



ST MATTHEW' S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

At St Matthew's we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to fulfil their potential. 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. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. A strong parent partnership will provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. (EYFS 2012).

As children commence their journey at St Matthew's, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS principles which guide the effective work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- □A Unique Child
 - □Positive Relationships
 - □Enabling Environments
 - □Learning and Development
- every child is a competent learner.
- children learn to be strong and independent.
- supporting and extending a child's development. - 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning and development.
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The seven areas of learning and development are divided into three prime areas and four specific areas: the three prime areas, which are Foundations for Schools readiness and future progress linked with the National Curriculum areas. The three prime areas are:

- □Communication and Language

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

These are then supported by specific areas that strengthen the prime areas. The specific areas are:

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

The prime areas are time sensitive and need to be in place between 3 and 5 years of age, these areas are universal and independent of specific areas. Children cannot master the skills within the specific areas without developing the prime areas.

The characteristics of effective learning in the prime and specific areas of learning and development are interconnected. The way in which the child engages with other people and their environment- playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which move through all areas of learning.

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

Provision

- We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years teachers and classroom assistants who plan and work closely together to provide a high quality curriculum.
- We value our parent partnership with an open door policy.
- Child's needs are met both academically and emotionally, helping to develop each child's confidence and independence.
- Small groups enable the teacher to provide an individual education planned around the needs and experiences of each child, so that true potential can be nurtured and realized.

- We provide a rich variety of academic, social, artistic, musical and sporting experiences.
- We have welcoming, child friendly and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas.
 - Routines are established 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.
 - Clearly labelled and easily accessible resources.
 - Children feel confident to have a go without the worry of making mistakes.

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

- Each child has the opportunity to visit the school prior to starting.
- Move up days at the end of the summer term, encourage a gentle transition between the year groups and gives the Reception staff time to get to know the children, both from our Nursery and those coming from other settings.

The Cycle of Observation, Planning and Assessment

At St Matthew's we hold the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practise.

Staff achieve this through:

- Observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated activities and planned activities, and learning from and sharing with parents about what the child does at home.
- Considering the examples of development as stated in the unique theme: observing what children can do, and identifying the stage on their developmental pathway.
- Considering ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development.
- Considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care. This information is then effectively used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

The EYFS requires St Matthew's to undertake summative assessments in which staff review children's progress and share a summary with parents at these two stages at the journey in the Foundation Stage:

- In the prime areas between the ages of 24 and 36 months
- And at the end of the EYFS in the EYFS Profile.

St Matthew's will carry out a baseline check on all children entering the Reception in all seven areas of development.

In addition information is shared at parent teacher meeting and in an end of year report.

Progress Checks

The progress checks are a statutory requirement and offer staff, professionals and parents a clear picture of individual children's stage of development. This shared knowledge and understanding benefits all concerned but most importantly, the child. Parent's views and contributions are taken into account and added to the progress check. The progress check is taken from on-going assessment and observations from everyday practice. St Matthew's strive to listen to the voice of the child. The child has a right to be listened to and valued in the setting

St Matthew's will provide to all parents a short written summary of a child's development in all seven areas.

Assessment at the end of the EYFS

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, St Matthew's Cof E Primary School completes the EYFS profile for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers 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.

The teacher will 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.

In compliance with Early Years regulations parents may have access to developmental records about their child e.g. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, etc. 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, and the special needs of each child, by ensuring that these areas are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.

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: "Equality & Diversity" Policy and our Inclusion Policy.

Admissions

The school welcomes children in to Reception from other settings at any time during the academic year. Children are invited to come for a short visit before joining.

For further details see: St Matthew's "Admissions" Policy.

Further information regarding the EYFS may be found on the DfE website www.education.gov.uk

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