



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years (Nursery and Reception classes) will provide an environment that is happy, warm, secure and stimulating. We aim to ensure that all children become confident, independent and enjoy exploring and learning. We aim to enable children to develop a strong sense of self, while also learning to play, negotiate and co-operate with others.

We believe...

- Parents are children's first and most important educators. Practitioners will aim to develop a partnership with all parents/carers that is based on mutual respect and shared responsibility.
- No child should feel excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, or religion, home language, family background, special educational need, disability gender or ability. Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- Children are active learners who are physically, emotionally and mentally involved in learning; for young children play is the natural and most important vehicle for active learning.
- The curriculum must be accessible for every child – in planning opportunities for children's learning and experience practitioners should ensure that the different areas of learning are interlinked, and that each area is given equal importance (broad and balanced curriculum).
- There are four essential aspects for the provision of an effective early years curriculum that provides for quality learning:
 - ✓ Observation
 - ✓ Record keeping
 - ✓ Evaluation
 - ✓ Planning
- Planning starts with observation – this is the key tool that enables appropriate and suitable planning that is challenging and appropriate for all children.
- Play is the way in which young children learn. Through play, in a secure environment, with effective adult support, children can:
 - ❖ Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
 - ❖ Enjoy learning, practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
 - ❖ Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
 - ❖ Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
 - ❖ Take risks and make mistakes
 - ❖ Think creatively and imaginatively
 - ❖ Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
 - ❖ Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS was introduced in September 2012 and updated in 2014. It is the statutory framework for all 0-5 providers in the UK.

The aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

St Dominic's Primary School Early Years staff have all accessed training on the EYFS and use the framework to underpin all aspects of the Nursery and Reception practice.

The EYFS is based around four principals:

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 and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and Development at Child's pace

The Early Years Foundation Stage Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and think independently and in partnerships. The unit is set up in learning areas where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently.

For more information on the EYFS see:

<https://www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage>

The EYFS Curriculum

At St Dominic's we aim to create a place where children can explore and meet new friends, be safe and adventurous. We value each child as unique individuals. We provide a wide and rich educational programme of learning. Research shows that young children learn best through play, with skilled adults to talk to, think with and learn from. We offer a rich and varied curriculum covering the 7 areas of learning both indoors and outdoors.

Areas of learning:

Prime areas of learning: These 3 areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

- Communication and Language (listening and attention, understanding and speaking)
- Physical development (movement and space, health and self-care awareness, using equipment and materials)
- Personal Social and Emotional Development (building relationships, attitudes, feelings, self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills, behaviour and self-control, self-care, community)

Specific areas of learning: Through them, the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

- Literacy (Learning sounds and letters in order to read and write)
- Mathematics (numbers, calculating, shape, space and measure)
- Understanding the World (investigating, exploring, designing, ICT, history, place, communities and culture)
- Expressive Arts and Design (responding to experiences, expressing and communicating ideas, exploring media and materials, creating music and dance, developing imagination and imaginative play)

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and 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.

Key Person

Every child attending St Dominic's is assigned a key person.

Important aspects of a key person relationship are:

- Developing secure trusting relationships with key children and their parents.
- Providing a secure base for your key children by supporting their interests and explorations away from you.
- Providing a secure base for your key children by being physically and emotionally available to them.

- Comforting distressed children by acknowledging their feelings, offering explanations and reassurances calmly and gently.
- Acknowledging and allowing children to express a range of feelings.
- Settling new key children into the setting.
- Whenever possible settling your key children as they arrive each day.
- Having regular opportunities to reflect on the emotional aspects of being a key person.
- Updating key children's profile files regularly.
- Setting up targets for key children and updating progress.
- Meeting parents termly to discuss child's progress and update targets.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We plan to ensure that children:

- ✓ Have access to an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum
- ✓ Are respected as individuals and have their learning needs met
- ✓ Have opportunities to function as autonomous independent learners
- ✓ Have relevant, meaningful experiences inside and outside
- ✓ Have opportunities to engage with practitioners who are aware of their developmental needs
- ✓ Are able to access all areas of the curriculum and provision (also see Equal Opportunities, above)

We keep records on children to:

- ✓ Find out about children's individual learning styles, interests and developmental levels.
- ✓ Share children's learning with their parents and enable parents to contribute to the assessment process
- ✓ Allow children to be involved in their own assessments
- ✓ Monitor progress and regularly review children's achievements to track and support progress
- ✓ Inform curriculum planning and enable staff to evaluate and adapt provision
- ✓ Provide a focus for communication with others including practitioners, parents, SMT, Ofsted Inspectors and Local Authority colleagues.

Records we keep include:

- ✓ Profile files for each child with dated photographs and samples of artwork and mark-making
- ✓ Relevant observations
- ✓ Parent/carers comments
- ✓ Records of meetings regarding the child (with parents and/or other professionals)
- ✓ Samples and observations from home/ other settings the child attends
- ✓ Summary reports of progress and next steps and targets.
- ✓ Settling in reviews and initial information provided by the parent/carers
- ✓ On entry assessments

Records are stored so that they are easily accessible to staff, children and parents in the child's classroom. All staff are sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

How the planning/assessment is completed

Nursery

The long-term plan in Nursery follows a cycle, which outlines the main themes/areas of interest/ Development Matters/ELGs. At the beginning of each new term, the Nursery teacher devises the medium-term plan (available to parents on the information board)

The Nursery team meets weekly to draw up the short-term plan, based on a mixture of adult-directed and child-initiated activities, the latter derived from observations made by practitioners during the preceding week.

Nursery staff record every child's progress in the Foundation Stage record of Achievement, which covers development matters and early Learning Goals. The record then is passed to Reception staff during the meeting at the end of the year as a part of transition plan.

Each Nursery practitioner is entitled to one hour per week to update their key children's records.

Reception

Before the start of each term the Reception Teacher completes the medium-term planner outlining the main themes/areas of interest/ Development matters/ELGs. This is related to the long-term plan which shows areas of learning over the year. This document is flexible enough to allow children's interests and developing knowledge to be planned for in the short term as the term progresses.

All staff in reception meet daily to evaluate the current provision and plan the subsequent activities. All the following weeks indoor and outdoor focus activities should be planned (by the Reception teachers). Continuous provision (ongoing activities) is planned for and amended in response to children's observed interests and abilities.

Reception Teachers are using Foundation Stage record of Achievement together with the Samples of work and discussions with the Nursery practitioners to inform their assessments on EYFS profile.

EYFS profile is the assessment that is updated termly and completed at the end of Reception year. EYFS profile is done electronically (EYF Profile) with the EYFS overview assessment sheet updated termly.

During the week the Reception teacher and EY practitioner will have time to update their key children's records.

Records are always available for parents and children to access. Parents are informed of the purpose of children profiles and encouraged and supported to contribute.

Staffing

The Early Years Foundation Stage at St Dominic's consists of a nursery unit and two Reception classes that are based in an open plan unit.

There is one qualified teacher and one Early Years Practitioner in the Nursery unit, and each Reception class has one teacher and one Early Years Practitioner.

We encourage all staff to undertake training. We aim to ensure that the EYFS staff work as an effective, motivated and dedicated team.

All staff undergo a termly CPD review of key targets with a member of the Leadership team.

In addition to this, staff attend weekly whole school training and weekly phase meetings to address local agendas relating to EYFS.

The EYFS Coordinator attends a weekly phase leader team meeting with the Senior Management Team and termly Foundation Stage Coordinators' Forums.

Outdoor Play

The opportunity to play outside, throughout the year, in all different kinds of weather is as important as playing inside and is a statutory part of the EYFS - it is every child's entitlement. Nearly everything that is provided inside can be provided outside and some of the best learning can only happen outside. For many children, the learning that happens outdoors is the most important.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We work in partnership with parents and carers to meet the needs of the children and families, both individually and as a group.

At St Dominic's Early Years, we aim to achieve this by:

- (Providing a relaxed, informal environment which is welcoming to all parents and carers and which encourages active participation).
- Giving all parents and carers the opportunity to contribute to and participate in their child's learning. Staff ensure that they talk and work with parents and carers and seek, where possible, the support of translators and interpreters to ensure that all parents whatever language they speak are given equal access to information and equal opportunities to share their knowledge of their child.
- Ensuring that arrangements for settling in are flexible enough to give time for children to become secure and for practitioners, parents and carers to discuss each child's experiences, interests, skills and needs.
- Encouraging parents to share information regarding the family background and culture and making sure this is reflected in the planning of activities and the Foundation Stage environment. The knowledge and expertise of parents and other family members are used to support the learning opportunities provided by the setting.
- Ensuring communication with parents and carers is effective and that parents and carers are kept fully informed about their children's education and care. Children's progress is reported to parents termly. Consultation sheets record discussion between school and parents and set agreed targets. Children's progress is reported and recorded at the end of the Summer term by way of an end of year report.
- Providing a variety of formal and informal opportunities for parents and carers to meet practitioners/key persons on a regular basis to discuss their child. Parents have access to records about their child's development and can see them at any time.

- Encourage and empower all parents to contribute to and participate in activities in the school. Parents are welcome to spend time at the beginning of the day settling their children and communicating with their key person in the Nursery. Parents are invited to offer skills which they can share with the children (e.g. storytelling, cooking, gardening, music, singing, art activities etc)

When children enter school, we ask parents to sign a home-school agreement which sets out the expectations of parents and the school in order for us to work in partnership during their child's time at St Dominic's.

Behaviour policy

The Early Years Behaviour Policy is part of the whole-school behaviour policy and the section specifically relating to Early Years reads as follows:

"The Stay on Green system is adapted for Early Years and builds upon good practice in this area. A visual chart is used to show some of the Stay on Green colours. The language of 'green' can be used with pupils and provides specific feedback for pupils as to what behaviour the school would like them to do more of, with the important focus being on positive feedback."

Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policy

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in Keeping Children safe in education Guidance (2016) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Computing and Online Safety, Food and Drink; Medical Needs, Educational Visits, Intimate Care, Pastoral care, Positive Handling, Uncollected Children and Vulnerable Children.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These class iPads are never taken home by school staff. Photographs of the children involved in daily activities and learning are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a Healthy School and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from the Government scheme. Reception

children are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and we plan cooking activities throughout the year to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

We take all accidents seriously and always log and phone home immediately if a child has a bump to their head. We have cold compresses stored in the Nursery and Reception fridges.

We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves) and have

stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed.

Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment. We follow whole school procedures for safeguarding and child protection (see separate policy).

Any child protection, safeguarding or other relevant concerns are discussed with the nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (Andrew Armstrong) and Deputy Safeguarding Lead within the school (Deirdre Finan).

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning.

At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

Before they start at St. Dominic's each child is invited to school to meet the head teacher, teachers and visit the classrooms in order make the transition to school as smooth as possible.

In the summer term before they start school, we offer taster sessions for the children and parents when we provide them with key information, school expectations and advise on how they can help their child.

At the beginning of the school year new Nursery and Reception children are given staggered entry dates to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. Reception children visit Year 1 settings to meet their Year 1 teachers and familiarise themselves with the new setting.

Written by: Nataliya Nayda, the EYFS Leader

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