



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Early Years Policy

Our Mission

In Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, we strive to ensure a happy and secure community with Christ at our centre working and worshipping together.

Our mission is to send out confident and caring children ready to achieve their full potential.

What is the 'Early Years'?

The 'Early Years' refers to children in their first year at school (Reception) for children aged 4 to 5.

Aims of Sacred Heart's Early Years Provision:

1. To provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced learning environment; both inside and out which meets all the individual needs of 'young learners'.
2. To enable them to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning
3. To give each child opportunities to interact with other children and adults and to establish good relationships. The child needs to find in his/her key worker someone to love and respect, with firm and sensitive control who provides the security of an ordered way of life.
4. To encourage the development of self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of achievement. The needs of the child come first; they require recognition and the satisfaction of feeling accepted and approved of by all adults.
5. To provide opportunities for learning through direct experiences. These will encourage natural curiosity and allow for exploration and discovery.
6. To provide opportunities to practise and consolidate new ideas and experiences. Children need activities that are challenging and encourage them to think, reason, make choices and solve problems.

7. To develop perseverance and concentration and to establish patterns of learning for the future.
8. To nurture and foster an awareness of the needs and feelings of others. To develop a sense of responsibility and a caring attitude towards the environment and other living things.
9. To promote equal opportunities for all children irrespective of race, gender, ability or special educational needs.
10. To develop skills and understanding in communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, creativity, knowledge of the world and to encourage physical, personal, social and emotional attributes.
11. To develop links between home and school in order to work together to promote the child's development.
12. To maintain continuity and progression between the Early Years and school through common policies, practices and attitudes.

The EYFS Curriculum:

The curriculum is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS is a framework from the DCSF which became statutory on September 2008. It set the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. It replaced Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, Birth to Three Matters and National Standards for the Under 8's Daycare and Child Minding.

From September 2012 the reformed EYFS came into effect.

Key Changes to the learning and development requirements:

Areas of Learning and Development now consist of three prime areas and four specific areas.

The Prime Areas:

Communication and Language – Listening and Attention / Understanding / Speaking

Physical Development – Moving and Handling / Health and Self Care

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Self Confidence and Self Awareness/
Managing feelings and behaviour/ making relationships

The Specific Areas:

Literacy – Reading/Writing

Mathematics – Numbers/Shape Space and Measures

Understanding the World – People and Communities/ The World/ Technology

Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and Using Media and Materials/Being Imaginative

Early Learning Goals and Assessment: now 17 goals instead of 69. Judgements will now be made against the 17 goals rather than the 117 scale points. For each goal, practitioners will determine whether children are making expected levels, are exceeding them or are below (emerging).

English as an additional language: now a clearer focus on the reasonable steps providers must take, including the assessment of children's skills in English. Other skills will be assessed in the context of the child's own language.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being.

How children learn

We see play as the vehicle by which our children gain access to the curriculum.

'Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. Children must have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors.....

Play underpins all development and learning for young children.....through play they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally....Providing wellplanned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which practitioners support young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge.'

(Early Years Foundation Stage DCFS 2008)

Through carefully planned and structured play we aim to provide children with learning experiences in a way that is fun and exciting. Staff plan and resource the environment and intervene appropriately to support and extend children's learning and develop their language and communication. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity.

Through play children can:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences which help them make sense of the world;

- 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 co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings and take risks;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.'

The Characteristic's of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring Active Learning Creating and thinking critically Finding out and exploring What areas / activities are they drawn to? Do they prefer to work in a group / alone? Do they initiate activities themselves or join in an existing one with a group? Do they think aloud describing what they do? Being involved and concentrating Do the children keep focused on a self-initiated activity for a long period of time? Are they concentrating and involved in the activity without being distracted? Do they show care with what they're doing? Do they demonstrate concentration through silence or thinking aloud? Having their own ideas Do they try something different rather than follow what someone else has done? Do they address a problem with a strategy? Retaining independence – not asking for support even if it takes longer to achieve the outcome Using what they know in their play In play do they draw on experiences from home / outside school? Do they act out situations in the role play area? Are they confident in finding tools, materials and resources they need for a particular project or idea? Keeping on trying Do children show persistence – not giving up even if it means starting again? Do they ask for help / support if they need it? Do they discuss solutions for challenges with peers / adults or work things through themselves? Using what they already know to learn new things Do they understand patterns and predictability of events? Talks about / explains how their process links to a previous experience Do they draw upon knowledge or experiences not immediately related to their activity? Being willing to have a go Levels of persistence – do they give up at first hurdle or keep trying? Are they eager to try new ideas or do they stay with what they are familiar with? Are they able to talk about / review what they've done if things haven't worked? Do they work best with continual support or prefer to get on with activities themselves? Enjoying achieving what they set out to do Is there a sense of satisfaction and pride when they have completed an activity; do they want to show / tell people? Do they relish challenges and continually try to make things better? Do they evaluate themselves and try different things as a result? Are they 'intrinsically motivated' - achieving things for themselves as opposed to adult praise? Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways Are they confident in using a 'trial; and error' approach and talking about why some things

do / don't work Choosing different ways of approaching activities and adapting if it doesn't work

Outdoor Environment

Children should be allowed to enjoy themselves when outside. They should be given opportunities to use their senses and to access all areas of the EYFS Curriculum. Staff and parents are encouraged to value the benefits of outdoor play as it complements and enhances all aspects of a child's development and learning through its physical, open ended nature.

Aims

To create opportunities for children to be able to explore the outdoors, and to enhance learning in the outside environment.

Objectives

1. Enjoy outdoor activity during ALL seasons.
2. Experience natural resources.
3. Develop the skills of asking and answering questions about outdoor experiences.
4. Behave safely outdoors.
5. Develop respect for the environment.
6. Encourage multi-sensory exploration.

Implementation

1. Allow all children to access resources independently.
2. Provide stimulating resources which can be used outside.
3. Plan to address all key areas of learning outside.
4. Dress children appropriately.
5. Model a positive attitude towards being outside.
6. Ensure that the outdoor environment is safe.
7. Raise parental awareness of policies and practice.
8. Interact with the children when outside.

Organisation

The Reception class caters for up to 30 children on a full-time basis.

Morning session times: 8.50 – 11.50

Afternoon session times: 12.50 – 3.10

All children are brought into and collected from reception by a parent or other responsible, named adult. During each session there are opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. Children bring suitable outdoor clothing depending upon the weather. We have extra items available for any child who may need them. Snacks are available during each morning and afternoon session.

Staff

The Foundation Stage staff comprises:

Reception: One teacher, 2 Level 3 teaching assistants.

The Role of the Key Person

The key person is responsible for promoting effective and positive relationships for children in our EYFS. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

Each member of staff has a group of children for whom she is particularly responsible. When a child first starts in reception they help her/him to settle and to benefit from the activities provided. The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her key group, spending time with them as a group each day.

Parents as Partners

At Sacred Heart we feel it is essential that we recognise and value parents as the child's first teacher. We want them to be full partners in the education process of their child, so that we can develop with them a mutual understanding and respect. Continued dialogue and sharing of information and expertise support the child's learning throughout school.

We involve parents by:

- Holding parents' induction meetings for children starting reception .
- Encouraging parents to contribute towards their child's learning journey on a regular basis.
- Weekly newsletters are given to all parents to allow them to be up to date with their child's learning.

- An open door policy where parents can see staff easily to discuss their child. If children are unsettled on arrival we encourage parents to stay for as long as necessary until they feel happy that their child is settled.
- Inviting them to help in the classroom.
- Inviting them to attend assemblies and celebrations.
- Encouraging them to share in their child's education at home.
- Reading, collecting articles for displays etc.
- Online APP 'Seesaw' is used to keep parents updated on their child's learning.

Planning and Assessment

In order to plan effectively children's progress and future learning needs are assessed and recorded through frequent observation. Through observation staff will assess their attainment in the three prime areas and the four specific areas against the early learning goals.

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff are involved in daily observations and assessments throughout their time in the EYFS. They include a balance between child initiated takes and teacher led activities both in the inside and outside learning environment.

Transition into Year 1

- Reception practitioners plan for more independent activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Reception children meet year 1 teachers during worship and other whole school activities during the reception year.
- EYFS Profiles are passed on to year 1 teachers and discussed.
- Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July. • Year 1 classroom will reflect the features of reception, with the use of continuous provision.

Safeguarding

At Sacred Heart we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice

The designated person for child protection in school is Lucy Scanlon.