children joining the Reception class.

Reception children receive a personal 'meet the teacher' chat on Microsoft Teams, attend Stay and Play sessions with their parents and then attend a short unaccompanied visit before starting school. They are also visited in their nursery if necessary. Parents will be invited to an information evening and are welcome to pre-visits. All parents receive information packs before starting and the children receive a welcome letter.

After discussions with nursery and parents/carers, there may be occasions where a child is not meeting the prime areas criteria and is therefore not ready to start school full time (if they are still 4 years old). This can be discussed with the class teacher and the headteacher and a child may be more suited to coming on a part time basis at first.

Once the children are part of the school we offer many ways for parents to be involved in and support their child's learning. These include:

- Class page (updated weekly)
- Emails sent with curriculum news and information
- Contributions to Tapestry learning journals
- Home learning sheets
- Communication to the Reception team – via a communication book
- Phonics practice (see presentation and videos on class page)
- Weekly reading books
- Parents Evenings
- Newsletters
- Parents invited to share experiences with the class such as a new baby, cultural celebrations, their job role as a doctor/nurse/police officer
- Opportunities to help with cooking, reading stories, playing board games, library visits, local walks and school trips
- Stay and Play sessions