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SOUTH EAST LONDON CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST (SELCAT) EYFS Policy

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy is underpinned by our school mission and values:

Mission:

Nurturing our God-Given Talents

Values:

Respect

Resilience

Truth

Faith

Love

Mercy

Person Responsible: Miss F Brophy

Date: September 2024

Mission Statement

We aim to provide for our pupils the best possible quality of education, guided by the teachings of Christ and His Church.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early year's settings.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three **prime** areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

In addition to these prime areas there are four specific areas which include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

These four **specific** areas are:

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

At St. Mary's we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum enabling each child to develop spiritually, personally, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. Therefore, the seven areas of learning involve activities and experiences for each child as follows:

Communication and Language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a language rich environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement as well as their fine motor skills to ensure they are able to use equipment, tools and express themselves in their writing and artwork.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. Children are also helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food and hygiene.

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Our Aims

At St. Mary's we aim to:

- Make the transition from any Nursery (pre-school) to Reception (full time education) as smooth as possible.
- Provide a secure and caring learning environment in which children are happy and eager to learn.
- Provide a broad, balanced and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned and purposeful play in all areas of their learning and development.
- Develop a working partnership between home and school.
- Enable each child to develop his/her full potential.
- Support children with Special Educational Needs/Disability (SEN/D).
- Ensure that all our children have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable education through their learning and development.

Admissions

An application for admission to St Mary's School can be made to the Nursery class, where children should spend one complete academic year. An application is then made for admission to Reception. Children who attend St Mary's Nursery must also reapply for a Reception place.

Application is made to the Governing Body, which is the admissions authority for the school, by means of an application form which must be supported by confirmation of Catholicity from a Parish Priest.

At St. Mary's, we have full time and part time places in the Nursery and there is one point of entry into the Reception Classes in September, where we have sixty full time places.

Starting School and Settling In

Starting Nursery will be, for many children, the first time they have been away from their parents or familiar adults for a substantial length of time. It is therefore important that the transition from home to school is made as comfortable as possible.

During the term prior to starting Nursery, the Nursery holds an Open Day for the children and their parents/carers to meet the staff, familiarise themselves with the building and experience some typical nursery activities.

When the children start Nursery, entrance is staggered so that no more than three children start at each session. We ask that all children have a familiar adult with them on their first day, and that an adult is available should the child need longer to settle. Settling –in periods are flexible, as children’s needs vary. If a child has previously attended playgroup and was settled there, we like the parent/carer to leave their child fairly soon. Children are usually fully settled within a few weeks, so if the child has not settled by Half Term, the staff will review the situation.

Children with SEN will be assessed and, if necessary, specialised provision will be made or extra adult help provided to offer them equal access to the Nursery Curriculum.

Parents/carers are made aware of the effect irregular attendance has on a child’s ability to settle, and of the effects of coming back to school after a long absence.

When joining Reception, the children make a preliminary visit with their parents the previous term. If the children attend our Nursery they have many opportunities to meet their new teachers in the second half of the summer term. However, we understand that not all children can attend our Nursery and arrangements are made for a smooth transition for these children. Entry to Reception is staggered building up ten children in each class per day. When all children are in school they will attend for the morning session for the first week, stay for lunch the next week and finally stay all day. This helps the children to manage the transition from part time more easily.

Staffing and Organisation

Nursery

We have full time sessions which run every day from 8.30am-3.30pm and two part time sessions each day - AM 8.30am-11.30am and PM 12.30pm-3.30pm. There is a maximum intake of twenty-six children in the Nursery at any point during the day. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:13 but have three members of staff at all times in the Nursery – Teacher, Nursery Nurse and TA. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the custom-built EYFS outdoor area. The Nursery Teacher liaises with the Nursery Nurse and TA, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment.

Reception

We have two Reception Classes, each with a maximum intake of thirty children. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 with a Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant in the classroom throughout the school day. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the custom-built EYFS outdoor area.

Role of Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Teaching Assistants (Early Years Practitioners)

The EYFS staff work closely together as part of a team to:

- Enable the children to gain access to all aspects of the curriculum offered in EYFS.
- Observe the children in detail and keep records of the children’s achievements and progress.
- Intervene appropriately to enable the children to extend their skills, knowledge and concepts.
- Develop strategies to build and support an effective partnership with all parent’s/carer’s.

Positive interaction with adults is crucial to challenging and supporting the children: adults should be interested, acknowledge the value of what the child is doing and give appropriate praise.

Planning

All planning is based on the EYFS 2021 curriculum framework with the support of the Development Matters document. The Foundation stage staff use an agreed format, which includes details of curriculum provision, deployment of staff, learning intentions and targeted children. Annual, Half Termly and Weekly plans ensure that children experience a broad and balanced curriculum which is appropriate for their age.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We aim to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum and acknowledge that this can only be delivered with the help of careful assessment, planning based on observation and accurate record keeping. Both Nursery and Reception teachers keep samples of child initiated work, photographs and observations of the children made by the staff. These are used for monitoring and assessment purposes. Throughout the Foundation Stage we track the children's progress from entry in Nursery to when they leave Reception. Assessments are carried out using the Target Tracker app, which corresponds to statements from the curriculum and Development Matters document. Summative data is also entered into Target Tracker on entry into FS1 and FS2 and then on a termly basis. At the end of the Reception year the Foundation Stage Profile is utilised to assess pupils against the curriculum's Early Learning Goals. An end of year report is sent home to parents reporting on the child's progress throughout the year. Reception teachers work closely with Year 1 in the summer term to ensure that there is a smooth transition and that correlations between EYFS and National Curriculum are agreed.

Baseline

Within the first 6 weeks of starting Reception each child will complete two baseline tasks with their teacher. One will be maths based and the other focused on communication and literacy skills. This will provide an opportunity for children to have valuable one-to-one time with their teacher at an early stage, so the teacher can get to know each child better.

It will provide a helpful snapshot of where each child is when they enter Reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way. The purpose of the assessment is to provide the starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between Reception and Year 6.

Equal Opportunities

As in all aspects of school life, the children will be treated at all times with the requirements of equal opportunities in mind. No pupil will be disadvantaged by reason of race, class, gender or ability.

This does not mean that all pupils will necessarily have an identical provision as, for example, those with Special Needs or English as an Additional Language may receive additional support

or have separate programmes of work. However, all pupils will receive an educational provision which is equally suited to their needs.

For specific reference to Special Educational Needs please see the school policy.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher, EYFS Leader and Subject Leaders carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

The EYFS policy has been created by the EYFS Leader (Miss F Brophy), in consultation with her EYFS colleagues and the Headteacher.