

St Cuthbert's C of E Academy Infants and Pre-school

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Review Date: November 2025

Philosophy

At St Cuthbert's C of E Academy Infants and Pre-school we believe children have the right to learn and teachers have the right to teach in an atmosphere free from disruption and poor behaviour. To help us achieve this we strive to create a caring Christian ethos where everyone is valued. We have chosen six Christian values which underpin school life.

These are:

- Friendship
- Love
- Respect
- Honesty
- Forgiveness
- Courage
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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year. At St. Cuthbert's we have preschool and Reception provision. Children can join our preschool when they are two years of age and then the Reception children join the September following their 4th birthday. In partnership with parents and carers we ensure that children 'learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe'. We aim to support children in their learning through giving children the range of skills and experiences that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and life. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the foundation stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal and it is our job at St Cuthbert's to build on this. The early year's education we offer our children is based on the following principals;

- Building on what our children already know and can do;
- Ensuring that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- Offering a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- Providing a rich and stimulating environment.

Aims of the EYFS

At St. Cuthbert's, we use the Development Matters document to support the planning of activities for children to access which will develop their skills and enable them to meet the objectives laid out in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. To motivate, inspire and allow children ownership over their learning we use topics and themes that come from the children's own interests. These topics and themes are used in a cross-curricular way as a vehicle to deliver the children's next steps in learning and to respond to individual needs to ensure progress is made.

The foundation stage curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's. It is split into 7 areas, 3 prime and 4 specific;

The **Prime** areas are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development;

Children are given opportunities to explore, extend and reflect on their own experiences so they can grow in knowledge and awareness of themselves, others and the world in which they live. We aim to encourage attitudes, values and beliefs that will ensure that they become responsible, caring individuals

Communication and Language;

We aim to enable children to communicate effectively and to do this we help them identify and build the vocabulary to express their thoughts, feelings, needs, ideas and experiences. Language is a tool for thinking as well as a means of communication.

It is imperative that these prime areas are the forefront of early development to enable the specific areas to develop at a later stage.

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Physical Development;

Children use their bodies with increasing confidence and skill and practice gaining control over their gross motor movements. We have a good range of small apparatus to use in the hall or outside, wheeled toys and an adventure playground as well as large fixed equipment in the hall. This wide range of equipment encourages children to climb, balance, run, jump, skip, push, pull and ride as well as throw and retrieve.

Children are also supported to gain independence of their own personal needs. They learn about how to use equipment safely and about how to live a healthy lifestyle.

The **Specific** areas are;

Literacy;

Children need to be spoken to, listened to, read to – in a one to one situation as well as in groups. Children need to develop speaking skills – about play experiences through conversations with adults and other children. They also need to listen – to good speech, rhymes, songs, poetry – and through taking part in activities which help them develop auditory discrimination – to help them hear and identify sounds.

Early handwriting skills are taught through pattern making, copying writing and cutting activities. Children are also encouraged to write during their play – in the role play area, for example when writing letters, making appointments, writing shopping lists. It is important that they believe themselves to be writers just as they believe themselves to be readers. We encourage literacy through informal opportunities designed to help children to see the purpose of writing and reading – enjoying stories, finding out information or play writing for real audiences.

Mathematics;

Mathematical concepts and vocabulary develops through structured play activities which involve the children in recognising and solving problems. Play in the role play area for example in shops and laying the table for meals as well as more concrete activities enable the children to match, form patterns and count. Through matching, counting and reciting number rhymes, children gain these early experiences.

Children explore early logic by classifying, sorting, ordering, sequencing and predicting.

Understanding the World;

Understanding the world with young children is mainly concerned with the exploration of the environment. It is broken down into three sub-sections:

People and Communities; where children talk about their life at home, family customs, routines and experiences they have had.

The World; where children comment on the environment around them, identifying patterns and change, similarities and differences; making observations and giving explanations.

Technology; where children are able to complete a programme on the computer, interact with age appropriate software, use cameras and select forms of technology for a particular purpose.

Expressive Arts and Design;

Creative activities are integral to children's learning and our aim is to encourage children to express themselves imaginatively and creatively.

They begin to appreciate colour, shape and form and express their views of the world through art using a wide variety of tools and materials. They listen and respond to sounds and music in their own music lessons and begin to make music and to sing a growing repertoire of known songs in their classes and with the rest of the school. Drama, role play, puppets and creative dance are further opportunities for children to express themselves their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Overall, our aim is to promote, encourage and develop interest in learning using first-hand experience to develop concepts, acquire skills and communicate effectively. We aim to enable each child to develop to be well-balanced, rounded individuals able to meet and enjoy life's challenges.

Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and develop skills and 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.

Observation and Assessment

At St. Cuthbert's Infants School, we assess children in the EYFS through both formal and informal observations of children to understand their level of achievement, knowledge and understanding, learning styles and interests. These observations are carried out during both adult-led sessions and Continuous provision (CP). These observations are used to inform the planning of activities and experiences that are pitched at an appropriate level to allow for progressions.

These observations are collated in the children's Learning Journeys on Tapestry. These Learning Journeys show evidence of children's achievements and development in all areas of learning. Tapestry allows the parents/carers to have access to their child's Learning Journey.

At the end of the Reception year, judgements are made for each child against each of the Early Learning Goals (17 in total) to say if they have achieved the goal (expected), are towards it (emerging).

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe this encourages independent learning.

- Continuous provision – resources available for the children to use during child initiated play/learning. A range of equipment, toys and resources that reflect and support all areas of development.
- Adult-led/teaching – sessions and activities following the EYFS curriculum, teaching skills and introducing topics and concepts.
- Adult supported – specific activities set out by staff to support learning and development in a particular focus. This focus may be to support a teaching activity or develop an area initiated from the children or their individual needs.

Parents as Partners

Parents are a child's primary educator. It is therefore fundamental that as practitioners we liaise closely with parents. This is done in a variety of ways:

- Open door ethos – practitioners are available at the end of the day for informal chats;
- Transition meetings and events;
- Parents open evenings and meetings;
- Reading records;
- Newsletters;
- Website up-dates;
- Parent mail;
- Tapestry;
- End of year reports