



Saint Augustine's Priory Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Philosophy

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up'
EYFS 2008

Aims

At Saint Augustine's Priory the EYFS Department encompasses the Nursery and Prep One. As an Early Years Department we believe that the child is at the centre of the learning process. Their interests and experiences should be valued and acknowledged as a starting point for learning. We will

- * deliver an Early Years Curriculum that deals with educating the whole child so that they are life-long learners
- * ensure that Early Years experiences build upon what children know and can already do
- * create a happy purposeful atmosphere, based on a spirit of co-operation between members of staff, children and parents
- * be concerned with the exploration of the world through senses, feelings and experiences, allowing young children to learn through well planned play activities
- * provide challenging, active learning experiences, giving children opportunities to explore practical activities, make decisions independently, and develop problem-solving skills
- * promote independence, confidence and a sense of responsibility
- * provide a well organised, rich and stimulating learning environment
- * encourage children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves
- * ensure that we provide high quality care and education which enables children to achieve their full potential for learning and development
- * work together to ensure a shared understanding and consistent approach to developing children's learning
- * ensure that we do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Inclusion

All children are provided with equal access to the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum regardless of their religion, ethnicity, culture, home language, family background, ability, disability, learning or developmental needs or season of birth.

Effective learning and development can only take place within an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Every child will be given the opportunity to grow, learn and succeed. Diversity is recognised as a rich resource to support and enhance the learning of all.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- *Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- *Encouraging children to develop a healthy respect of each other's differences and to value everyone as an individual
- *Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- *Encouraging children to learn about their own culture and to find out more about the culture and religions of other children
- *Valuing linguistic diversity and providing opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning
- *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.

Every Child Matters

Our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum supports the 5 outcomes for Every Child Matters in the following ways:

Be Healthy- our curriculum ensures that children learn about a healthy diet, exercise, hygiene and getting sufficient sleep. We provide daily opportunities for challenging physical play in the indoor and outdoor environment. Curriculum Enhancement Weeks such as Healthy Schools Week and workshops led by our kitchen staff promote a culture of healthy lifestyles and choices

Stay Safe- children are taught about personal safety – road safety, stranger danger, sun safety, water awareness, firework code, relationships – family, friends, at school and the wider community. We use positive strategies to manage children's behaviour. Children are aware of the daily routines and procedures and know what is expected of them. The learning environment is safe, clean, secure and well-organised. Curriculum Enhancement Weeks such as Road Safety Week, E-Safety Week promote a culture of staying safe

Enjoy and Achieve- children are settled and engaged in activities that are adapted to meet the different learning ages, styles and interests of all. Our play-based curriculum and Forest Schools in particular gives children the opportunity to explore, problem -solve and investigate so that they can extend their fascination and wonder at the world around them

Make a Positive Contribution – the needs of all children are valued and respected within an inclusive environment. We will build positive relationships with children and their families. Children behave well as they learn to consider others and what is expected of them

Achieve Economic Well-Being- children are helped to develop the skills and personal qualities which will equip them for work and adult life. We provide a challenging hands-on curriculum that enables all children to reach their full potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on four guiding themes. These provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. The themes are each broken down into four commitments describing how the principles can be put into practice.

A Unique Child recognises that every child is a constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development, inclusion, safety, health and well-being

Positive Relationships describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect, partnership with parents, supporting learning, and the role of the key person

Enabling Environments explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. 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/carers. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment and the wider context – transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of children in early years provision, including children with SEN and disabilities.

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. EYFS Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care in order to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

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 are known as the **prime areas**:-

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

These prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. Practitioners working with the youngest children focus strongly on these prime areas, but it is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

There are also four **specific areas**:-

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

These specific areas enable the prime areas to be strengthened and applied.

Whilst we recognise that children learn and develop at different rates, there is an expectation that the majority of children will attain a '**good level of development**' at the end of the EYFS (Prep One). This is defined as achieving the Early Learning Goals for all of the Prime Areas and for the Specific Areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Characteristics of Effective learning

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and we reflect these in our practice. Three characteristics of effective learning 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

Learning Through Play

At Saint Augustine's Priory play in EYFS is an integral part of learning. We are committed to child initiated learning and believe in learning through well considered play opportunities. Play is central to young children's learning, it is through play that children learn to make sense of the world around them.

For young children there is no distinction between work and play. It is a serious pursuit which enables them to develop concentration, explore ideas and expand their knowledge.

Intrinsic learning thrives in an environment of low threat, high feedback and lots of fun, where many chances to learn are inherent. We aim to encourage children to learn from the mistakes they make without facing the fear of failure. Effective play allows children to take charge over events and conquer fears. We also feel that it is particularly important as a tool for developing good social behaviours and prompting the use of critical and creative thinking. When planned effectively we believe that it helps to develop the whole person, motivation is intrinsic and children experience high levels of success. The types of play offered will be appropriate to the individual children's needs and include:

***Child initiated** – where the child has complete decision making and directional control of the play

***Adult led** – adult interacts with the play to extend and support children's learning

***Adult initiated** – where the child engages in activities set up by the adult. As the child moves towards Key Stage One it is expected that there will be more adult-directed activities.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching methods in Early Years Foundation Stage will accommodate the different ways children learn and their various developmental stages by planning for the same learning objective in a range of different ways. These include:

*A multi-sensory practical approach as a starting point, building on the concrete rather than the abstract

*Praise and encouragement to establish an ethos in which individual achievements are valued

*A balance of groupings to include whole class, small collaborative groups, peer partner, individual, ability and mixed ability as appropriate

*A balance of child- initiated or freely chosen, adult- led activities and direct teaching, which includes modelling expectations delivered through indoor and outdoor play

*Provision of experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development towards the Early Learning Goals

Teaching and learning meet the needs of all children including those working at a level that exceeds the requirements of the ELG's.

EYFS staff are well informed about current EYFS policies and best practice. Staff are provided with opportunities to update and share knowledge and training. EYFS Department Meetings are held every 2 weeks.

EYFS staff have time and opportunity to liaise with external agencies such as LEA advisory staff, inspectors, educational psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists in order to provide for individual children's learning needs

*Staff have annual appraisals with targets set to contribute to their on-going professional development and to ensure that there are high expectations for meeting children's learning and development needs.

Suitable People

We ensure that our EYFS staff are appointed and complete induction procedures with regard to the 'safer recruitment' requirements as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014 and Keeping Children Safe In Education 2016

Our EYFS team have 'appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge': Our Head of Preps and Pre-Preps (EYFS Manager) has qualified teacher status and is an experienced Early Years practitioner. In her absence the Nursery Teacher takes on the role of Deputy Manager. Our Early Years Practitioners all have equivalent Level 3 NVQ qualifications as a minimum requirement. Our Nursery staffing ratio meets the requirements. Our Prep One staffing ratio exceeds the recommended Reception ratio of 1:30

There are contingency plans in place for staff absences. We will always seek to cover with EYFS Team Members first. For long-term absences or if we are unable to maintain the ratios with our own EYFS staff we will use Agency Staff. We will ensure that we ask the Agency that the cover staff have suitable qualifications and experience, and that they hold current DBS checks.

Key Person

On starting Nursery or school we allocate every child a key person who is a member of the EYFS Team. This person gets to know the child in more depth and will take responsibility for helping them to settle into school, recording progress and development, communicating with parents and personal and social development. The key Person also ensures that every child's learning and development is tailored to meet their individual needs. The secure relationship between the child and Key Person helps the child to become familiar with the school environment and to feel confident and safe within it. We maintain a regular two-way flow of information between parents and carers.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment encompasses the indoor, outdoor and emotional environments, we try to ensure that the indoor and outdoor environments are interlinked as much as possible so that children can move freely between them.

*We provide a welcoming, comfortable environment for children and their parents

*We provide a rich, stimulating environment that fosters children's learning about themselves, each other and the world around them

*Organisation of the learning environment ensure that there are opportunities for active learning where children can move safely around quiet areas, role-play areas, messy play, creative areas, investigative play, physical play, writing and mark-making areas, reading area, modelling and construction

*The learning environment is carefully labelled and resources are accessible so that children can become confident independent learners

*Resources are well maintained and we encourage the children to take care of them

* Displays are interactive and represent all 6 areas of learning and development. They include examples of children's work, photographs, models, artefacts and home-school links. They reflect the diversity of children's cultures and backgrounds. They are changed regularly to reflect

current learning and experiences.

Planning

The starting point for planning is the child, their interests and experiences and what they know and understand.

*All EYFS staff are involved in planning, working together, generating ideas and sharing expertise, skills and knowledge

*Planning includes long-term planning- across a year, medium-term planning –termly/half-termly and short-term planning – weekly plans

*A thematic approach to planning enables children to make links between the areas of learning and development

*Not all children will cover all of the planned activities. This will depend on their development, interests and needs

Observation and Assessment

EYFS staff undertake sensitive observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's individual needs. The EYFS Curriculum enables staff to observe children in a variety of situations and learning contexts so that we can learn about children's strengths and weaknesses, knowledge and understanding, interests and experiences, patterns of behaviour and stages of development. Children are assessed using the EYFS Development Matters and we keep a Learning Journey for every child in the EYFS.

We complete electronic assessments using the Early Essence programme which enables us to track each child's progress and attainment and generate analysis for individual learners and specified groups of learners.

All EYFS staff contribute to children's assessment profiles and Learning Journeys. We liaise with parents, carers and children's previous settings to build up a picture of what children already know and can do upon entry to school. We continue to liaise with parents throughout the year to build up a fuller picture of the child's learning and development and to share their children's achievements.

*Assessment takes many forms – photographs, written observations, anecdotal evidence, dated and annotated samples of children's work

*Observations are made on a regular basis and inform planning and assessment

*Observation informs staff of what the child is doing, learning and how involved they are in the learning process

*Profiles are moderated termly by EYFS staff to ensure consistency and we also partake in LEA moderations

*Termly assessment meetings are used as a tool to track children's learning and development and ensure that all children are making progress towards the Early Learning Goals

*The Head of Preps and Pre-Preps and the EYFS Governor have overall responsibility for monitoring children's progress in learning and development to ensure that all children are reaching their full potential.

Special Educational Needs

We observe and monitor individual children's progress throughout the year and where a child

has a disability or appears not to be making progress either generally or in a specific aspect of learning we present them with different opportunities or use alternative ways of learning. In particular, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas of learning and development gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with parents/carers and agree how best to support the child. If we identify that a child appears to be behind expected levels, we follow the SEND Code 2015 – gathering information and seeking 'Early Help' to create a graduated response to the child's needs. This includes setting clear targets for progress, agreeing with parents what support will be provided and tracking how it is working. Parents will be informed if their child is receiving SEN Support.

*We discuss observations and any proposed plans with the parents in a way that encourages them to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their child and allows them to raise any concerns they may have about their child's needs and the provision that is being made for them. Wherever possible we involve the children in the process also.

*With parents' permission, we may ask for advice and support from external specialists or to request an EHCP assessment.

*The Head of Preps and Pre-Preps has undergone training to become SENCO for EYFS (Miss E Keane). As a team we continue to develop knowledge of special educational needs by attending training that is relevant to the children in our care.

Partnership with Parents

We recognise parents as the child's first educators. Education is a shared responsibility between home and school. We ensure that we work in partnership with children and parents, building an honest and open relationship. We communicate with parents about their child's progress in learning and development through emails and letters sent home, informal discussion, parent profiles on entry to Nursery or school, New Parents Meeting in the Michaelmas term, Curriculum Evening in the Michaelmas term, termly Parents Meetings, written progress reports in the Summer terms, Open Afternoons in the Michaelmas, Lent and Summer terms.

Parents are also invited to Nativity (Nursery and Prep One), Spring and Summer concerts (Prep One), to accompany children on outings and to come into school to contribute to various topics and themes throughout the school year- we invite parents in to talk about their cultural backgrounds and to celebrate Religious Festivals with us.

We have an 'open door' policy where parents or grandparents can come in and look around the classrooms at the end of the day.

Health and Safety

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 well-being of all children.

All staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage Team take care when setting up, moving and managing resources. The Early Years Foundation Stage Team ensures that the school safety guidelines are consulted concerning any activity. Appropriate EYFS Risk Assessments are in place for daily activities and additional Risk Assessments are carried out for visits, outings and any activities where it is deemed necessary.

At St Augustine's Priory we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. We understand that we are required to:

- *Promote the welfare and safety 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 (SEE EYFS BEHAVIOUR POLICY)
- *Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are 'suitable persons'
- *Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- *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
- *The head of Preps and Pre-Preps is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for children in the EYFS
- *The Head of Preps and Pre-Preps represents the EYFS at termly meetings on the school Safeguarding Committee, Academic Committee, E-Safety Committee, Health and Safety Committee.

First Aid in the Early Years Foundation Stage

All EYFS Staff are Paediatric First Aiders. All children requiring first aid treatment in our Early Years Foundation Stage Department are seen by Paediatric First Aiders, we also have a School Nurse who liaises with EYFS staff and parents where more long-term care is needed, or to put Care Plans in place. These First Aiders have received training which complies with OFSTED and EYFS guidelines. We ensure that staff renew their qualifications and keep up to date with current recommended practice.

Documents Referred to:

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE September 2014

SEND Code 2015 DfE

Keeping Children Safe In Education 2016 DfE

Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2013 HM Government

ISI Regulatory Requirements - current