

# St Charles RC Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage

### Policy



## CHRIST IS AT THE CENTRE



**C**ompassionate  
**H**elpful  
**R**espectful  
**I**nclusive  
**S**haring  
**T**ruthful



# St Charles RC Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



*Our mission at St. Charles RC Primary School is to try and centre our life in Jesus Christ, the spiritual foundation of our community.*

*We aim to pass on the faith we share in partnership with you.*

*We want the children in our care to grow and develop to their full potential within a caring Catholic community which recognises fully their true worth and God given talents. We look forward to working with you in a spirit of mutual trust and support.*

*We take pride belonging to St. Charles RC Primary School.*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**As a family of God, we love to learn and learn to love**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Foundation Stage or Early Years as it is sometimes titled applies to children from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. These are classes Nursery and Reception. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday, this is the Reception class. Key Stage 1 starts at the beginning of Year 1. By the end of the Foundation Stage most of our children are working securely within the Early Learning Goals. Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Some have been to one of a range of early years settings that exist in our community.

The education we offer in the early years is based on the following principles:

- What our children already know and can do e.g. an emphasis on multi-sensory, active learning that uses first hand experiences;
- A recognition of children’s prior experiences on entry to our school as independent and active learners;
- No child will be excluded or disadvantaged;
- A structured learning environment that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- A rich and stimulating learning environment that connects with children’s interests.

### **AIMS OF THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The Curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children’s:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Physical Development;
- Communication and Language skills;
- Literacy Skills;
- Mathematics Skills;
- Understanding of the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design skills;

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between parents and staff, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being, achievement and resilience;
- Staff’s understanding of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching and care standards;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps all children progress through development bands towards the Early Learning Goals;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;

- The encouragement and entitlement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The continuation of the development of good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The importance given to transition issues (on-entry to Foundation Stage and then to Year1) is regularly considered, not just at appropriate times in the school year;
- The clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working in the Foundation Stage.

### **LEARNING THROUGH PLAY IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Through play our children at St Charles RC Primary School have fun, explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, develop motivation and persistence and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fear or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

### **INCLUSION IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

At St Charles RC Primary School we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to reach their full potential holistically. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups, sexual orientation and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experiences and interest, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning and developmental needs;

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- • Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide extra support as necessary. This may involve multi-agency support for some of our children.

## **THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the 'Development Matters Document' and 'Early Learning Goals'. We refer to the curriculum guidance for the EYFS to inform our planning and assessment. Since September 2012 we have been using the new EYFS Guidance for these purposes.

The experiences that our children meet both indoors and outdoors, enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across all areas of learning and Religious Education. Themes and first-hand experiences are used as starting points for planning. Planning for children at such an early age needs to be flexible and give children opportunities to revisit, repeat, and spend prolonged periods of time engaged in activities of their own choosing and those provided by the teacher.

Teachers plan focused and enhanced learning activities, both inside and outside, for whole classes, groups, pairs or individuals according to prior experiences, stage of development, learning style and knowledge from observations of 'next steps' required to move children's learning along. We use weekly and half-termly planning and revisit plans to evaluate provision and learning. Half-termly planning identifies the intended learning and weekly themes. Weekly planning shows the focused activities indoors and out, enhancements for play areas as well as differentiated outcomes and assessment opportunities. Children's spontaneous learning is highly valued and opportunities for high level play are strengthened by the staff's commitment to ongoing evaluation of the areas of Continuous Provision (inside and outside).

Continuous long-term planning is evident in all Continuous Provision Areas. By monitoring the continuous provision, staff acknowledge the importance of children learning through their natural interests, structured play learning and especially the need to: explore, repeat, re-enact, rehearse and consolidate in meaningful playful contexts.

Teachers and teaching assistants work in and close by the continuous provision making informal assessments not only of children's progress and interests but also of the learning opportunities provided. This enables us to constantly ensure that our environment is stimulating, challenging and fun. Our curriculum consists of an appropriate balance between adult led and child initiated learning.

Staff use sensitive interaction, open ended questions and shared sustained thinking to build on and extend children's knowledge and skills. The bedrock of all our practice is centred round well being, involvement and enjoyment in learning. We use a positive behaviour policy with rules drawn up by the children and staff together. These are displayed and referred to so that the children learn to make 'good' choices.

Staff are aware of the diverse ways in which young children develop and learn in an active, multi-sensory environment with a strong partnership with parents. Speaking and listening is actively embedded in all areas of the curriculum.

## **ASSESSMENT**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we make ongoing assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future learning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation stage takes the form of observation e.g. photographic evidence, work in books and more formal assessments using the school software. Teachers are responsible for the attainment and progress of their classes and teaching assistants make contributions to this process too. Children and their parents/carers are also invited to be part of the process.

We record on-entry baseline assessments in both nursery and reception, further progress is then tracked half termly and recorded on tracking grids in the assessment software for all 17 areas of development. Children's assessments are discussed regularly and appropriate actions are put into place. Our assessments are carried out sensitively and as much as possible in situations which are more meaningful.

End of Reception scores are reported to the LA as required usually in June. We share the children's results with parents/carers formally in Autumn and Spring through parents' meetings. Learning profiles on the 'Working Walls' and children's books are available for parents to view at any time.

Parents receive their child's books and learning profile at the end of the Foundation Stage. We complete these in June and send them to parents/carers in early July each year. Nursery parents/carers also receive a Certificate of Achievement at the end of nursery assembly.

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS**

We believe that parents and carers are the first educators of their children and have a vital role to play in the continuing education of their child. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We acknowledge this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before s/he starts at our school;
- Spending time with new parents talking about the induction process;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Foundation Stage;

- Being available to talk to parents/carers daily about their child's progress. We have parents' meetings twice yearly during which the child's teacher will discuss progress and development. The child's profile is discussed and parents/carers are offered the opportunity to make a written contribution.
- Having appropriate admission and induction arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become secure and by allowing time for staff to get to know children and their families so that relevant next steps in learning are meaningful and truly relevant;
- Arranging for children to start Nursery over the first half-term. We stagger the starting time of each child over the first three weeks so that staff can welcome each child individually into our school. We actively involve parents/carers in settling their child during the induction period.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourages collaboration between child, school and parents/carers.
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents.

## **RESOURCES**

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages exploration, motivation, enjoyment, challenge and a positive attitude to learning. We use material and equipment that reflects the local community and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the learning activities on offer as we firmly believe that this encourages autonomy, social competence and independent learning.

## **Equalities Statement:**

St Charles RC Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at St Charles RC Primary school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.