

Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Updated: September 2024

Agreed by Governors:

To be reviewed: September 2026 or before if needed

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”
[Statutory Framework for the EYFS – gov.uk]

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, children can join us from the September before they turn 5.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Augustine’s School we strive to ensure that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We have differentiated learning tasks, not only in the specific areas of the EYFS, but also in continuous provision to allow development for all in the core areas.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

‘Inclusion is sometimes taken to apply specifically and only to those children identified as having special educational needs, learning in mainstream settings. However, it has a much broader meaning and applies to the practices, attitudes and, above all, values that create early childhood communities in which everyone feels comfortable, that they ‘belong’ and can contribute.

Emphasis can vary from culture to culture, society to society, setting to setting and even practitioner to practitioner. ‘ [Prof. C Nutbrown - ‘Inclusion in Early Years Settings]

In the EYFS we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s interests, knowledge, experience and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs; including child-led play based on their own interests and adult-led activities.

- Providing a breadth of opportunities to motivate and support children and for adults to scaffold and support their learning effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Quality observations and interactions with the children: monitoring children's progress continually by all Early Years staff.
- Providing a 'Unit Carousel' for phonics, writing, and maths every morning – in order to ensure children are being taught these areas to enhance their current abilities.
- Putting interventions in place based on the needs of the children, overcoming barriers to learning.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist, not only related to the school behavioural policy, but also in connection to everyday life and using technology. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take appropriate risks. For example, it is common for children to fall over, but with appropriate risk comes the need to be taught how to recognise danger and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them." [Statutory Framework for the EYFS – gov.uk]

At St Augustine's School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the **Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage**. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Maintain high standards of hygiene and cleanliness will help prevent the spread of infections and illnesses in a setting.
- Have procedures for administering medication and supporting children with medical needs or who appear unwell during the day.
- Identify any allergies when children first registers, practitioners can prevent contact with allergenic substances.
- Promote hygiene and healthy eating, ensuring fresh drinking water is accessible at all times and meeting first aid requirements.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At St Augustine's School we recognise that children learn to be resilient and independent through building secure relationships. We adopt a Key Person system to aid Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

"The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he/she will thrive. Relationships are the agents of change" [Dr Bruce Perry].

The staff show unconditional positive regard to all the children and develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

EYFS TAs

The class teacher and EYFS TAs (one full days, one mornings only, one afternoons only) meet regularly (minimum of once a week) to discuss the children's individual development and any areas of concern. All staff are aware of the children's needs, areas of strengths, and next steps (which are displayed prominently in the classroom), so we can work in continuous provision to strive to deliver the best progression opportunities for each child. The class split into three smaller groups at the end of each day for their 'Story Groups' each is led by an individual staff member and allows for time to reflect on the day, so children can express themselves in a smaller group.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their ongoing/future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Holding 'meet the teacher' events in the Summer 2 term prior to the children starting school.
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- The teacher visits the children in their home setting prior to their starting school (month of August, or July if SENDCo or Family Support Liaison is needed to be present also – so children will remember the teacher and hopefully settle quicker into school life).
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Induction mornings' in the Summer Term, where the class teacher will also explain the school structure and learning journey that their children will be on, including expectations for early reading and writing and phonics development and how they can help their child.
- Individual baseline information including 'I can do' and 'I am working on' statements are sent to parents no later than the end of the third week of starting school.
- Individual childrens' phonics assessment data is sent to each parent at the end of Autumn 1, so they are aware of how their child is progressing and areas for development.
- Every home time as parents collect their child from outside they have the opportunity to chat to the teacher and /or TAs about things in general or specific concerns as all are present.

- Half termly ' EYFS Learning Topics' in all areas is put onto the school website and the parents are reminded of the link to see this via dojo.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term.
- Inviting parents into school for Celebration assembly, once a month. Also parents are invited to other events such as, special assemblies, Masses and Sports Days etc

Enabling Environments

At St Augustine's School we aim to use the environment to support and extend the children's development. This includes providing a stimulating classroom that the children have helped to create, reflecting the children's interests, learning and development.

We provide opportunities to develop all areas of learning both inside and outside in equal measure.

We have a stimulating outdoor environment in which both planned and child-led activities and challenges are carried out in an open air, organic environment, where problem solving, turn taking physical skill development and role play, to name a few, are some of the child initiated play activities that take place.

For St Augustine's, enabling environments also means taking children out into the community. We use our close proximity to town to extend children's learning and life experiences. School trips are organised to support our topics.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The day consists of adult led activities, child initiated activities and guided activities. The perimeter of the classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently, the central table areas are used for surfaces to utilize these activities and also for Literacy and Maths sessions (more as the year progresses, to aid the progression into year 1 and the National Curriculum).

The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. It is found to aid the development of Personal, Social and Emotional skills and communication and language skills. learning activities are presented in a more practical nature in the outdoor environment.

Learning and Development

Teaching and Learning Style

At St. Augustine's we teach phonics through 'Phonics Bug' throughout the infant classes, this starts with Phase 2, 3 and 4 teaching in reception class. Phase 2 phonics, initial writing skills (pen control and letter formation), White Rose Maths, and Mastery of Number are taught in Autumn 1 with all EYFS children together as they settle into school life.

From Autumn 2 onwards the children are split into 3 groups, there is also a fourth group of lower ability year 1s, the morning timetable then alters to:

9:00-9:30am Phonics

9:30 – 11:30am = half hour slots for each group to access half an hour teaching of writing (delivered by Mrs Cremona in Willow), half an hour teaching of maths (delivered by Mrs

Thompson in Blossom) and two half hour sessions in continuous provision. The year 1 pupils access one hour of English, and 45 minutes of maths, with a 15 minute break during this learning carousel.

After lunch the afternoon sessions (R.E., Understanding The World (planning linked to the NC Geography (People, Culture and Communities), History (Past and Present), and Science (The Natural World)), P.E., Expressive Arts & Design (planning linked to the NC art, DT, music) are delivered through adult input before the children complete a set activity and then venture back into continuous provision before story time.

Children's skills and progress are developed through quality continuous provision and appropriate enhancements to develop learning and challenge provided by skilled staff. "The purpose of an effective Continuous Provision is to offer children a constant environment that is safe for them to explore whilst providing challenge in their learning. It should allow children the freedom to explore and become independent in making choices." *[Statutory Framework for the EYFS – gov.uk]*

The new EYFS framework (September 2021) focuses more on curriculum than the previous framework.

Main Teaching and learning aspects in Foundation Class are:

- Providing phonics teaching of Phases 2, 3 and 4 (onwards if relevant to the child).
- Providing a child-led and adult-led curriculum based on children's interest and/or planned topic theme.
- Developing children's skill development through Adult-led teaching and Continuous Provision
- Developing a partnership between teachers and parents, so that parents can support their child's learning development relevant to school learning.
- Continually developing the Early Years Team's Subject knowledge of EYFS curriculum as it changes. and how this affects learning and teaching.
- Effective role of the adult in class providing quality first teaching, modelling and offering first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop learning opportunities.
- Early Years Staff in Continuous Provision developing child's concepts, ideas and language.
- The provision of extended sustainable play to promote team building and communication and social and emotional development.
- Building on good relationships between our school nurseries to provide an accurate picture of the child before entry.

THE EYFS CURRICULUM

Ways of Learning

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Learning through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, consolidate new skills and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules and considering others. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have opportunities to express their feelings in a supportive and safe environment.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS Curriculum is made up of seven areas of learning (17 sub areas):

3 Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development ([Self-Regulation / Managing Self / Building Relationships](#))
- Communication and Language ([Listening, Attention and Understanding / Speaking](#))
- Physical Development ([Gross Motor Skills / Fine Motor Skills](#))

4 Specific Areas:

- Literacy ([Comprehension / Word Reading / Writing](#))
- Maths ([Number / Number Patterns](#))
- Understanding The World ([Past and Present / People, Culture and Communities / The Natural World](#))
- Expressive Arts & Design ([Creating with Materials / Being Imaginative and Expressive](#))

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Well-being and involvement

In order for children to thrive, they must have high levels of well-being and involvement in their learning. This is crucial for children to be independent progressive learners in an environment such as our Early Years setting. The children are scored using the Leuven's scale on-entry, as well as baselines in the EYFS areas being noted. Progress is observed and discussed with the team. To raise engagement and well-being levels, there is a focus on encouragement and developing children's particular interests which are documented. Involved play is captured via iPad and celebrated with the rest of the class. This also serves to demonstrate that learning can take many forms. 'Learning Champions' is a term used to promote independent learning through play in many different guises.

Monitoring progress, Assessment and Planning

Children's progress is monitored and recorded through practitioner observations, formal assessment (half termly) and weekly teacher monitoring. It is photographed or videoed (when appropriate), annotated and recorded using an application tool called Seesaw. Notes on plans are also recorded by staff to monitor progress. The staff use the Development Matters statements to assess the progress of the children. Weekly professional discussions regarding the children's progress are held. This informs the class teacher's planning. On-entry Data and baseline info are updated termly and is reviewed termly with the head-teacher and SENDco. Children who are still emerging in their Early Learning Goals at the end of Foundation Class will continue to develop their skills in accordance with the Early Years curriculum until the end of the Autumn term in Year 1, after which a learning review will take place to determine if there are other barriers to a child's learning.

Policy monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher and staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. See EYFS action plan for specific, detailed development of the Foundation Stage
The Head teacher, SLT and EYFS Lead will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.