

St.Walburga's RC Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

*"Every child deserves the best possible start in life
and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential."*

(EYFS Framework, 2021)

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)' (September 2021).

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

At St.Walburga's we believe that every child is entitled to the best possible start to their school life, both socially, emotionally and intellectually, in order for them to reach their full potential. We aim to support each child's learning and welfare by:

- Recognising that each child is unique and special
- Understanding that each child develops at different rates and in different ways.
- Providing a safe and caring environment where children feel happy and valued by all members of staff.
- Encouraging and developing children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Nurturing each child's confidence and self-esteem.
- Developing children's understanding of the social skills, values and codes of behaviour that are necessary for people to work harmoniously together.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development
- Providing effective and stimulating learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.
- Providing experiences which build on children's knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, support and extend their learning and development in all areas of the Early Years curriculum.
- Developing positive relationships with parents/carers

The Unique child

We aim to reflect the different needs of children in our provision at St.Walburga's. We recognise that children learn and develop at different rates and in different ways, and we provide children with ample opportunity to develop their experiences through **playing and exploring** using all available resources and activities. Through informal observations, teachers and teaching assistants are able to note how children learn and further support them to develop their **characteristics of learning** through careful questioning. Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through their **active learning**. They will be able to make links and explore their ideas and problem-solving strategies through **creating and thinking critically**.

All children are treated fairly at St.Walburga's Primary School, regardless of race, religion gender or abilities. We welcome all children and families and work hard to make them feel safe and valued as members of our school community. All children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best ("Learning to be the best we can"- school mission statement) and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Positive relationships

Within school we promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children. Children are taught how to deal with difficult situations and relationships through the Coram Education SCARF curriculum (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience, Friendship). We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are the children's first educators and invite them to share their child's learning with us. We do this by:

- Welcoming all parents to an Induction Evening in the summer term before their child starts school.
- Inviting children to two play sessions in the summer term in order for them to get to know their teachers and new learning environment.
- Liaising closely with feeder pre-school settings to ease the transition to school.
- Visiting the children in their home environment in September to enable children and parents to get to know their teachers on a friendly and informal basis.
- Support children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with children attending part-time for the first week.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if they have any concerns
- Inviting parents to share their own observations of their child's development through Tapestry online Learning Journal which help staff to get a rounder understanding of each child's personal development in different areas.
- Inviting parents to come to school to share in 'Stay and Play' sessions, phonics and numeracy 'hands on' sessions, class liturgies, school trips and curriculum events.

Enabling Environments

We aim to provide a rich and stimulating learning environment where children feel secure, confident and challenged, both inside and outside. The Reception base is set up in learning areas where children are able to find, locate and tidy away equipment and resources independently. The outdoor environment offers children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. The classrooms offer zones of learning to support and extend phonics and number work, fine motor skills, reading skills, creative work and imaginative play. Our outdoor area offers the children the chance to play and learn in different ways through role play, dancing and music, balancing, bike riding, science activities, construction, small world play and opportunities to explore the natural environment. Through careful observation, skilled adults will support children's learning by playing alongside them, engaging in two-way conversation, modelling speech, and providing targeted questioning to extending their thinking. Planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure that we follow their current interests and experiences. Where appropriate, observations and 'wow' moments are shared in children's online Learning Journeys and any 'paper' evidence is kept in an individual learning folder.

Learning and Development

We have developed the curriculum giving **communication and language** skills a high priority. This is in line with Development Matters 2020: ***"The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively."***

A high priority is also given to the teaching of **reading**. We aim to teach children to read and develop a love of books as soon as they arrive at school, and books are used to teach topics and to enhance our whole curriculum.

We follow a systematic approach to **phonics** teaching based on the Twinkl Phonics scheme.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are 'prime areas' and four 'specific areas'. These areas are all interconnected. The prime areas are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form positive relationships.

The **prime** areas are:

- **Personal, social and emotional development** (Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships) – children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how manage feelings and respect others.
- **Communication and Language** (Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking)– children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment.

- **Physical Development** (Gross and Fine Motor Skills)– children have opportunities to be active, develop coordination and practise the skills needed to be able to write.

The **specific** areas are:

- **Literacy** (Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing) – children learn how letters link to sounds and begin to read and write.
- **Mathematics** (Number and Numerical Patterns) – children to have a deep understanding of numbers to 10, including the composition of them, the ability to subitise and recall number bonds.
- **Understanding the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – children have opportunities to explore feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play, art and design.

Through quality interactions with practitioners, careful assessments and observations, including contributions provided by parents, a child’s development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child’s progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents /carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the Inclusion Manager in order to access SEN support.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part of children’s development, building confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests in order to guide their development.

Planning will take into account the three characteristics of learning as set out in the EYFS Framework:

1. **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
2. **Active learning** – children concentrate and are able to persevere if they encounter difficulties. They show enjoyment in their own achievements.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS at St.Walburga’s Primary School. Regular, planned and focussed assessments are made of specific aspects of children’s learning and individual needs (e.g. phonics). The main assessment method is through teachers’ and teaching assistants’ interactions and informal observations of children in different learning contexts, including teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Formal and informal observations may take place on a daily basis. A weekly review

of individual children's progress in phonics, reading, writing and maths are carried out to enable any necessary support to be put in place immediately to avoid children falling behind their peers. This information is available to all Reception staff, so that any adult can provide support where appropriate. The Reception team will moderate, review and discuss the year group as a whole at the end of each half term to enable staff to plan effectively and ensure all children progress.

Tapestry online Learning Journey and folders of work celebrate children's achievements and contribute to evidence of children's progress over the academic year

Transition

Starting school can be an unsettling time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

We have an induction programme which includes:

- EYFS teachers meet or contact all of the new intake childcare providers to receive important transition information.
- SENCO (and if possible EYFS Leader) to visit specific children if a need has been identified by the childcare provider.
- An induction evening for parents to be formally welcomed into the school. This starts with a liturgy and also includes practical and curriculum information.
- A first 'stay and play' visit in July so that the children can get to know the teachers and school staff with their parent present.
- A second visit in July encourages parents to leave their child for an hour whilst they receive information about hot lunches and uniform and also have the opportunity to meet other parents. This also gives the children a chance to spend some time in the classroom with their peers and staff without their parent present.
- During the first week of September, teachers and teaching assistants will visit each child in their own home. This is an opportunity to refamiliarize the child with the staff, but also for children and parents to discuss any worries, pass on any information and ask any questions.
- When children first start school, there is a gradual introduction to the school day. Children do a week of part time (either mornings or afternoons) which introduces the children to their new routines gradually and gives the adults more time to get to know them in a smaller group.

When children transition into year 1 the teacher has time with the year 1 teacher to give them all the relevant welfare, academic and general information about all the children leaving the EYFS. The children also have a transition morning to spend time with their new teacher in their new classroom. The EYFS curriculum is designed to provide a strong foundation for learning which enables a smooth transition into the KS1 curriculum. The Year 1 teachers are informed of who has met which Early Learning Goal, so that their curriculum starting points can be planned accordingly.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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. We provide children

with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We help children to self-regulate and manage their emotions appropriately and Personal Social and Emotional Education is at the heart of everything we do.

Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit scheme. For our Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with the chef. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. We make sure that children with allergies or other dietary requirements are catered for in conjunction with our catering providers.

Children are asked to bring a refillable bottle of water to school each day. The bottles are kept in the classroom so that they can help themselves to water at any time during the day. If a child forgets their water bottle, a cup is provided to use instead.

All teaching assistants in the setting have a recognised paediatric first aid qualification in line with the EYFS framework 2021. A qualified first aider will always be on duty in the playground at breaktimes and lunchtimes.