

Newchurch St Mary's CE Primary Academy



Learning Through Faith

"At St Mary's we believe that ordinary people can choose to be extraordinary"

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

At Newchurch St Mary's CE Primary Academy we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through God's teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that by following the Fruits of the Spirit our teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives. We believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage – it is vitally important in itself. Early Years refers to children in the Foundation Stage, more commonly known as the Reception class.

The School admits 8 children (1 class), each year. Children are required by law to attend full time school from the term after their fifth birthday. We have 1 admission point during the year which is in September.

The Environment

Children in Reception class have access to a learning area where provision is made to cover the different areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Outdoor learning is actively encouraged and children have access to the outdoor learning area, which is resourced to meet each curriculum area.

The Curriculum

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the principle that:-

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments.
- Children develop and learn in different ways.

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning and is based on ongoing observations and assessments in three prime areas of learning: -

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication and language
- physical development
- and four specific areas
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Approach to learning

The general features of good practice in the education of the young children in our care are:

- the provision of a happy and welcoming setting where all children feel secure and valued;
- the provision of an exciting and stimulating environment where children will be motivated with a desire to learn;
- opportunities for the children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and skills and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities, enabling them to develop into confident and independent learners;
- encouragement of children to play an active role in their learning, to question, discuss and listen to other points of view, in the knowledge that their opinions are valued;
- the commitment to outdoor learning giving them the opportunity to learn through active play and exploration;
- encouragement for the children to develop creative thinking, curiosity and successful acquisition of skills;
- the development and support of the children's social and emotional aspects of learning;
- recognition and celebration of the cultural diversity that makes our school and our community a rich and interesting place to work and play;
- the promotion of a personalised approach to learning, ensuring all children are supported at a level and pace that enables them to realise their full potential;
- the inclusion of all children and access to the whole curriculum;
- the adoption of a variety of teaching styles, appropriate to the needs of the children and the curriculum;
- involved in practical activity, enquiry and purposeful play;
- to build on what the children already know;
- partnership between parents/carers and teachers in supporting the education of the children, encouraging a team approach which involves home and school working together
- good relations between our school and the 'settings' that the children experience prior to joining our school.

Characteristics of effective learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage has always highlighted the importance of **how** as well as **what** children learn. Staff reflect on the different ways they learn, and then reflect these in their practice. A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment.

The different characteristics of effective learning are;

Playing and exploring

- finding out and exploring
- playing with what they know
- being willing to have a go

Active learning

- being involved and concentrating
- keeping on trying
- enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically

- having their own ideas
- making links
- choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

Quality of teaching

Effective teaching takes place where:

- staff have a clear understanding of how children learn;
- staff plan, co-operate and work as a team;
- activities are purposeful and clearly planned;
- staff work directly with the children;
- children's play is supported and extended sensitively;
- there is a good use of space, materials and equipment;
- staff are flexible and explore opportunities that occur spontaneously;
- staff have high expectations based on each child's ability.
- Children have full access to and use of the inside and outside environment
- There is a balance of self-chosen, adult initiated and directed activities

Planning

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the interests of the pupils;
- To plan according to the learning objectives for the Foundation Stage
- To have thorough planning as a guide while also being mindful to make the most of opportunities for learning as they arise.

Assessment

An ongoing assessment of the children's learning ensures that future planning reflects the needs and interests of the pupils. Assessment is mainly through observation and discussion carried out by the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

In Reception class a record is kept of the children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Baseline and follow up assessments at the end of the academic year are used alongside ongoing teacher observations and assessments for each pupil. Paper and electronic 'Learning journeys' are used to record, monitor and track the progression of skills, learning experiences and characteristics of effective learning for each pupil throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Home/School links

We recognise that all parents/carers, as their child's first educators, have a vital role to play in their child's education. We aim to establish strong links with them:

- We offer induction meetings during the term prior to their child starting school, and invite them and their child to spend time in school together.
- Home visits to establish and foster good working relationships between the family and school and to ensure a smooth transition from nursery into Primary school.
- We hold a 'Stay and Play' session each term.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to talk to the class teacher if they have any queries or concerns.
- Parents can also contact the school by telephone or make appointments to see staff at a mutually convenient time.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to children's Learning Journeys each term and to send in 'Wow' moments from home.

Foundation Stage Leader: Miss Pickering

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