



ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Horseshoe Lane West, Meroo, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2SX

☎: 01483 888388 Fax: 01483 888385

🌐: www.st-thomas.surrey.sch.uk

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Person responsible:	EYFS Leader
Date adopted:	February 2005
Date of this review:	Summer 2015
Date of next review:	Summer 2016

Mission Statement

God's love is at the heart of our Catholic School Community. We show this in our respect, kindness and love for others and by treating other people as we wish to be treated ourselves. We will encourage everyone in our school family to do the best they can.

This document is a statement of the rationale, principles, aims and strategies for the teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage at St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School.

Rationale

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards that all children should learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The EYFS seeks to provide:

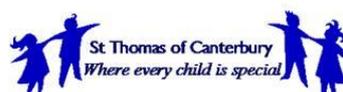
- **quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;**
- **a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;**
- **partnership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

'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', 2014

Themes & Principles

There are four principles that help to ensure all children in the EYFS learn and develop well. These are:

- unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments and
- recognition that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates



A Unique Child recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be confident, capable and self-assured.

Positive Relationships describes how children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments explains that the environment supports and extends children's development and learning.

Effective teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built on these four themes. These themes are broken down into commitments describing how the principles can be put into practice.

This principled approach ensures that the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the aims of improving outcomes and that every child has the right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being.

Aims

At St. Thomas of Canterbury the overall aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five "**Every Child Matters**" outcomes.

We aim to:

- provide an exciting, safe, challenging and caring environment for learning;
- establish the right conditions/motivation for children to ensure they become lifelong learners;
- provide opportunities for children to learn through adult-led, adult set up and child-initiated play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment;
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress;
- work in partnership with parents/guardians.

Organisation, Planning and Resourcing

The organisation of the EYFS ensures the delivery of the aims and is based on the 4 principles:

A UNIQUE CHILD recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be confident, capable and self-assured.

All practitioners cultivate in the children self-belief and a growth mindset. Children learn about being a successful learner and are openly expected to become active partners in their own learning. The essential key skills for learning and life are taught through the Skill Bug.

Learning is carefully managed to ensure equality of opportunity and to guide children to accessing all areas of the EYFS curriculum. This is nurtured through:

Planning effectively to meet the needs of children

Liaison with pre-school settings and parents

Quality assessment procedures

Differentiation in planning

Consideration given to the interests of the children

Adult intervention

Every child has a fundamental right to equality of opportunity, irrespective of religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background, gender, social group or disability. Co-operation exists between Inclusion Manager, **Home School Link Worker** and EAL service.

“Early Years Practitioners, the School’s Inclusion Manager and **Home School Link Worker** should focus on each child’s learning, development and care needs by:

- removing or helping to overcome barriers for children where these already exist;
- being alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary;
- stretching and challenging all children.

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2012

For further information see the Inclusion Manager, Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented Policies.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Planning is crucial to optimising learning and needs to be a careful and organised process.

Effective curriculum planning needs clearly understood aims and objectives and values and must relate directly to The Early Years Foundation Stage framework. All staff are familiar with this document. Regular weekly team meetings ensure planning and practice is consistent.

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for 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 that is guided by adults.

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2014

At St. Thomas of Canterbury we feel it is important that we respond to each child’s needs and interests through warm, positive interaction.

Areas of Learning and Development

The level of progress children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals set out below.

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2014

PRIME AREAS

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

• **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

• **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2014

Around these prime areas that are CENTRAL to children’s learning are 4 SPECIFIC areas of learning. These are:

SPECIFIC AREAS

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

• **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

• **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

• **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

• **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role- play, and design and technology.

‘Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others.’

‘Statutory Framework in the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2014

There are three characteristics of effective learning and development. These are:

‘Planning and exploring are the ways in which children engage with their learning – through finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to have a go.’

‘Active learning is what motivates children – being involved and concentrating, keeping trying and enjoying achieving what they set out to do.’

‘Creating and thinking critically – children need lots of opportunities to think, have their own ideas, make links and choose ways to do things.’

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2014

Just as some children will still be progressing towards the early learning goals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, some children will achieve and progress beyond them during this stage. The achievement of children beyond the early learning goals can be described using the level descriptions of the National Curriculum.

There are three stages of planning curriculum delivery:

Long Term Planning- link to planning guidance and reflect practice- long term defines, the connectors, time allocation, skills, experiences, challenge, celebration

The long term planning offers opportunities for each of the seven areas of learning and development from the EYFS. The topics cover areas that are familiar, as well as opportunities for new experiences, of interest to the children and also enable us to deliver a balanced and creative curriculum.

Medium Term Planning- defines opportunities for learning across the seven areas of learning and ensures skill delivery, breadth and balance across the seven areas of learning.

Short Term Planning

Reflects weekly over view of learning

From September 2014 the EYFS team have been using a new planning format that reflects the BIG 5.

The first big 5 is the learning context that links to the learning journey and has a stimulus to engage learning. This could be a trip, visit, expert, video, drama etc.

The second big 5 is the engagement that links to a sharp and clear learning objective and the characteristics of effective learning.

The third big 5 is the lesson introduction (groupings, learning partner, group work, individual), teaching strategies (modeling, demonstration, questioning, discussion and explanation) and the lesson challenges and key questions/ vocabulary.

The fourth big 5 is independent learning. Quality First provision is planned for so all children can be supported to achieve planned outcomes. Different learning styles and the role of the adult are planned for.

The final big 5 is feedback and progress. Children and the adult are involved in generating or agreeing what will make their work successful and how they will evaluate their work against the success criteria. Key questions for assessment opportunity during the lesson are written down to develop learning further.

When planning, practitioners follow and use the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage'. The short term planning allows for child initiated or spontaneous play and planned play (indoors and outdoors). *It defines the adult's role as developing children's learning.*

Assessment

Assessment plays a very important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an everyday part of the learning and development process.

'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', 2014

The Reception Baseline is being introduced to help assess each school's effectiveness by providing a score for each pupil against the knowledge and understanding for children at the start of reception. This score will be used as the basis for an accountability measure of the relative progress of a cohort of pupils through primary school.

The Reception Baseline will be linked to the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage and to the key stage 1 national curriculum in English and Maths.

At St. Thomas of Canterbury School we will be using the reception baseline assessment from September 2015. Shortly, we will be choosing 1 out of the 5 reception baselines that best fits with our school's needs and approach to assessment.

From September 2016 we will only be able to use our reception baseline to key stage 2 results to measure progress.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is on-going and is an integral part of the learning and development process. All staff assist with making observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. These observations and assessments are used to identify each child's present learning and plan the next steps in their development.

At St. Thomas of Canterbury we use O - Track to assess each child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. O- Track is **completed at intervals** throughout the year, though

entries can be made at any time. This data is used for pupil progress meetings and evaluation of intervention programmes.

All practitioners are involved in the moderation process. The results are analysed and are then used to identify strategies to support and extend children onto the next stage of their learning and development.

A summative assessment will be made in the final term of Reception, against the Early Learning Goals. Foundation Stage teachers will show whether a child is *meeting **expected levels of development**, or if they are exceeding **expected levels**, or not yet reaching expected levels (**'emerging'**)*. **This information together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning** will be shared in a written report with parents and Yr1 teachers.

Assessment procedures are in line with the school policy (see Assessment policy). Curriculum co-ordinators make specific reference to Reception. Children and parents are involved in the assessment procedure through target setting. *Parents need to be aware of this assessment procedure during the Induction Programme*. Individual portfolios and targets are used within the classroom to motivate children and boost self-esteem.

It is important that children are given the opportunity to take ownership of their learning. They are encouraged to do this by talking about what makes a good learner. These ideas will be displayed and used in the classroom.

The use of the Success Criteria is hugely influential in the development of each child's learning and is introduced during the Induction Stage and is built upon throughout the year. In line with the T&L policy, stickers and stamps are used for rewarding children. Each week Reception Staff pick a "Star of the Week". The Headteacher presents a child with a sticker for good work, an act of kindness or exemplary behaviour.

The school assessment policy outlines procedures for reporting to parents, assessment tasks, the transfer of information to the children's next teacher and procedures for record keeping.

Induction to Reception and Transition to KS1

Induction

A smooth and well-organised induction programme to Reception is essential.

- The school brochure is sent out to parents with the application form. Parents have the opportunity for an initial visit to look around the school with the Headteacher and a chance to ask questions.
- Two induction packs are distributed.

Induction Pack 1

This is distributed in the Spring Term. It contains a school newsletter and a welcome letter to St. Thomas of Canterbury School outlining informal invitations to family events, such as the May Fayre and Sports Day. Parents are informed of the date and time of the New Parents Meeting. This meeting provides an opportunity for parents, the Reception team, other staff, governors and members of the P.T.A. to meet. There is an opportunity to ask questions both formally and informally over refreshments. The induction programme is carefully explained. Activities and work samples are available to see for each area of learning in the Reception classes. The early learning goals are also displayed. The induction pack also contains a pre-school information form. Parents and nurseries/playgroups are asked to fill in this form in consultation with each other. They are asked to return the pre-school information form before their child's story time session in the Summer Term. This form is invaluable in helping to identify any SEN. It is also a useful document in helping to plan visits to feeder organisations.

Induction Pack 2

This is distributed at the New Parents Meeting. It contains class lists, details of the induction programme and an invitation to an Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Evening. It also requires parents/guardians to provide personal and medical details for their child. The pack contains a "Unique Child" booklet – for parents/guardians to complete with their child and return at their child's story time session in the Summer Term. New parents can find information on the window situated outside the Reception classrooms.

The Induction Programme consists of:

- A play/story time session with the EYFS team in the Summer Term;
- Informal invitations to Sports Day, a school concert and a family picnic;
- Half-day session every day during the Induction Programme.

Settling In

A child's first year in school is an important one. A great deal of thought is given to the induction programme. We aim to make the child's first experience of school an enjoyable one.

- During the first term Reception children are gradually introduced to assembly building up to a maximum of three weekly assemblies;
- The Headteacher leads a birthday assembly for Reception children giving both the Headteacher and the children a valuable opportunity to get to know one another;
- Outdoor learning is available throughout the day. Children are gradually introduced to school playtime;
- At lunchtime the Reception children enter the dining room at 11.45 am, before the KS1 children. This gives them an opportunity to settle. The children have a supervised playtime after lunch, initially this is in the reception outdoor area. Year 6 children volunteer to act as monitors to give added support;

- At St. Thomas of Canterbury we take E- Safety very seriously. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children learn about staying safe on the Internet by having a 'stay safe' assembly and doing some E- Safety activities in class. Parents are invited to come to an E- Safety presentation where they and their child are asked to sign a cyber user contract. This takes place at the same time as the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum evening which is held in September.

Transition to Key Stage 1

Transition to Year 1 is carefully managed. Early Years Foundation Stage teachers and Year 1 teachers interchange classes and liaise closely with each other to ensure a smooth transfer. A transition topic is introduced towards the end of the Foundation Stage which is continued in Year 1. Teachers meet to transfer information concerning children's attainment in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage. **Highly Able and Talented** children are included in the school's **Highly able and Talented** Register.

Children are gradually introduced to the English and Mathematics framework, children learn the basic skills for reading, writing, spelling and number whilst working and playing in small groups. As the year progresses more class focus sessions are evident.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

High quality learning experiences are crucial to a child's development.

At St. Thomas of Canterbury the environment of the EYFS plays a crucial role in supporting children's overall development. We aim to give an exciting, stimulating, safe and welcoming environment in which children feel happy and secure, and are challenged to move on with their learning. We also aim to make it an environment where children can explore, investigate, extend their ideas and learn through first hand experiences. Children have the opportunity to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. There are defined areas of learning in each classroom that enable children to move to different interests within their learning.

We encourage the children to make their own selection of the resources on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Resources are easily accessible, clearly labeled and well-kept. Children are trained from the beginning to care for them and tidy up (see class code).

Safety is also a predominate consideration. Equal and safe access to play activities is very important. To regulate and control learning the following strategies are to be used:

- 1. Put up a certain number of smiley faces in each area of learning to indicate the number of children who can play in that area.*
- 2. A number sign to show how many children can play in that area at a given time.*
- 3. An enlarged indoor and outdoor code that can be clearly seen by children and adults.*

It is acknowledged that there must be opportunities for robust play. These must be carefully balanced to ensure safety and quality learning for children.

These considerations need to feed into the planning of learning experiences.

Children are given the opportunity to access all outdoor areas including both playgrounds and the school field.

The Safeguarding And Welfare Requirements

At St. Thomas of Canterbury all the Early Years team have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training is made available to enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in an appropriate way.

Health and Safety

- The guidance given in the DCSF Guidelines is adhered to at all times.
- The premises are inspected by the Health and Safety Committee, comprising the Headteacher and the Health & Safety representative of the Governing Body.
- Special consideration is given to the routines of toileting and hand washing.
- Procedures are in place to ensure sand and water trays are regularly kept clean and other equipment is washed as considered necessary.
- School fire regulations are carefully observed and the children are sensitively introduced to procedures.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

All practitioners are role models to the children in their care and the roles of all practitioners are carefully defined to ensure teamwork is optimised. Positive relationships are essential prerequisite for working with young children and must be upheld.

‘Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs (**in accordance with paragraph 1.10**), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.’

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’, 2014

Role of Teacher

- Ensure the implementation of the school mission statement
- To take responsibility for the children in order to provide effective teaching and learning for children
- Ensure the optimum development of learning
- Ensure the provision of a well-resourced, purposeful, structured and challenging indoor and outdoor environment;
- Risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environments are checked daily
- Uses their professional expertise to plan and deliver the learning experiences for the children ensuring an appropriate range of adult led, adult set up and child initiated learning
- Plan effectively to ensure pupils have the opportunity to meet their potential, notwithstanding differences of race and gender, and taking account of the needs of pupils who are: underachieving or very able.
- Plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs, in

collaboration with the INCLUSION MANAGER , making an appropriate contribution to the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of IEP's.

- To lead, manage and work collaboratively with TAs
- They clearly define to TAs their role and how to optimise learning for the children
- To lead the assessment of learning and ensure high quality AfL strategies are used
- Ensure a good standard of pupil behaviour in the classroom through establishing appropriate rules and high expectations of behaviour.
- Liaise effectively with pupils' parents/carers through informative oral and written reports on pupils' progress and achievements, discussing appropriate targets and encouraging them to support their children's learning, behaviour and progress.
- Take responsibility for own professional development, setting objectives for improvements, and take action to keep up-to-date with research on the EYFS and developments in pedagogy

Role of TA

- Ensure the implementation of the school mission statement
- To support the class teacher and follow the guidance given to develop children's learning effectively
- To act as an EYFS role model in actions, planning and relationships;
- To support the class teacher in constructing and maintaining a stimulating learning environment
- To assist with assessment of children's progress as outlined and guided by the class Teacher.
- Ensure a good standard of pupil behaviour in the classroom through establishing appropriate rules and high expectations of behaviour.
- Be guided by the class teacher in taking responsibility for own professional development, setting objectives for improvements, and take action to keep up-to-date with research on the EYFS and developments in pedagogy

CPD

Reception teachers and Teaching assistants attend courses to keep abreast of current trends with regard to early year's development.

Role of FS co-ordinator

- Establish clear expectations and constructive working relationships among staff involved EYFS, including through team working and mutual support; devolving responsibilities and delegating tasks, as appropriate, evaluating practice; and developing an acceptance of accountability.
- *Display clear leadership*
- *Pro-actively develop own professional expertise*
- *Responsibility for EYFS policy*
- *Ensure policy reflects current pedagogy and statutory guidance*
- *Ensure EYFS policy is implemented*
- *Ensure all practitioners have clarity over EYFS expectations*
- *Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in EYFS*
- *Analyse data and action plan to secure improvement in EYFS*

- *Being proactive in ensuring continuous improvement in EYFS*
- Ensure the Headteacher, senior managers and governors are well informed about EYFS, plans and priorities and the success in meeting objectives and targets.

Partnership Working

At St. Thomas of Canterbury we believe partnership with parents is of a high priority.

Close working between early years practitioners and parents is vital for the identification of children's learning needs.

There are many opportunities that are taken to keep parents informed of their child's learning and development.

We aim to:

- invite parents/guardians to meetings to share information about their children;
- share information through curriculum evenings, newsletters, the learning platform, a parent's noticeboard, class assemblies, prayer services, Christmas plays and displays;
- provide opportunities for parents/guardians to attend different social events including the Prayer Service, Christmas play, Christmas Fayre, Grandparents' Tea Party and the school May Fayre.
- invite parents/guardians to come into the classroom to help with an activity/share a talent or interest with the children;
- inviting parents to class assemblies and other whole school events.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is monitored with regard to national framework and DCSF publications. Monitoring takes place by analysing performance on entry from year to year. New targets are devised for improvement through reflection on present practice. O-Track and class tracking graphs are used to monitor and measure pupil progress throughout the year. **The EYFS leader monitors the teaching and learning through drop in visits, work scrutiny and planning.**

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum should form the starting point for all curriculum schemes of work and all staff should be knowledgeable about it.

At St. Thomas of Canterbury we support children's learning through planned play activities and through observation of child-initiated or adult-led play activities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by guiding them to different areas, modelling by example and playing alongside them to encourage involvement.

*This policy of St Thomas of Canterbury School upholds the school's ethos and Mission Statement. It must be read in conjunction with and implemented in accordance to the school's policies for Health & Safety Equal Opportunities, **Highly able and Talented Policy**, Inclusion and Safeguarding. Copies of these policies are available from the school website.*