

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

## Parish Primary School

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**PARISH**  
CE Primary School  
Part of the Aquinas Trust

Building Learning, Friendships and Faith

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## Our Vision

At Parish, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, giving them a strong foundation for their future learning.

## Our Aims

We believe that the reception year is a unique time in a child's life which is crucial in evolving strong, confident individuals who develop a love for learning.

- To provide happy, safe and stimulating learning environments which enable the children to become confident, independent learners who are motivated to take ownership of their own learning.
- To promote and embed our schools' core values of care, respect, honesty, generosity, integrity and trust.
- To value each individual child and work cooperatively alongside parents, carers and other agencies (when required) to meet each child's individual needs and to help them fulfil their own potential.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills.
- To help each child recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing their confidence to work towards their own personal next steps.
- To provide the tools that children need to achieve a good level of development
- To have high expectations of each child which encourages them to develop, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To ensure that all children are kept healthy and safe and that they have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the future.

## The Curriculum

We adhere to the statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that young children learn and develop well, and are kept healthy and safe. It details four key principles which shape our practice;

- 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.

## Principles into Practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children, based on the seven areas of learning in the EYFS.
- Believe that play is the main vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work closely in partnership with parents and carers (and other agencies when needed).
- Plan exciting and challenging learning experiences which are informed by our continual observation and assessment of the children.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and outdoors.
- Get to know each child and their needs, wants and interests. Where possible, we use this to inform our planning and provision to ensure the highest levels of engagement.

## Learning at Parish

We plan and deliver an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of the children's needs, interests, and stages of development across all seven areas of learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The EYFS curriculum is comprised of the following areas:

## The prime areas:

- **Communication and Language**
  - Listening and Attention
  - Understanding
  - Speaking
- **Physical Development**
  - Health and Self-care
  - Movement and Handling
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
  - Making Relationships
  - Self Confidence and Self-Awareness
  - Managing Feelings and Behaviour

These are vital to a child's development, and must be secure before the specific areas can be achieved.

## The specific areas:

- **Literacy**
  - Reading
  - Writing
- **Mathematics**
  - Number
  - Shape, Space and Measure
- **Understanding the World**
  - The world
  - People and Communities
  - Technology

- **Expressive Arts and Design**

- Being Imaginative
- Media and Materials

## Learning through Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in Reception. The whole curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined in the EYFS. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities that interest and inspire them to learn, and provide them with such opportunities on a daily basis. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful, first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think critically and creatively, and be active. They are able to practise skills and build upon prior learning at their own level and pace. Play gives children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills.

As a team, we plan weekly focus activities based around texts or themes, to fully immerse the children in the curriculum. When planning, we consider the children's prior knowledge and various different starting points, and constantly assess each child's stage of development so we can challenge them appropriately. Children have access to whole group and small group sessions which allows the teacher to focus on the progress of both the whole class and individuals.

## Continuous Provision

Continuous provision refers to the resources/activities we provide for the children within their own learning environment which they can freely access during independent learning time. These activities will match a theme or interest of the class in order to inspire, extend and challenge the children's learning. These activities allow children to explore various concepts/learning intentions at their own pace. During independent learning time, the Reception staff interact to stretch and challenge the children further. Our adults take an active role in observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

The seven areas of learning are catered for in our weekly continuous provision planners, providing opportunities for the children to develop in all areas of learning on a weekly basis. Learning spaces are clearly defined and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations.

## Outdoors

The outdoor area is an integral part of our practice, with many children deciding to learn outside during independent learning time. We teach and encourage children to free-flow between the inside and outside environments, depending on their current interests. Outdoor learning activities are embedded into our weekly plans to ensure that all children get the time and opportunity to explore high quality play based activities outdoors.

## 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 embedded within our daily practice. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum where they are encouraged to develop their own needs, interests, values and opinions. We demonstrate democracy in action by giving the children choices and responsibilities, supporting the decisions that they make and valuing their differing opinions. All children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where their questions are valued. We openly celebrate differences and encourage the development of tolerance towards opinions which are different to that of our own.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)

The focus of the CoEL is on how children learn rather than what they learn. We understand that underpinning these learning styles are learning attitudes that will last a lifetime, and each child must be supported to learn in the way that is best for them. They highlight the importance of children's attitudes towards learning, and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. When planning activities or experiences, we remember and consider the different ways in which children learn. A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment.

The three characteristics are:

- 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.

## Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking into account their range of life experiences, varying starting points and individual needs. When planning, we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that they all have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.

## Observation and Assessment

### Assessment

The 'Development Matters' age bands, and the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) provide the basis for assessment throughout Reception. Children are quickly assessed on entry to school to establish their starting point/baseline across all seven areas of learning. Progress is then monitored and tracked consistently throughout the year. Data is collected once a term.

Our assessment relies on our knowledge of each child and the personal relationships we have with them, allowing us to know exactly where they are working at, at a given point in time. When assessing a child, we use this knowledge along with additional evidence from a wide range of sources including observations of the children whilst playing, observations of the children during adult led activities and discussions with parents and carers, to inform our judgements. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning.

### Daily Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess the children's development to inform our future plans. Everyone who works with the children is encouraged to contribute to the children's EYFS profiles. High quality observations and interactions with children are key to our assessment and planning cycle.

### Next Steps

The children have individual next steps which are shared with the parents. These are on display so that all staff are aware of how to extend and challenge the children's learning. This is also beneficial for the children – so that they know how they can extend their own learning. The next steps are set to enable all children to achieve a good level of development.

### Parents Consultations

We hold a parents evening in the Autumn term and again in the Spring term. In addition to this, there are open afternoons in the summer term.

### End of the Year

At the end of the year, we carry out the statutory assessment arrangements which involves measuring the children's progress against the 17 early learning goals and reporting this to parents/carers. The children's profile data is also submitted to the borough and shared with the year one staff. Our data is regularly moderated by other schools in the Aquinas Trust and we have had visits from impartial assessors who ensure quality and consistency.

Children are reported as either fulfilling the ELG (expected; 2), emerging within the ELG (emerging; 1) or exceeding the ELG (exceeding;3). When making these decisions we thoroughly review our evidence on each child and always refer to the exemplification material before a judgement is made.

Children are said to have achieved a good level of development if they reach the expected level across the following five areas:

- Communication and Language,
- Physical Development
- Personal, social and emotional development,
- Literacy,
- Maths.

## Safety

The children's safety and welfare is paramount to us. Our learning environments are safe and secure and we deliver a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the EYFS statutory guidance and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy. Each teacher conducts their own daily health and safety check and records/reports anything untoward immediately. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of fruit and milk, and speaking to the children regularly about making healthy and safe choices. Each Reception classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of clean hygiene.

## Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We encourage parents through:

- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Providing story sessions where the teacher, parents/carers and child can meet before they start school.
- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become settled and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.
- Encouraging parents/carers to attend workshops around the curriculum and supporting at home.
- Send home half termly newsletters.
- Hosting formal parents' meetings for parents/carers twice a year times a year and summer open afternoons.
- Providing a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the reception year.
- Regular updates through social media.

## Transitions

### Before starting School

During the summer term, the Reception teachers liaise regularly with our various feeder pre-schools in Bromley. They visit as many as possible to gain an understanding about the children due to be starting school. The teachers speak to the pre-school staff and observe the children in their own environments.

- We have built strong connections with three of the main pre-school feeders to Parish and have trained two of these settings in forest school procedures.
- There are two opportunities for the children to attend story time sessions with their new teacher before they start school.
- When the children begin at Parish, they initially attend for mornings only to help them settle. There is also a staggered start for the first week to make it less daunting for them.
- Parents are then able to decide if they would like their child to attend full time or part time, or delay their child's start until the Spring term, based upon their date of birth.

## After the Reception Year

- At the end of the year, the Reception staff undertake in-depth consultations with the Year One staff to discuss individual children's progress. When the children begin Year One, they experience a six week transition period, during which the classrooms are run in a similar style to the EYFS classrooms, before settling into a more formal learning style.

## Safeguarding and Welfare

At Parish, all children have the right to feel and be safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage the children to take risks in a safe and controlled learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Our practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.. Our team works collaboratively to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.

*As a result of the Trust's statutory responsibility, the Trust will receive personal data, some of which will be sensitive personal data. The Trust processes personal data in accordance with the data protection principles embodied in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The Trust complies with the requirements of the data protection legislation as detailed in the Trust data protection Policy.*

*All staff are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Trust safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust's data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Trust and the relevant academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.*