

# **St. Nicholas CE First School**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### **Introduction**

At St. Nicholas CE First School we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to reach their full potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences from birth to age 5 have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure and happy childhood is important in its own right. A strong parent partnership will provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. (EYFS 2012)

As children commence their journey here at St. Nicholas CE First School, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment. We recognise that every child is unique and our aim is nurture individual strengths and abilities so that children become independent learners who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We are completely aware that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and we provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum whereby the opportunities made available match the needs of our young learners.

Here at St. Nicholas CE First School our Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 52 place nursery and two classes of thirty Reception children. Children can start full time education in the final year of the Foundation Stage, which is their Reception year. This is the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the curriculum used before National Curriculum, preparing and equipping children with the necessary skills and confidence for later schooling.

### **Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development and all areas are important and interconnected. 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. These three, the prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

Through the teaching of the specific areas, the prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities which respond to each child's emerging needs and interests.

Play is a vital part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and

build on ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Through play children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own, communicating with others as they investigate and solve problems. Children can express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. In our setting adults have an active part in play by modelling roles and activities, and by intervening at key moments to develop and extend learning.

In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and this is reflected in our practice.

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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- **Quality and consistency** – so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A Secure Foundation** – through high quality learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child children are assessed and reviewed regularly in preparation for next steps learning.
- **Working in Partnership** – Making effective relationships between practitioners and parents/carers. At St. Nicholas CE First 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.
- **Equality of Opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice** – ensuring that every child is included and supported.

We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and kept healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through "teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

### **Assessment**

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities to support learning and development. (Statutory Framework 2012)

The children in EYFS are ready, able and eager to learn. They develop quickly in the early years and we as teachers and practitioners do all that we can to capture their progression through detailed observations. We analyse the observations through assessment and ensure

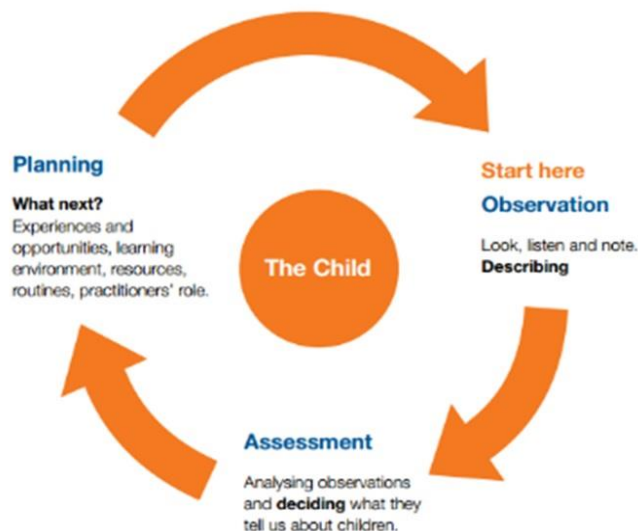
their progression through next steps planning. This observation and ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice.

The 'Development Matters' document helps us support children's learning and development as a guide to making 'best fit' judgements. Development Matters provides us with a benchmark from which we can begin our assessment. We are aware that children learn at their own rate and in different ways and that each child is an individual. The statements therefore, are non-statutory and are only used as a guide to determine the ages and stages of individuals.

High quality assessment is achieved through:

- Observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated and planned activities, and learning from and sharing with parents what the child can do at home.
- Considering the examples of development as stated in the unique theme; observing what children can actually do, and identifying the stage on their developmental pathway.
- Considering the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in the class.

The figure here summarises the assessment process in Early Years Foundation Stage.



In the final term of the year in which a reception child reaches age 5 it is statutory for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) to be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents, carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Each reception child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals in the seven areas of learning. Teaching staff will indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This information is shared with parents/carers and there is the opportunity to discuss this at parents evening.

## **SEND and Dyslexia Friendly Schools' Policy Statement**

At St. Nicholas First School, all pupils are valued equally. Teachers plan lessons which enable all pupils to participate, achieve and excel, whatever their level of ability. Lessons provide opportunities for pupils to recognise and develop their own learning style, (auditory, visual or kinaesthetic), through varied and flexible provision across a broad and balanced curriculum.

In order to meet the needs of all our pupils, we hold the Schools' Dyslexia Friendly, Level 1 Award and are actively working towards Dyslexia Friendly Schools' Full Status.

As a school, we believe that a Dyslexia Friendly environment and teaching styles will benefit the learning of all pupils and not just those with dyslexic tendencies. Strategies that are good for the dyslexic learner are good for everyone.

### **Inclusion/Special Educational Needs within the EYs**

All children and their families are valued at St. Nicholas CE First School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools SENCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEN.

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;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

### **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 transfer sessions;

- support children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with the children attending part time during the first two weeks. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the first half term of the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year 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 school year and are invited in informally to discuss the report and to look through children's learning journeys;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, school visits, enterprise days;
- providing parents an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision;
- written contact through home school diary as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring school to contact members of staff to arrange an appointment .
- ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistant are their key workers and by providing a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns.

### **Enabling Environments**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning folders.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

### **Learning and Development**

Teachers and teaching assistants provide the curriculum in the reception classes of up to a class size of 30 children in a two form entry school. We have a 52 place Nursery offering 26 morning places and 26 afternoon places.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas." The prime areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

- Literacy

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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. 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 prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the Inclusion manager in order to access Special Educational Needs support.

At St. Nicholas CE First School:

"Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

Planning and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At St. Nicholas CE First School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These 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; and
  - **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.
- (Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2012)

Religious Education is also taught in the reception classes in accordance with Staffordshire guidelines.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

### **Safeguarding and Welfare**

"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."

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 well-being of all children.

As the Safeguarding and Welfare of all our pupils is paramount we hold policies on the following:

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

- Suitable People
- Staff Qualifications
- Staff to Child Ratio
- Disclosure and Barring (DBS)
- Identity of Visitors

**Feelings and Behaviour Support**

**Child Not Collected**

**Missing Child**

**Child Records**

**Use of Mobile Phones, Cameras and Other Devices**

**Arrivals and Dismissal Policy**

**Behaviour and Discipline**

Refer to Appendix 1 for the full version of these Policies