

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our Vision is in our Church of England Federation we take strength in collaboration, yet celebrate uniqueness. As schools, we may be small, but together we develop children ready to make a mark on the world. We welcome the child yet embrace the whole family. We celebrate our rural environment yet aspire to look beyond our boundaries. We strive for knowledge and gratefully accept opportunities that come our way. We all take pride in our Federation as we follow in Jesus's example.

Introduction

Early Years Education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives, and is taught through a means of making connections, learning through play and adult interaction.

Aims

We believe that if our youngest pupils should feel safe and nurtured and are supported and encouraged in their learning (as Jesus cared for his lambs and carried them upon his shoulder) then they will be enabled to “Be the best they can be” as they grow and flourish in our school communities.

This policy aims to ensure:

- that children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life

Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands. Psalm 119:66

- quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. Galatians 3:26

- close partnership working between practitioners and with parents/carers

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

- every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

For God shows no partiality. Romans 2:11

Structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. In the case of the Federation’s schools EYFS involves the Reception year.

In the Federation the EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

A Unique Child - 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/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude and love of learning. We value the diversity of individuals within our schools and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children are treated fairly

regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our schools.

Positive Relationships - 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. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating their child(ren).

Enabling Environments - the EYFS environment 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. The Foundation Stage has its own enclosed outdoor area. 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 outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

Learning and Development - 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.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are three **Characteristics of Effective Learning** –

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active learning – children concentrate and keep 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.

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) areas of learning and development have been updated and were published by the government in 2021.

These areas of learning are used when observing, assessing and planning for a child's individual needs.

There are seven areas of learning, which have sub sections to focus learning. The seven areas are also split into two areas, **Prime Areas** and **Specific Areas**.

EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Personal, social and emotional development
Self- regulation
Managing self
Building relationships
- Physical Development
Gross motor skills
Fine motor skills
- Communication and Language
Listening, attention and understanding
Speaking

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy
Comprehension
Word reading
Writing
- Mathematics
Number
Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world
Past and present
People, Culture and communities
The natural world
- Expressive arts and design
Creating with materials
Being imaginative and expressive

Planning and Teaching

Throughout the EYFS we plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum and lifelong learning. Children will take part in both adult led and independent learning within the classroom, outside areas and within our school community. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning. Members of staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively.

Planning comes from a long-term plan and feeds down into termly plans and weekly planning. It is acknowledged that weekly plans may well change as members of staff adjust to meet the needs and interests of the class. The children themselves will help with planning each term and the interests of the children will be used to help with this planning.

There is a strong focus on phonics, early reading and writing and members of staff work hard to plan for exciting and challenging opportunities to reflect this focus.

Each child is viewed as an individual, with specific needs being met in appropriate ways, according to their stage of development. Individuality is encouraged, independence is fostered and each child is encouraged to be the best they can be.

As children develop through Reception, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year One.

Assessment

At our Federation schools, EYFS staff are continuously observing and assessing the reception children. Staff use assessment guides such as Development Matters and Birth to 5 to support discussions, assessments and next steps. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Members of staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents/carers. Members of staff will collate a Learning Journals for each child recording significant learning evidence against the seventeen Early Learning Goals.

During the Reception Year, parents/carers will meet formally twice for Parent Consultation Meetings. At the end of the EYFS, members of staff complete the EYFS profile for each child.

Pupils are assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Working towards

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents/carers.

Working with Parents/Carers

Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with staff and become involved in their education. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The Parent Consultation Meetings and EYFS profile helps to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Parents/carers are invited into their child's school three times a year to Class Planning Meetings where the Class Teacher will discuss forthcoming learning.

Parents/carers are very welcome to come in and help in their school (subject to DBS clearance) and take part in a weekly parent/pupil reading session.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to their child’s Learning Journal through the use of “wow slips” which are available from the class teacher.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) and networking

All EYFS staff attend relevant training course, related to curriculum developments. Class teachers across the Federation attend regular Early Years Hub meetings.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

Curriculum Area Leaders

Within Early years we are passionate about developing other teachers and middle leader’s knowledge of the EYFS curriculum. It is expected that teachers spend time within EYFS and review our provision as part of their subject leadership, sharing ideas and effective early years practice. Like the parable of the wise man building his house upon the rock, EYFS is the ‘rock’ on which children develop subject specific learning as they move through their time at our schools.

Review

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every three years. The policy review will be undertaken by the Federation’s Headteachers and the Governing Body’s Policies Working Party.

Appendix One

List of Statutory Policies and Procedures for the EYFS. This checklist lists the Policies and Procedures that the Federation must have according the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Statutory Policy or Procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Federation’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
Procedure for responding to illness	See Federation’s Health and Safety Policy and Federation’s Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Federation’s Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Federation’s Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Federation’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Federation's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Federation's Complaints Policy and Procedure