

At St Teresa's Catholic Primary School our curriculum is driven by our mission *to create confident and independent learners who have the skills and knowledge needed to be the best that they can be and who serve each other in a loving Catholic community.*

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE March 2014).

Intent:

In St Teresa's Early Years Foundation Stage we place great value on the development of children as individuals and provide them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the challenges of Key Stage 1 and beyond. Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning from previous settings and their experiences at home, providing first-hand learning, whilst allowing the children to build resilience, ambition and integrity. Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we celebrate and welcome the diversity within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that our first experiences of school should be happy and positive, enabling us to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Many of our children arrive with much lower starting points than the national average, with a high proportion categorised within a 'vulnerable' group. In particular, their speaking and listening skills are weak and need to be developed from the outset, therefore, we prioritise Communication and Language, alongside Personal, Social and Emotional Development, especially in the Autumn term. Our enabling environment and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play exploration. As the children move into Reception, we invest time and energy into helping them set and reflect their own goals. This is delivered through a holistic curriculum which maximises opportunities for cross curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained shared thinking following children's interests and ideas.

Our Curriculum:

This academic year 2020-21, our early years setting is trialing the new EYFS framework in preparation for the statutory roll out in September 2021. Alongside this, we use the revised Development Matters document to support children's learning and development. There are seven areas of learning, all of which are equally important and inter-connected. The areas of learning are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

The three PRIME AREAS are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication & Language

There are also four specific areas which include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The four SPECIFIC AREAS are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In addition to the areas of learning, we strive for our children to develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning which will enable them to become learners for life.

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

Implementation:

Our children are provided with plenty of time to engage in ‘exploration’ throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms and equal importance is given to learning in both areas. The curriculum is planned using broad topics that follow the time of year, the ‘Come & See’ document or following children’s interests.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, however, for those children who may need further support, we offer a range of additional interventions, focusing more specifically on the Prime Areas of learning. We also have on the spot interventions that may change on a daily/weekly basis. We also invest strongly in supporting those children whose English is an additional language through the employment of a Polish speaking TA.

Reading is at the heart of the school day, with lots of opportunities for shared reading, listening to individual readers and whole class reading. High quality phonic sessions are being taught daily, using the Read Write Inc scheme. Many concepts in Maths and Understanding the World topics start with a story. We encourage parents to read with their child and send home books that match their phonic ability. In nursery, we have story sacks (book & puppet/toy) that children are able to take home and share with their families on a weekly basis.

In St Teresa’s Early Years Foundation Stage, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation provides opportunities for child-initiated activities reflecting

the topic where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide a range of stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. Both nursery and reception have their own outdoor areas that are used all year round, in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

In St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Observational assessments are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and are recorded in a variety of forms in the children's individual learning log. Throughout EYFS we track each child's progress from entry in Nursery until the end of the Reception Year.

Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents/carers. Children enter nursery after their third birthday. After a settling in period, we then observe and complete an on-entry assessment. This first assessment is a snapshot of all the prime areas of learning alongside Literacy and Maths attainment. There are three further assessment points at the end of each term to support the identification of attainment, but also the gaps for further support and learning. Throughout each child's time within the Early Years, a paper-based learning journal is compiled to celebrate achievements and independent evidence of attainment throughout the EYFS referencing Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. To support the compilation of each learning journal and to enable us to celebrate children's achievements with their parents, we use an on-line app called 'See-Saw'. This enables them to see on a daily/weekly basis what their children are learning. Parents can respond and add information that staff would find useful. The App allows us to provide up to date information and learning that we would like them to continue at home.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are: not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging') or meeting expected levels of development. The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents/carers and the Local Authority. Progress meetings are planned termly with teacher's, key people and SENCO's, to discuss and moderate children's attainment and consider support, interventions or further challenge.

Impact:

During their time in EYFS, our children make rapid progress from their very low starting points. This has been verified by external moderation which stated that our provision meets the needs of the children and allows them to make very good progress. We moderate judgements across the Trust and within the Local Authority. Staff judgements are confirmed to be accurate.

The impact of our curriculum is measured by assessment procedures which allow us to measure outcomes against all schools nationally. Class teachers use observations

to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Systems are in place in the form of interventions for those children who are not keeping up. Summative assessment compares children's attainment to age related expectations using the age bands in Development Matters. We use a Trust wide tracking sheet, which tracks the children's progress from on entry in nursery to the end of Reception.

The impact of our curriculum will also be measured by how effectively it helps our children develop into well rounded individuals who embody our values and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens. We endeavour for children to be Key Stage 1 ready and have our school's values embedded by the time they leave Reception, preparing them for their future.

