

St Luke's RC Primary School

Early Years

Foundation Stage Policy 2015

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1. Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age 5 have a major impact on their future life chances. As children commence their journey at St Luke's RC, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Luke's RC Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults, supported by the SMT. In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at St Luke's RC Primary School. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn four years old. These children are in the final two years of the EYFS – Nursery (Foundation Stage 1) and Reception (Foundation Stage 2) In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall aims 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 eventually achieving economic wellbeing. In the EYFS setting at St Luke's RC Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, spiritually, intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special, created in the image of God.

- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates – physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children’s learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children’s personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at St Luke’s RC Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government’s statutory document ‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ (March 2012 and updated Sept 2014). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children’s welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:

- A Unique Child – every child is a competent learner.
- Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent.
- Enabling Environments – supporting and extending a child’s development.
- Learning and Development – 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning and development.

Unique Child.

At St Luke’s RC we believe that every child is a unique individual created in the image of God, with unique needs, skills and talents. We aim to nurture this through supporting every child in becoming independent learners by developing and maintaining the characteristics of effective learning as set in the EYFS framework:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

These underpin all learning in the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They ensure that a child is an effective independent and motivated learner. They can be observed by the way in which the child engages with other people and their environment.

Learning and Development

The seven areas of learning and development are centred around three prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

Children cannot master the skills within the specific areas without developing the prime areas. These are then strengthened by four specific areas.

The specific areas are:

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

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value. At St Luke's RC Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that young children learn best through when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

We provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding as well as challenging themselves to move onto the next stages in their development. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. We aim to do this by:

- Providing a rich variety of experiences in response to the children's interests and needs.
- Ensuring welcoming, child friendly and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. These environments are constantly changing and adapting as they are planned around the children's interests and needs.
- Establishing routines so that children begin to anticipate and feel confident to take the next step. Pictorial timetables give children the security to know and understand their routines.

- Having clearly labelled and easily accessible permanent resources and enhancements. We use dyslexia friendly labels with photographs and words. We encourage children to make their own additional labels for enhancements where appropriate.

Positive Relationships

Adult-child interactions are at the heart of these play experiences. We aim to ensure high quality adult-child interactions through forming positive relationships in the following ways:

- We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years practitioners who plan and work closely together to provide a high quality curriculum.
- Every child is assigned a Key person from our EYFS team who is responsible for each individual's well-being and is the first contact for parents. We value our parent partnership with an open door policy.
- During adult directed sessions the children are taught in smaller groups, not full classes by both teachers and teaching assistants. This enables us to provide education planned around the needs and experiences of each child, so that true potential can be nurtured and realised. It means that children can contribute to and take part in activities more frequently. It also means that children's progress can be monitored more closely.
- Children are encouraged to have a go and challenge themselves without the worry of making mistakes; promoting confident, independent learners.
- An EYFS practitioner is Elkan trained and supports all other practitioners in developing their interactions with children. This is further supported by working closely with other services as needed e.g. supporting interactions with ASD children through liaising with Learning and Support Service.

4. Observation, Assessment, Planning and Record Keeping.

At St Luke's RC we hold the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed an on going cycle observation, assessment and planning. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice.

Practitioners achieve this through:

- Observing and playing alongside children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated activities.
- Recording observations through photographs, narrative , annotation and class/group grids.
- Sharing information about children's development between home and school.
- Analysing observations and responding to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development by planning challenging and enjoyable experiences
- Considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The EYFS statutory framework requires schools to undertake summative assessments in which practitioners review children's progress and share a summary with parents at the end of the EYFS in the final term. This is in the form of the EYFS Profile and provides parents and practitioners with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It furthermore prepares Year 1 teachers for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps. The profile will reflect

upon the schools on-going observation and relevant records. Practitioners work together to determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels, exceeding them or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals.

From 2016 it will also be statutory to undertake a government Baseline Assessment of children entering Reception. St Luke's RC is trialling the Early Excellence Baseline during the academic year 2015-16.

In addition to these statutory requirements a baseline assessment is completed for all children at St in the first half term of starting at the school in line with development matters. Children are then tracked individually through the developmental age bands in all areas of Learning and Development during their time in EYFS. This information is used to plan for the next steps in each child's development. We encourage parents to contribute evidence to inform these assessments. We also track the children's progress in further detail in specific areas such as phonics, pencil grip, letter formation.

Parents can look at this information in each child's Learning Journey at any time during the school year, in compliance with Early Years regulations. It is shared formally at parent meetings where targets are discussed and advice is given on how to support their child.

Practitioners also discuss progress regularly on an informal basis and work with parents to meet each individual's needs, providing support and challenge.

This individual tracking is gathered as a cohort and used to analyse the progress, learning, development and achievement of cohorts. We then use this to inform our EYFS Action Plan.

5. Parents as Partners

Parents are a child's primary educator. It is therefore fundamental that as practitioners we liaise closely with parents. This is done in a variety of ways:

- Open door ethos – practitioners are available for informal chats at the start and end of the school day.
- Each child has an EYFS practitioner assigned to them as a key person. This person works to establish close relationships with both the child and parents to ensure that home and school work together to meet the needs of the child.
- Transition meetings and visits.
- Parent open days and meetings.
- Curriculum meetings.
- Reading records.
- Newsletters online or paper copies are available.
- Curriculum letters.
- Home-school dairies if needed e.g. if a child has additional needs or contact with parents is limited.
- For children with SEN we hold regular meetings to review play plans as well as multi-agency meetings involving parents where applicable.
- Sharing children's Learning Journeys and the next steps in their development.
- End of year reports.

6. Admissions and Transition

Admissions to Nursery (Foundation Stage 1) take place from the September after a child turns 3 years.

Admissions to Reception (Foundation Stage 2) take place from the September after a child turns 4 years.

Please see St Luke's Admissions Policy for further information.

St Luke's RC prides itself in supporting each child in transitions. This is achieved through the following ways:

- Each child and their parents have the opportunity to attend a transition visit. We use this as an opportunity to get to know the child and gain valuable information from parents to aid transition.
- We hold transition meetings in the evening during the Summer Term for parents to receive important information, have a look around the setting and speak to practitioners.
- We offer additional visits to school for children from other settings during the Summer Term.
- We go to local settings to see children in their present setting and speak to their key person.
- We use Salford's SLW 'Here I Come' transition sheet.
- In the Summer term before transitioning, children visit their new key person and class – either in Nursery, Reception or Year One.
- In the Nursery children start with stay and play sessions before moving to a full session.
- In Reception children start with half days, half days with dinners and then a full day.
- At the start of the Autumn Term specific adult directed transition sessions are planned e.g. discussing dinner times routines and going to visit the school hall prior to staying for dinners.
- Children who are identified as having particular difficulties around transition are provided with individual transition programs and home-school transition booklets.
- Practitioners meet internally in school to share information on children transition between Nursery – Reception and Reception to Key Stage One.
- Key Stage One work closely with EYFS to ensure continuity and progression. EYFS profile data is shared and children who did not achieve Expected continue working on these Early Learning Goals through a practical, play based curriculum.

This all encourages a gentle, smooth transition between the year groups. It provides staff with the time to get to know the children, both from within school and those coming from other settings.

7. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Needs

The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it.

- Ramps and a disabled toilet are available within the school to cater for children with physical disabilities.
- Our curriculum respects a child's ethnic faith and cultural heritage, by ensuring that these areas are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.
- We have Elkan trained practitioners and a SENCO . We work closely with our Educational Physiologist and outside agencies such as Learning Support Service and Speech and Language to ensure inclusion.
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children in our care with additional educational needs including gifted children.

For further details see: St Luke's "Equality and Diversity" Policy.

8. Fundamental British Values

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage.

Democracy: making decisions together

This is promoted Personal, Social and Emotional Development – self-confidence and self-awareness:

- Practitioners encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. When appropriate demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views on what the theme of their role play area could be with a show of hands.
- Practitioners support the decisions that children make and provide activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

Rule of law: understanding rules

This is promoted through Personal Social and Emotional development – Managing Feelings and Behaviour:

- Practitioners ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and learn to distinguish right from wrong.
- Practitioners can collaborate with children to create the rules and the codes of behaviour, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and ensure that all children understand rules apply to everyone.

Individual liberty: freedom for all

This is promoted through Personal Social and Emotional development – self-confidence & self-awareness and Understanding the World – people & communities:

- Practitioners support children in developing a positive sense of themselves.
- Practitioners provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences and learning.
- Practitioners encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated

This is supported through Personal Social and Emotional development – managing feelings & behaviour and making relationships and Understanding the World – people & communities:

- Practitioners create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
- Practitioners support children in acquiring tolerance and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between

themselves and others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences.

- Practitioners encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions.
- Practitioners promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

Written by Miss T Simpson EYFS Manager April 2013.

Reviewed October 2015 by Miss T Simpson.

To be reviewed July 2016 to ensure it reflects changes to assessment.