

MARCH 2025



EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

ST EDWARD'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

*“TRUE MIND, TRUE HEART, TRUE SPIRIT;
AS WE GROW IN THE IMAGE OF CHRIST”*

Approved by	
Date	
Last reviewed on	
Next review date	



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

St Edward's Catholic Academy Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance."

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Edward's Catholic Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be 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. We also recognise that each child is made in the image and likeness of God, therefore we support children to continue to grow in the image of Christ.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St Edward's Catholic Academy 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.

In the 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. 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;
- 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.

Welfare

"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."

At St Edward's Catholic Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage January 2024. We aim to provide:

- Quality and consistency- ensuring all children make good progress
- A secure foundation- planning, assessing and reviewing the learning and development of individual children
- Partnership working- working with a range of practitioners and parents/carers
- Equality of opportunity- ensuring that every child is included and supported

Positive Relationships

At St Edward's Catholic Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong independent learners from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents 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 do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the teacher offers visits for children and parents in school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Stay and Play' afternoons and Transition morning;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' on Tapestry and to contribute to those themselves.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Share days, Mass, Sports Day etc;

Enabling Environments

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

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within EYFS follows a range of topics and themes. These themes take into account the development and interests of the children. These themes are planned to support and engage children to develop and expand their knowledge and skills. Children have a range of child-led and adult-led learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to explore and develop their learning independently.

Assessment within EYFS is undertaken mainly through observations, these are often shared with parents through Tapestry. We use these observations to enhance learning experiences of our children and help them to progress. We actively encourage parent input, through observations and conversations to gain a full view of each individual child. All adults are important in the assessment process.

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, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access both indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning. Both Nursery and Reception access adult led and child led activities.

Learning and Development

At St Edward's Catholic Academy 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 they are interconnected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests

- and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Playing and exploring (engagement)

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Children's curiosity should be nurtured to enable them to seek challenge, take risks and engage in new learning experiences through a trial and error process. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas and 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. The adult as the facilitator is there to support, guide and extend children's play.

Active Learning (motivation)

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. Children need to be supported to 'keep trying' even when the challenges occur as well as being involved and concentrating on their own learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking (thinking)

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. Children should be supported to have their own ideas, make links to previous learning and have the ability to choose effective ways to do things (decision making).

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS lead (Mrs Brown), EYFS teachers and EYFS teaching assistants 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 EYFS lead will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.