

FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

SUBJECT STATEMENT

A child's first year at school is a foundation for the rest of his / her education. It is essential that parents know their children are safe and happy in a stimulating learning environment, which ensures that all children develop their full potential socially and academically.

In our Mission Statement we state that; 'The mission of St. Thomas More's School is to educate and inspire every child to fulfil their unique giftedness within a loving Catholic community'. We aim to keep this at the forefront of everything that we do.

As stated in our Learning and Teaching Policies, 'our Learning Policy enables the children to learn and develop concepts, attitudes, skills and knowledge, enabling them to reach the highest possible standards' and 'we believe that our Teaching Policy enables us to deliver a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum'.

AIMS

- to meet each child's needs
- to meet the needs of parents

At St Thomas More's, our intention is to provide equality of opportunity for all children.

OBJECTIVES - A

- to ensure that each child has a smooth transition into school
- to ensure that each child feels secure, confident and cared for
- to treat each child as an individual with unique needs
- to ensure a structured learning environment which enables each child to explore, play and talk
- to progress spiritually, socially and intellectually, physically, emotionally and creatively
- to ensure that learning experiences are practical, enjoyable and matched to the child's stage of development.

OBJECTIVES - B

- to ensure that parents have a feeling of trust and confidence in the school, knowing that their child is in safe, professional caring hands
- to ensure that parents feel welcome in the school and are given opportunities to ask questions
- to build a strong partnership between parents and teachers, reassuring parents that they are valued as their child's first educators, and that they have a vital role to play
- to ensure that communications are clear and parents are informed about school routines, events, curriculum and their child's progress.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION take place through:

- home visits prior to starting school
- regular meetings with parents
- on-going assessment through the Foundation Stage Profile

Approved Curriculum Committee: 12th May 2015

To be reviewed bi-annually

Next Review Date: Summer 2017

GUIDELINES TO THE FOUNDATION STAGE **St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School**

Aim:

To ensure that every child's first days at school are interesting, enjoyable, exciting and stress-free for children and parents and carers.

An important part of this process is giving every child the opportunity to get to know the surroundings and staff that they will be working with.

How does this happen?

When parents apply for a place, they will receive a brochure containing information about our school. Parents and their children will have had an opportunity to look around the school and see how we work.

Parents will be invited to attend two information evenings in the Summer Term. During these meetings, key members of staff will be introduced. The Early Years team will talk about how to prepare children for school, current classroom practice and the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Parents will be asked to complete a short form to disclose which pre-school their child attends so that school staff can visit them in their current setting. There will also be an opportunity to order and purchase school uniform.

Parents and children will be invited to attend a series of 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Summer Term. These are designed to help everyone to get to know one another and the setting.

Pre-school visits will take place at the end of the Summer Term.

Home visits will take place at the beginning of the Autumn term, during the school day.

The visits will be made by the class teacher and/or the early year's assistant. The purposes of the visits are;

- ♦ to get to know each child in the security of his/her own home/pre-school setting. To hear parents/key person views of their child's experiences and strengths
- ♦ to ask for personal details, e.g. the name he/she likes to be called by, correct pronunciation of names, information about physical and emotional development, main interests and strengths
- ♦ to share a school photograph album
- ♦ to discuss the school brochure and forthcoming events
- ♦ to share a book with your child all about them
- ♦ to discuss ways in which parents can help their child(ren) at home
- ♦ to discuss ways in which parents can become involved in school life, e.g. helping in the classroom, the school library, on school outings, joining the "Friends of St Thomas More's
- ♦ to discuss what will be expected of their children
- ♦ to meet their child's key person

By the time a child starts school she/he should:

- be able to use the toilet independently, and usually be dry during the day
- have some independence in dressing and feeding themselves
- be able to communicate their needs
- be able to cope with the demands of a school setting

This is the beginning of a strong learning partnership. We know that children will settle into school more effectively and make more progress if, parents, carers and practitioners work collaboratively.

In September the Friends of St. Thomas More's will have a coffee afternoon where you can meet one another and find out how they work.

1. Admission Arrangements for Class R Pupils

Statutory school age starts on the first day of the school term following the child's fifth birthday. This is full-time and compulsory.

However, it is strongly advised, that children start school before their fifth birthday with agreement between parents and the school.

Autumn Births: September 1st – December 31st

Spring Births: January 1st – March 31st

Summer Births: April 1st – August 31st

Induction arrangements for September 2013-2014

Week 1: w/c. Tuesday 3rd September 2013 – INSET and Home Visits

Week 2: w/c. Monday 9th September 2013 - Induction

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| Monday 9 th September 2013 | Autumn birthdays attend morning: | 8:45 – 12:00 |
| | Spring birthdays attend morning: | 8:45 – 12:00 |
| | Summer birthdays attend morning: | 8:45 – 12:00 |
| Tuesday 10 th September 2013 | Autumn birthdays attend morning and lunch: | 8:45 – 1:00 |
| | Spring birthdays attend morning: | 8:45 – 12:00 |
| | Summer birthdays attend morning: | 8:45 – 12:00 |
| Wednesday 11 th September 2013 | Autumn birthdays in full-time: | 8:45 – 3:15 |
| | Spring birthdays attend morning and lunch: | 8:45 – 1:00 |
| | Summer birthdays attend morning: | 8:45 – 12:00 |
| Thursday 12 th September 2013 | Autumn birthdays in full-time: | 8:45 – 3:15 |
| | Spring birthdays in full-time: | 8:45 – 3:15 |
| | Summer birthdays attend morning and lunch: | 8:45 – 1:00 |
| Friday 13 th September 2013 | Everyone is full-time unless there has been a need identified by home or school that requires an extended induction | 8:45-3:15 |

The arrangement for transition from part-time to full-time will vary according to the needs and previous experience of each child. This will be discussed between home and school.

Arrangements are flexible and we encourage parents to discuss personalised induction programmes with the head teacher. It is the head teacher's right to use his professional judgement, in consultation with the Reception class teachers, as to when a child should be admitted or make the transition from part-time to full-time attendance.

2. Classroom Practice

In the Reception year, which is the last year of the foundation stage, children are learning through play and first-hand experiences and activities.

Children will be working towards achieving the early learning goals and where appropriate some children will go beyond the early learning goals.

3. Parental involvement

Our policy is for parents and teachers to be partners in their child's education and parents are encouraged to become involved in the following ways.

- During the Autumn and Spring terms parents are invited to meet with their child's key person at 'Stay and Play' sessions to discuss their child's progress and achievements.
- Summer Term – At the end of term, parents are invited to meet with their child's class teacher and discuss the Foundation Stage Profile and end of year report. .
- Staff are readily available to talk to parents throughout the year and they have a regular after school 'surgery' once a week.
- Parents are invited to help in the classroom and work with the children.
- The school will hold regular 'Family Learning Workshops' to share teaching methods with parents
- The school will provide regular newsletters about what is going on in class.

**St Thomas More's Catholic School
Learning and Development Policy
Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Mission of St Thomas More's School is to educate and inspire every child to fulfil their unique giftedness within a loving Catholic community.

Rationale

We recognise that each child is a unique individual loved by God and strive to offer an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) where everyone feels happy, secure and valued. This enables everyone to thrive and grow, learn and develop and make the most of their abilities and talents.

Aim

To provide an excellent play and social setting within a loving catholic environment in the context of high quality learning opportunities.

To encourage children's learning and development through the Early Years Foundation Stage (DFE 2012) to enhance their understanding of the world around them and prepare them for school.

To work closely with families to share ideas and expectations of children's learning and development

To provide an environment of trust and mutual support.

Objective

This will be done by:

- Recognising that each child is unique and offering them opportunities to build confidence in themselves and in their ability to do things, and value their own achievements.
- Promoting positive secure relationships with staff, families and other children.
- Providing an enabling environment where each child is safe and able to learn.
- Supporting Children to progress in all six areas of development plus faith development.
- Building a positive approach to learning and finding out about the world and themselves.

EYFS Learning Years Development Goals and Commitments

A Unique Child

Child Development: Skilful communicator, competent learner.

Inclusive Practice: Equality and diversity, children's entitlements, early support.

Keeping Safe: Being safe and protected, discovering boundaries, making choices.

Health and Well-being: Growth and developing, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Positive Relationships

Respecting Each Other: Understanding feelings, friendship, professional relationships.

Parents as Partners: Respecting diversity, communication, learning together.

Supporting Learning: Positive interactions, listening to children, effective teaching.

Key Person: Secure attachment, shared care, independence.

Enabling Environments

Observation, Assessment and Planning: Starting with the child, planning, assessment.

Supporting Every Child: Children's needs, the learning journey, working together.

The Learning Environment: The emotional environment, the outdoor environment, the indoor environment.

The Wider Context: Transitions and continuity, multi-agency working, the community.

Learning and Development

Play and Exploration: Learning through experience, adult involvement, contexts for learning.

Active Learning: Mental and physical involvement, decision making, personalised learning.

Creativity and Physical Thinking: Making connections, transforming and understanding, sustained shared thinking.

Areas of Development and Learning.

We recognise that every child matters, and that each child is unique. Therefore, we recognise that every learning journey will be different as children will learn and develop at different paces.

To ensure that each child's learning and developmental needs are met, each child is assessed when they start and at regular intervals through discussions with families.

Staff will take a genuine interest in children encouraging their interests and endeavours.

Each child is assigned to a key worker and children's progress is monitored regularly through observation and recording.

Information is shared by staff and families so that together, children may be offered opportunities to learn and develop as individuals.

Positive Relationships

Children learn best when they have strong loving relationships with families and Early Years Foundation Stage staff. All staff will get to know children well and each child will have a key worker to work with more closely who will show particular interest and encourage a child's development

Staff all undertake training in early years development to support children to build confidence in themselves and to take manageable risks in play.

Parents and children will be involved in the planning to ensure that activities are appropriate for children's development and interests.

An atmosphere of mutual respect, friendliness and kindness will be nurtured in all relationships between families and staff.

Enabling Environment

Children are provided with plenty of space both inside and outside to set up activities and to encourage energetic play.

There is a wide selection of equipment and resources. Learning is structured to challenge and interest children enabling them to explore, play and talk in this way they progress spiritually, socially, intellectually, physically emotionally and creatively.

Equipment and resources are rotated regularly and they can be used in a variety of different ways. The space and all equipment is regularly risk assessed to ensure that the environment is safe.

Time, opportunities and resources are provided to encourage children of differing abilities and disabilities to learn and develop at their own pace.

Opportunities will be sought for visits and outings working with other agencies and schools to prepare for transition.

Learning and Development

Play and Exploration

Children learn best through play. Children will be offered opportunities to experience a wide variety of individual play, with other children and with adult involvement.

Active Learning

Children learn actively through physical and mental challenges. They will be offered opportunities to explore and investigate things that interest them, involving people, objects, ideas and events.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children's creativity and critical thinking develops with open ended activities and from opportunities to move equipment around both inside and outside to make new connections. Children will be encouraged to explore and try out new ideas sharing their thinking with other children and adults to improve their understanding.

Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all are interlinked and equally important. As a Catholic setting, we have added the area of Spiritual and Religious development. Children will access a variety of toys, games and activities each day that will give them a chance to practise the skills, knowledge and experience needed to learn and develop.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language;

- physical development;
 - personal, social and emotional development.

The prime areas are supported by five specific areas, which are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design
 - Spiritual and Religious Development

Monitoring and Evaluation

Records are continuously monitored and evaluated by Early years practitioners. Children's records are reviewed termly with parents.

Consultation with Parents

All parents are invited to two information evenings before their child starts school about the Early Years Foundation Stage. All parents will be given an information booklet.

Early Years Foundation Stage Areas of Learning and Development

Our programmes involve activities and experiences for children, as follows:-

- 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.
- 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, roleplay, and design and technology

Spiritual and Religious Development

- Children are encouraged to talk about themselves as being special and to appreciate and explore God's Creation. They are introduced to short prayers to thank God and ask for His help.

- They are introduced to Bible stories and special celebrations in the story of Jesus.
- Children are also introduced to ideas of other religious festivals and how other cultures express themselves spiritually.
- In reception children are taught religious education using “God Matters” programme of study. This programme of study encourages the children to engage, explore and express their ideas about God. There are 10 units of work which will be covered over the school year.