

St Thomas CE (VC) Primary School



ST THOMAS
CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

EYFS Policy

Policy Reviewed on:	March 2024
Policy approved by Governing Body on:	March 2024
Policy to be reviewed on:	March 2025

St Thomas CE (VC) Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.. They begin attending school full time at the start of the year in which they turn five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique Child

At St Thomas Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be independent, resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences. All children at St Thomas Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

'Inclusion is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging. Inclusive early years practice is about anticipating, paying attention, responding to and reflecting on the needs and interests of all children. A commitment to inclusion should permeate all aspects of the design of educational programmes and the structuring of environments, as well as shaping every interaction with children, parents and other professionals. 'Birth to Five 2021.

'Identifying what each unique child "knows and can do" is the foundation of inclusive early years practice.' At St Thomas CE VC Primary School, we ensure that all staff get to know children through high quality interactions. We value transitional information that we receive from previous settings and we visit children in these settings. High quality transitions between the school and other providers ensure that children and their families feel known.. We quickly identify children who will benefit from extra support. Our provision responds to children's needs and interests. Our staff understand the starting points of every child regardless of chronological age.

In EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. 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 and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Children are at the heart of all we do.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that 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.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to

- learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Use the EYFS framework and Birth to 5 Matters or other guidance to support understanding of typical development, and to enable practitioners to have confidence to observe, question and consider why a child may be developing differently.
- Making sure the environment meets the needs and interests of the children and enables all children to make progress.
- Valuing high quality play experiences that enable talk to flourish between children and adults.
- We believe that play is essential for children's development and we ensure that children have the opportunity to explore, make believe, experiment and rehearse their learning.
- We also value the importance of talk in ensuring high quality play experiences that develop children's language and vocabulary.

Children's language is enriched and enhanced by back-and-forth exchanges with practitioners who respect and respond to children's conversation. Birth to Five 2021

- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

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. 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 wellbeing of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

At St Thomas Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the **Early Years Foundation Stage 2023**. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote emotional well being of all children through developing close attachments to teachers and support staff.
- Developing relationships between children and staff that ensure children feel safe, relaxed and secure.
- Create familiar routines and regular patterns of activities so that all children know what happens next e.g. use of now and next timetables, daily visual timetable.
- Provide a clean and safe environment that allows space for physical play, quiet play and rest.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Provide daily access to the outdoor environment where children can develop balance and coordination and develop gross motor skills and enjoy the natural awe and wonder of the world.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs. (see schools behaviour policy)
- 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 is safe and suitable for purpose. Health and safety walks carried out by SLT and daily health and safety sweeps carried out by all members of the EYs team.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development

experiences tailored to meet their needs.

- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavor to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At St Thomas Primary School, we understand that children learn to be strong and independent individuals (and learners) from secure relationships with peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

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

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term their child starts school
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's and allowing free access to the children's online 'Learning Journey' using Seesaw and the Tapestry app, to which they are given the opportunity to add content.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents twice a year, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the

child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the year

- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: weekly in-class library, 'come and do' afternoons, Sports Day, Nativity etc;
- Monthly newsletters that provide information about what and how their child is learning,

All EYFS staff aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the EYFS teachers act as a 'Key Person' to all children, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

In the Summer term, the EYFS teachers will visit children in feeder settings and talk to key workers and Nursery teachers, who will share information with us. Staff, parents and children are invited to visit school and get to know their new environment. In doing this the children will feel confident arriving in school and settle in quicker.

Enabling Environments

At St Thomas Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children, assessing their interests and development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

At St Thomas CE (VC) Primary we are committed to providing a broad, balanced, inclusive and challenging curriculum which promotes and develops a love of learning.

Our curriculum is designed to be relevant; to match the abilities, interests and aspirations of our pupils, which in turn, gives every pupil the opportunity to flourish and learn. Our St Thomas vision of, 'From Tiny Seeds Grow Mighty Trees' is the foundation of our belief that our pupils can strive for excellence and be ready for their next stage of learning. The EYFS Planning follows the school's Long-Term Plan (LTP) and Medium Term Plans (MTP), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning; however, the teacher may also plan additional activities based on the needs and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

In the first four weeks of starting school, we carry out statutory baseline of each child. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a statutory assessment from September 2021 onwards. It provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of professional dialogue between staff, observations of the children and this involves the teacher and other EYFS staff. Using Tapestry and floor books, these observations are recorded in each child's individual 'Learning Journey' to track the children's learning, from the beginning to the end of the Foundation Stage. They also contain information provided by parents.

We then use 'O-Track' to record judgements against the EYFS Profile at the end of each half term. This information is gathered and shared with the Headteacher, the Senior Leadership team and the Governing body. Class teachers also use this information to plan for the next steps in children's learning and ensure that children keep up and not catch up.

Each child's level of development is recorded against the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically) and against the 17 areas of Prime and Specific learning and development. Children should exit Reception with a 'Good Level of Development'; this is achieving the Early Learning Goal (ELG) in the prime and specific areas.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs and Characteristics of Effective Learning. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, but also quiet and restful. The classroom is set up in areas of provision, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently, through the continuous provision. Teachers monitor and adapt the provision on a regular basis to match the learning intentions and needs of the children. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development; being outdoors offers many opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales as opposed to indoors. It offers the children chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active, take managed risks and be exuberant. We plan activities for the children to access outdoors that supports learning and development across all areas of learning.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

At St Thomas Primary School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that the prime areas of learning underpin the specific areas of learning. (see curriculum)

Play

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.' Birth to Five 2021.

At St Thomas CE VC Primary School, all staff in the early years consider the individually needs, interests and development of each child in their care. This is used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

'Play, while central, is not the only way in which children develop and learn in the early years. Children also have opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences of all sorts, alongside being shown how to do things, having conversations, and taking part in activities which are planned by adults to introduce or practise particular skills.' Birth to Five 2021

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, 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 fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

'The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn. To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development' Birth to Five 2021

Playing and exploring: engagement

At St Thomas CE VC Primary School, adults build positive relationships with children which are supportive and nurturing. Staff value the importance of play as it allows children to feel safe to explore and to have a go by themselves. We encourage children to use their senses to explore the world around them, to develop particular interests, to take on a role in roleplay scenarios, to initiate play and show a can-do attitude.

Active Learning: Motivation

At St Thomas CE VC Primary School, we pride ourselves on making time for quality interactions between adults and children. We support and model emotional resilience in the face of challenge. We promote growth mindset by encouraging children to understand learning is an important part of their development and to not give up. We encourage children to vocalize, 'we can't do it yet,' and allow children the opportunities to practice and rehearse learning. We model responding positively when things go wrong, and talk about learning from failure. We encourage laughter and have fun. Happiness deepens learning. Children are given a long enough period of time during the day to maintain focus on their activity and to return to this later. Children show high levels of involvement, energy and fascination. Staff observe and listen to children and support those who may need to prefer to watch rather than take part in activities. During the Autumn term, staff spend time teaching children how to use the areas of provision and tools within them so that they can use them independently for their own goals.

Thinking creatively and critically: Thinking

At St Thomas CE VC Primary School, we teach children that they can ask questions and find out. Adults model thinking out loud and are not afraid to show that they do not always know. Adults use the language of thinking and learning. Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas. We establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm and supportive relationships. We give children time to talk and think. Make time to actively listen to children's ideas

Non-Statutory guidance

We use the Birth to Five non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Development Matters to support high quality teaching and learning.

The seven areas of learning are:

Prime Areas of Learning (EYFS)

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

Specific Areas of Learning (EYFS)

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding of the world (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Prime areas of the curriculum are the most important in the first few years of a child's educational life. Unless the prime areas are supported, the child will fail to thrive and learn. All areas of learning are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area, there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. As outlined in Birth to Five Matters (2021) we very much put play at the heart of teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We believe that every child is unique, who is constantly learning. They learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. These relationships support children to learn and develop in an enabling environment. Staff recognise that children learn at different rates and the environment enables all children to learn and develop.

Staffing and Organisation

At St Thomas Primary school, the early years is led and managed by the EYFS Leader, who is a part of the Senior Leadership team. There are two Reception classes. Each class has their own class teacher who will plan and teach whole class sessions and be responsible for the teaching and learning of those children. The children are also supported by appropriately qualified early years support staff who support the class teachers to provide quality teaching and learning.

The Reception classes are based across 2 classrooms (one with an additional space, which both classes can access); this allows for time to take part in whole class teaching lessons and enables the children to free access the continuous provision in their own rooms and access to shared provision area in the larger classroom.

There is also a door leading to the outside provision. Children have safe access to the outdoors throughout the day during child-initiated time.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head Teacher and Foundation Stage Leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.