

**Our Vision:**

At St Michael's we strive to develop and inspire courageous, respectful and resilient learners encouraging them to serve with kindness and tolerance guided by our Christian values so that they can flourish, living 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

**Introduction**

This policy has evolved through discussion and with reference to the previous policy document. Reference has also been made to Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. This policy reflects the school's values and philosophy in relation to teaching and learning within the Foundation Stage. It sets out the framework within which Foundation Stage Practitioners within the school operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching, assessment, home school links and the provision of an effective learning environment. It reflects the principles for good early years practice laid down in the statutory framework for the "Early Years Foundation Stage" (2012) and the non- statutory guidance "Development Matters in the Early Years" (2012)

This Policy is intended for:-

- Practitioners within the Foundation Stage/wider school
  - The school Governors
  - Parents
  - Children's services advisors and inspectors
  - Inspection teams
- Copies are provided to school staff and Governors.

Copies are available in school or on the school website to ensure accessibility to parents, Children's Services, Ofsted and other interested agencies.

**Admissions**

The school reviews its admission policy annually with Governors and consults more widely on any changes made. The Local Authority manage the allocation of places on the school's behalf.

**Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from birth to the end of the Reception year. Entry into our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, the EYFS consists of a Nursery and a Reception class. Children can attend the nursery class from their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday although

all three-year-old funding commences the term after this date. All children join us full time at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

### **Rationale**

#### **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage:**

*"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 EYFS is based upon **four themes**:

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

#### **A Unique Child**

At St Michael's C.E. (A) First School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that God made all children unique and 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 worships 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 Michael's C.E. (A) First School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. As a Christian School, we give equal value to all God's children and their families.

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 by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- providing a safe and supportive culture underpinned by Christian values
- 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 well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

### **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 Michael's we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare 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.
- 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
- 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 endeavour to meet all these requirements.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Michael's C.E. (A) First School we support pupils to become confident and independent 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 nursery and school;
- the teacher or Nursery Manager contacts previous settings to ensure a smooth induction is in place.
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with the EYFS practitioners before starting school during 'Settling in' sessions.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- inviting parents to accompany children to their settling in session.
- rigorous hand over procedures keep Nursery parents informed of events daily. email communication used for parents who aren't able to collect or drop off children.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's key person if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for reception parents in the autumn and spring terms at which the child's key person and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the key person.
- all children receive a school report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each year.
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: parent sessions, Sports Day etc;
- Parents are able to make contributions to their child's learning journey through Tapestry.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school all children will be assigned a 'key person'. In Nursery the Nursery Manager and Nursery Nurses will have key groups. In Reception the teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in the class, supported by the Teaching Assistant.

We have good links with nurseries in the local area. The Foundation Stage Manager meets with staff to discuss new intake children. Strong links are established between the Nursery and Reception settings. The planning and implementation of learning in the shared outdoor space is carried out collaboratively with staff from across the EYFS.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Michael's C.E. (A) First School 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 the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTPs), which are based around half termly themes. These themes are based around the children's interest. These plans are used by the EYFS practitioners as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTPs in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves all the EYFS practitioners and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded using Tapestry, our online learning journals. They also contain information provided by parents and other settings.

At St Michael's C.E. (A) First School, we use the Early Years Outcomes and early learning goal to assess the children's progress.

During the foundation stage the EYFS practitioners will also assess each child's individual Characteristics of Effective Learning. The children will be observed to assess the way in which each child learns:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

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

### ***The Learning Environment***

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely indoors and outdoors. 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.

### **Learning and Development**

At St Michael's C.E. (A) First 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 they are inter connected.

### **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 1 and 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the underpinning of all curriculum delivery and content by our core Christian values
- the expectation that practitioners have a good understanding 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;

### **Play**

"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."

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

### **Active Learning**

"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 satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

### **Creativity and Critical 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.

**Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas.

**Prime Areas**

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

**Specific Areas**

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

The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. Within the Nursery setting the Prime Areas will underpin all the learning activities that are taking place.

The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge.

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 (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Religious Education features in the Reception curriculum plan weekly and reflects the Diocesan Long term plan.

**Monitoring and review**

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

The Head teacher, Foundation stage manager and other subject leaders will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Adopted by Governors: 18.5.2021

To be reviewed: 18.5.2022



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors)