



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy St Catherine's C of E Primary School

April 2022

St. Catherine's is a nurturing community where differences are celebrated, and caring, happy children flourish. Children embrace their learning and develop skills of wisdom and resilience, enabling them to live life in all its fullness.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

Reviewed and Revised by foundation stage team and SLT 16/4/22

St Catherine's C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2022

Introduction

At St Catherine's, we operate a single intake in September into our Nursery class and Reception classes. Both the Nursery and two Reception classes form the Foundation Stage Unit in our school which consists of three large classrooms and spacious outdoor areas. In addition to our morning Nursery class, we also offer provision for children to stay all day and attend our Nursery in the afternoon (This may be funded through the 30 hrs funding scheme or paid for). Wrap around care with breakfast and afterschool club is also offered to our Early Years children.

Aims:

In the Foundation Stage at St Catherine's School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, from a holistic approach. We provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential through a positive, caring and nurturing environment. At St Catherine's we embrace Christian values and ensure all children are ready for their next steps in their learning journey. At St Catherine's we aim to;

- Provide a broad, balanced, and enriched curriculum using both our indoors and outdoors learning environments. Our learning environments give children the opportunities to play and explore, be active, experiment and develop their creative and critical thinking skills. Children are encouraged to learn from mistakes, build resilience and foster a love for learning.
- Provide an atmosphere where each child feels safe, secure, happy and a valued member of our school community.
- Promote in each child a positive self image, and a belief in themselves as an individual and as a lifelong learner.
- Recognise that all children are unique, have different needs and learn and develop at different rates.
- Develop positive partnerships between staff and parents where the home learning environment is highly valued.
- Provide equality for all children to access all learning opportunities and develop independence.
- Provide opportunities to learn about the school community and wider community for each child to take their place in school and in society in a positive and active way.
- Develop personal moral values, respect and tolerance for others, their beliefs and thoughts.

Learning and Development

At St Catherine's school our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021. Learning and development is categorised into **three prime areas** of learning. These prime areas are essential for children's healthy development and future learning. These are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional development.

As children develop in the prime areas of learning these skills underpin their learning in the other **four specific areas**. These are:

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

Our Early Years curriculum is based around our professional knowledge of the children within our cohort and the Department for Education (DfE) Development Matters document. By the end of Reception some children may have achieved all or some of the Early Learning Goals (ELG's). Other children may be working towards some or all of the ELG's.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL). These CoEL are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout our Foundation Stage. Staff promote the development of these skills and continuously plan for opportunities for children to develop these skills independently both indoors and outdoors.

The CoEL are:

- Playing and Exploring (Engagement) – children finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to have a go.
- Active Learning (Motivation) – children being involved and concentrating, keep trying, enjoying what they have set out to do.
- Creating and Thinking Critically (Thinking) – children have their own ideas, make links between different experiences, and develop strategies for working with their ideas.

Observations, Assessment and Planning

When children start Reception, they take part in the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). As stated by the Standards and Testing Agency (2020), 'The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of early mathematics and literacy, communication and language. It is delivered in English and is administered within the first six weeks of a pupil starting reception. The assessment has two components, each consisting of practical tasks using physical resources. There is an online scoring system for the practitioner to use as the pupil engages with the task. The RBA will be used to create school-level progress measures for primary schools which will show the progress pupils make from Reception until the end of key stage 2.'

At St Catherine's the Foundation Stage staff make regular observations of each child. These observations are then used to support assessments and identify each child's next steps in learning. We use 'Tapestry' electronic learning journals to evidence some elements of each child's learning and development. These could include observations, photographs, videos and annotations. Each child is set up a Tapestry account when joining St Catherine's, which parents/carers have access to and are encouraged to use to share their child's learning and development outside of school. Children's next steps are documented and reviewed on Tapestry and are also displayed within the classroom.

The assessment of children's progress and attainment is ongoing throughout their time in Foundation Stage. The Statutory Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child at the end of the Reception year and is submitted to Hertfordshire County Council. Observations, practitioner knowledge and these ongoing assessments are used to inform planning. Staff in Foundation Stage meet regularly to carefully plan engaging, challenging and stimulating learning activities, which enables each child to develop their skills in all 7 areas of learning. Activities are carefully planned to suit each child's unique needs and follow their interests. Throughout the day the children in our Foundation Stage take part in a variety of adult-led activities and have opportunities for Child Initiated Learning (CIL) where they can select where they would like to learn and the resources that they would like to use. Challenges are set up within the Foundation Stage unit to engage, motivate, extend, and challenge children's independent learning and development.

Key Person

As stated in the revised Early Years Framework (2021), each child must have a Key Person. At St Catherine's every child is given a Key Person within their first few weeks of starting Nursery or Reception. A Key Person is an important person in a child's life whilst in Foundation Stage. A child's Key Person will help to settle them into school and build a positive relationship with both the family and the child. A Key Person is able to identify gaps in learning and development, and along with the class teacher, plan to meet children's individual needs. A Key Person will also update parents about their child's progress and development during parent consultations.

Parents as Partners

At St Catherine's we believe that parents are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure that parents are involved in the learning that takes place at school. We encourage and welcome parent partnerships through newsletters, parent's workshops, 'Marvellous Mondays' and other events that take place throughout the year. Parents are kept informed about their child's learning via Tapestry and through parent/teacher consultations during the Autumn and Summer term. Parents also receive a mid-year written report about their child's learning and development.

Smooth Transitions

Once a place has been accepted at St Catherine's nursery/school we can start the transition process to make the transitions from home to nursery/school as smooth as possible. To help us ensure smooth transition for all pupils at St Catherine's we: offer a parent's information evening; liaise with current settings that children may attend; visit many pupils coming onto nursery/school in their current settings; gather information from parents about their child's interests, needs, likes and dislikes; offer a play session prior to pupils starting school; complete home visits (if parents opt for one) and provide a free taster lunch for new nursery and reception children.

All staff in the Foundation Stage adhere to the whole school policies which can be found on the website.