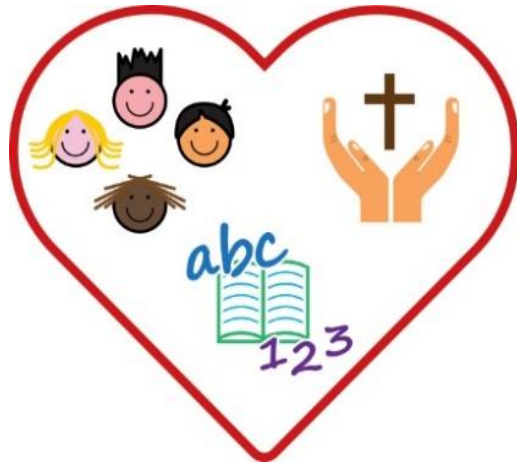


ST. MATTHEW'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY



Early Years POLICY

Reviewed: June 2021
By: N. Shaikh

Date of next review: June 2023

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School and Nursery
Early Years Policy

Mission Statement:

St. Matthew's C.E. Primary School & Nursery is dedicated to providing an education which enables every child to fulfil their best potential. It seeks to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment, welcoming children drawn from diverse cultures.

Vision Statement:

Inspired by Jesus' words (Matthew 5: 1-12), we strive to promote academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment for all members of our school family.

We can all '**Be blessed by God, be happy and aspire to be...**'

Introduction

At St Matthew's C.E. Primary School & Nursery, all teaching staff deliver an EYFS curriculum through immersion in high quality teaching alongside an enriched environment. The curriculum is tailored to provide all children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be confident, inquisitive, curious, independent learners and influence their wider thinking across all areas of the curriculum. Our philosophy is to nurture every child's love of learning, developing both skills and confidence as they take their first steps on their own unique journey, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world.

At St Matthews C.E. Primary School & Nursery we recognise the importance of giving our children the best possible start to their education by planning and implementing teaching and learning opportunities that supports them in reaching their full potential and fulfilling their dreams. The children experience the seven areas of learning through a balance of whole class/group teaching and play based learning. This is through the children's interests, topics, themes, continuous provision activities, and phonics. Learning is carefully planned by the staff to support communication and language development; personal, social, and emotional development; and physical development as well as literacy, mathematics, understanding of the world and expressive arts and design. We understand that oracy not only improves academic outcomes but is a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. Oracy develops children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support the child's well-being. Our enabling environments and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start.

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Early Years in this setting consists of:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school children may join our Nursery from their 3rd birthday. They join our reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Organisation and management of provision:

Early Years provision at St Matthew's school is organised into;

A 52 place sessional nursery, 26 children attend morning sessions and 26 children attend afternoon sessions. The nursery has access to an outdoor area and has toilet and kitchen facilities. Again, a wide range of indoor /outdoor equipment and resources are available.

One large Reception Unit which consists of two reception classes for 30 pupils aged 4-5. All children have access to the outside play space and a wide range of indoor /outdoor equipment and resources are available to meet the needs of the children. The children also have access to other equipment and facilities throughout the school, e.g. hall, library etc.

Nursery session times:

Mornings	Monday – Friday	9:00am – 12:00 pm.
Afternoons	Monday - Friday	12:10 pm – 3:10 pm.

School session times:

School day - 8:55 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.
Morning playtime – 10:25 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.
Lunchtime – 11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

Doors are open from 8:45 am

Worship

Children in Reception classes take part in a whole school worship. Nursery and Reception children attend special events alongside the whole school.

Hall Time

Reception & Nursery classes have a weekly timetabled session in the hall for whole class physical development activities.

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Playtime/Lunchtime

Nursery children attending the morning session have lunch between 11:30 am and 12:00 pm in the school hall. Children attending the morning session can opt for packed lunches or school dinners. Those attending the afternoon session can choose to bring a packed lunch to eat between 12:10 pm and 12:40 pm. A Midday Supervisor and Welfare Assistant are assigned to the nursery children over the lunch break alongside a Nursery Nurse.

Reception children have the option of packed lunch, school dinner or home dinner. Children opting for a packed lunch or school dinner eat in the school hall. Children opting for home dinners are collected by a named adult at 11:50 am from the front door of school and return to school at 12:45pm through the front entrance.

Children in reception classes have a 15 min morning playtime session and time during the lunch hour. Teaching Staff and Support Staff are on a rota for playtime supervision.

Parental Engagement

Parents are the first and most important influence on their child's development and future outcomes. Children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. Therefore, the school and the parents all have crucial roles to play. The impact on a child's education is greater if parents and schools work in partnership.

At St Matthew's C.E Primary School and Nursery, parents are invited to be involved in every step of a child's journey in education. Beginning with a pre- starting school meeting, followed up with home visits (Nursery) and the invitation for their child to attend several 'transition' sessions before the Autumn term commences.

Each child has an individual learning journey (Sparkle Book), to record, track and celebrate. We also celebrate and share information on Dojo with parents where text, images and videos can be uploaded to share learning and experiences. This platform can also be used by parents to share with school to help create a complete story of a child's time. Throughout the year families are invited to 'Stay and Play' sessions in the EYFS/ Nursery settings along with many whole school events such as concerts, sponsored events, sports days and nursery graduation.

We pride ourselves on building positive relationships with the families of St Matthew's. Creating a 'triangle of trust' (Elfer et al.) between children, parents and practitioners. We understand that when parents relinquish part of the care and teaching of their child to the staff in our setting it is a big step. We create an environment that is conducive to interactions where all feelings can be taken into account.

A warm welcome each day often leads to a deeper knowledge and understanding of each child and their family 'it is knowing the child and family that opens up endless possibilities for interactions that deepen the emotional bonds between a practitioner and a child, and lead, in turn, to educational opportunities to support and extend learning.' (Fisher, 2016)

Key Person

All children in Nursery and Reception have a key worker.

'A key person has special responsibilities for working with a number of children, giving them reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents.'

Transition Procedures

Nursery children are admitted using a staggered entry system during the Autumn term. Reception children are admitted full-time using a staggered entry system during the first two weeks of the Autumn Term.

Points of transition:

Home/Pre-School to Nursery

Induction day, home visits, information booklet, transfer of information.

Nursery to Reception

Induction meeting for parents, induction visits for children, reception staff visit nursery during summer term, school brochure, transfer of information.

Reception to Y1

Year One teachers visit Reception classes during the summer term, Reception children visit Year One during the final term of the summer, parents are informed who the next class teacher will be, transfer of information.

Special Educational Needs

Where staff feel that a child is not progressing in line with his/her peers they will speak to parents in the first instance to seek their opinion and to discuss how the child can best be helped. Where children are identified as needing extra support within the setting this involves the SENDCo, the carers and the child's key person working together to write a plan to identify how the child will be given extra support. We liaise very closely with the outside agencies, including Health Visitors, the School Nurse, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Educational Welfare Officers, Social Workers, Foster Carer's, Paediatricians, Dieticians, GP's and anyone else we feel will be able to support and help the child and their parents or carer's. For the very small number of children whose needs cannot be met in this way and whose needs are more severe and complex, the foundation staff will, with parent'/carer's permission request a formal assessment from the Local Education Authority.

EAL

Children with English as an additional language are supported in school by experienced teachers and TA's in class as well as our inclusion team. Children are encouraged and given opportunities to speak in their home language. Bi-lingual teachers and teaching assistants are used to introduce new concepts and vocabulary in children's home languages wherever possible; they also help to liaise with parents. Classrooms resources value the diverse languages and cultures of the school.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

At St Matthew's C.E. Primary School & Nursery our curriculum is underpinned by a complementary relationship between adult led, adult-initiated and child led learning. We are ambitious in our approach using a continuous cycle of observation and assessment, planning/teaching, alongside structured and systematic lessons, and guided group work. It is

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also important to highlight that our plans are flexible to allow us to respond quickly to children's needs and interest to ensure learning is real, relevant, and purposeful.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

- 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.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

Throughout their time in the Reception Year our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs) The descriptors for these can be found in the appendix.

At St Matthew's C.E Primary school & Nursery we:

1. **Tailor practice to the needs of the children** - the child is at the centre of our practice. We have a clear vision of what we want to achieve for the children in our care, and these clear goals inform all areas of our practice.
2. **Invest in skilled and experienced staff** - that support children to reach their full potential.
3. **Operate an open and reflective culture** – our culture is driven by continuous improvement. We seek out other settings and professionals to learn from, share and reflect practice. We recognise the knowledge and expertise of our own staff and value open discussion and staff consultation; and embedded within our school is a culture of self-evaluation as a means of driving continuous improvement.

Organisation and management of the learning environment:

The foundation units are organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment. Equipment and resources are accessible and can be located and used independently by children. The enclosed outdoor spaces are secure and offer children the opportunity to explore a different environment, presenting them with different challenges and experiences. Activities are planned throughout the foundation units to help the children develop in all areas of learning. We encourage children to explore the outdoors at all times of year and in all weathers. We provide appropriate clothing if required.

Reviewing the Early Years policy.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Early Years Leader to ensure it is being implemented appropriately and to take account of changing circumstances. Early Years provision is monitored by the Senior Leadership team.