

Early Years Foundation Stage Intent, Implementation and Impact Statement

The Early years Foundation Stage, EYFS, is the period of education from birth to 5 years. In our Foundation Stage we have a Foundation Stage One class for 26 pupils and, depending on numbers, we are able to offer up to 16 full time places.

We accommodate a maximum of 40 pupils in our Foundation Stage 2 unit, based over two classes. We work closely with feeder nurseries and pre-schools to provide a smooth transition in our school.

Intent:

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy, the curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning and experiences begun at home and, for some children, in pre-school settings. Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we welcome and celebrate differences within our school community. We believe that a child's first experience of school should be a memorable and a positive start to their learning journey. We use a topic approach to teach the EYFS curriculum which supports learning, widens vocabulary, consolidates and deepens knowledge and ensures children meet their next steps. A vocabulary rich environment that supports learning is carefully planned for and provided in both the indoor and outdoor classrooms. The support of parents / carers is actively encouraged and greatly valued and parents are invited at every available opportunity to share their child's learning. We work with parents in a true partnership to nurture independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points.

Our curriculum is progressive and purposeful and provides the children with the knowledge and skills to be ready for their transition and learning in key stage one and later, key stage two which will impact them positively in their later life. We are preparing children to be lifelong learners.

We prepare children to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of Foundation stage and ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting point. Throughout their time in our EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to the school community and are ready to transition into year One. They have secure foundations and are ready to continue their learning. They move forward as confident, independent learners who are able to communicate their ideas and thoughts to others.

Implementation:

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we follow the Early Years Statutory framework for teaching and learning of the EYFS curriculum. This ensures there is a broad, balanced progressive learning environment and curriculum. The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum:

Personal Social Education
Physical development
Communication and Language
Literacy
Maths
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design.

The curriculum is designed around a topic approach and is one that values, and considers children's interests. We encourage active learning to ensure that the children are engaged and motivated. Many of our children enter school at a low starting point with poor language skills. As a result of this, we maximise opportunities to widen their vocabulary through focus teaching and activities, storytelling sessions, poetry learning, weekly themes, intervention and working with friends and adults to promote talk. Due to the limited experiences some of our pupils have outside school, we organise various educational trips in order to provide them with new experiences. Foundation one plan a trip towards the end of the year and Foundation two have termly trips. Our educational visits include visiting the local library, accessing the local park and environment, an outing to the theatre or ice show and an end of year visit to a farm.

Oracy is a key focus for our school. We expect our environment to be vocabulary rich with children being introduced to new vocabulary and being encouraged to use this appropriately. Children are encouraged to interact with their peers informally through play. We have referred to Julie Fisher's book; 'Interacting or Interfering' to ensure quality interactions between the adult and child during adult led and child led activities with particular focus given to 'sustained shared thinking'.

In Foundation Stage 2 children are encouraged to discuss and share ideas with their 'talk partner' during formal learning times. Appropriate talk-based interventions are put in place for those children who require further support to develop their language skills, through the Language Enrichment Activity Programme (LEAP) delivered by a trained and experienced staff member.

In Foundation Stage 1, the focus is on the prime areas of learning. Children often enter with low levels of personal and social skills, language skills and physical skills including not being toilet trained. Therefore, emphasis is placed upon these areas. Children experience a wide range of activities to support their physical development including gross motor and fine motor skills; both indoors and outdoors. Children spend a large proportion of their time outside, using the outdoors as an extension of the indoor environment. Staff work closely with parents to support them to develop their children's self-care skills. Staff will support children to develop their social skills, encouraging them to share resources with their peers, to talk to one another and to learn to play together. Children will experience a blend of teacher led learning and child led activities. Children identified with lower language abilities will take part in a Pre-Language Enrichment Activity Programme (Pre-Leap).

In Foundation Stage 2, over the course of a week, all children will participate in one literacy, vocabulary and maths task directed by an adult.

There is often one other planned directed task which reflects the needs of the children in other curriculum areas. Practical, purposeful resources in continuous provision support play, the learning process and language development. Through continuous provision children are using, consolidating and challenging skills taught throughout the year on a daily basis and are given valuable time and opportunity to practice and cement new learning and skills. During the school day, children will have an opportunity to work independently, work collaboratively with their friends and with members of staff. Our outdoor areas are used to great effect and are carefully planned for – providing purposeful activities, all year round and in most weather conditions.

There is daily teacher led phonics, maths and hand writing sessions planned to meet the children's needs and to develop the next steps in their learning. Children's reading books reflect their phonic ability and the teaching of Little Wandles phonics scheme is embedded in the Foundation Stage. Language development is promoted through story telling sessions and poetry basket and there are at least 2 stories per session read to the children in F1 and 4 in F2. "Book talk" takes place for children to develop language either in a small group or on a one to one basis. Nursery rhymes and poetry basket are used to develop language and understanding.

Through observation and discussion, areas of need and next steps are identified for all children to ensure that at least good progress is made. There is also a range of stimulating and engaging activities which the children can access independently and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play. In planning and guiding children's activities we observe the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practise.

Staff in the EYFS make regular observations of the children's learning to ensure their next steps are met. We regularly assess where the children are, using 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to Five', as some children enter our school much lower developmentally, than their chronological age, in some areas, then ensure that our planning, adult interaction and learning environment; including continuous provision, support children to reach their next steps. We include interventions for groups or individuals if and when necessary.

We ensure activities support the Characteristics of Effective Learning to ensure learning takes place. 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;

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things. We celebrate learning and use the Characteristics of Effective Learning during Class Assemblies.

The role of the adult is key. Adults are organised to accommodate indoor and outdoor provision. They support learning through a mixture of direct teaching and supporting play through child-initiated activities. Through observation, direct teaching, quality interactions, questioning and modelling the adult will create an 'enabling' environment in which children can progress.

We carry out home visits to ensure that we collect as much information about the child as we can before they start school and to ensure the children's transition into school is happy. We keep parents/carers informed and we meet regularly through parents evening, stay and play sessions, curriculum meetings, home-school learning diary, wow moments and certificates. We know that working in partnership with parents impacts positively on the progress the children make. We acknowledge parents are children's first educators and know their children well.

EYFS staff play a pivotal role in supporting children's transition into Key Stage 1. We prepare children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring that the classroom environments are similar at the end of EYFS and the start of Year 1. We cater for the needs of individual children and all transitions will be tailored to meet the needs of the child.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured by assessment procedures which allow us to measure outcomes against all schools nationally, (EYFS PROFILE). We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is at least good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be in line with National Expectations. Evidence in children's learning support all areas of the EYFS curriculum. We measure the percentage of pupils achieving age related expectations at regular intervals throughout the academic year. At pupil progress meetings and through ongoing professional dialogue we discuss progress and achievement of all pupils and put targeted interventions in place if needed.

Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessment compares children attainment to age related expectations using month bands in Development Matters and phases in Birth to Five. This is tracked using Target Tracker to ensure that rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND, or disadvantaged children. Our assessment judgements have been moderated both within school and externally with colleagues from other schools. We also partake in local authority moderation which validates our school judgements. The impact of our curriculum will also be measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well rounded individuals who carry with them the knowledge, independence and communication skills which will make them lifelong learners and successful citizens. We endeavour for pupils to be Key Stage 1 ready and understand our school 'RESPECT' values by the time they leave EYFS.

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