



St Barnabas C of E First and Middle School

Early Years Policy

Intent

We ensure all 7 areas of learning are carefully planned for and implemented, showing progression in skills and knowledge from Preschool to the end of Reception and then preparing children for year 1.

At St Barnabas CE First & Middle School the children are at the heart of everything we do. We value play and first hand experience and design our creative curriculum around the needs and interests of our children to ensure that learning and teaching is purposeful, engaging and memorable. We choose topics that cover all areas of the framework and provide children with in-depth knowledge and skills. For example, in Reception the topic of 'Around the World' covers all areas of the framework by looking at maps, how cooking has changed over the years, craft activities, and comparing a variety of different countries. This begins to embed skills ready for foundation subjects they will do in year 1, for example in Geography they will learn about how the weather affects where they live. Children can then build on their prior knowledge in Reception class in year 1.

Our staff in Preschool and Reception provide children with a safe and nurturing environment encouraging children to build on their confidence, independence and curiosity. We do this through engaging and stimulating child led and adult led activities during continuous provision indoors and outdoors. Through quality questioning and sustained shared thinking during continuous provision staff can recognise each child's individual needs and starting point. We can then build on this to inspire, challenge and support their learning, laying firm foundations in EYFS which they can then continue during their school life here at St Barnabas.

The Early Years Framework

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning and teaching as well as planning and assessing in early years settings.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical Development – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their coordination, control and movement. As well as gross motor skills, children are

provided with opportunities to develop their fine motor skills. This is provided by using scissors, tweezers, pencil control and handwriting practice.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are then 4 specific areas which include essential skills and knowledge for children to develop through their whole life.

- Literacy – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
- Mathematics – children will be provided 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 – Children will 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 – Children will explore and play with a 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.

Characteristics of Learning

When planning and implementing what children learn, we reflect on our practice and adjust this appropriately to suit and support all learners.

There are 3 characteristics of learning:

- 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

All children learn in different ways and pace so making sure that through all activities and teaching that these 3 characteristics of learning are implemented is essential for children meeting their Early Learning Goals.

Implementation

At St Barnabas in both Preschool and Reception we plan and teach the curriculum through a wide range of topics which reflect the children’s interest and also make sure that all areas of the Early Years Framework are covered. Staff then make medium term plans which show how this topic meets all the needs of the children, how it will be engaging and stimulating and covers all areas of the Early Years Framework. Examples of topics that we have covered include space, dinosaurs, under the sea, nursery rhymes, people who help us.

We provide children with opportunities for both adult focus led activities and child initiated activities. This then enables each individual child to have the support and challenge they need from adults but also gives the children confidence and independence to take the role in their own learning too.

The organisation of the learning environment is vital in making sure that the curriculum can be implemented successfully. In both Preschool and Reception we allow the children to have continuous provision around the room so that children can independently access the curriculum.

Key areas we have:

- Role play area - this usually links to the topic we are learning and children have lots of involvement in creating the role play environment making it fun and engaging.
- Reading/book corner - children have access to this at all times, to look at stories, listen and read stories with adults and other children
- Small world play - this supports children's communication and language as well as being able to express themselves using their imagination and creating narratives with their peers.
- Small and large construction - this supports all areas of the curriculum but importantly personal, social and emotional development as it involves children having to work together, listen and share ideas successfully to create models.
- Making table - children have access to creative resources (paper, pens, pencils) as well as natural resources to create pictures.
- Maths area - each week there is a key maths focus, the maths area will then underpin this focus and children will independently show what they have learnt about this key maths focus.
- English/writing area - an area where children can mark make and when in Reception begin to use their phonics and literacy skills to write sentences.
- Water and sand - these areas are used for a variety of areas of the curriculum including expressive art and design and mathematics.
- Snack area - this is a time where children can use their language skills and vocabulary to communicate with their peers.
- Outdoor area - both Preschool and Reception have access to their own outdoor area where extra learning opportunities and activities can take place.
- Forest school - both Preschool and Reception have a weekly forest school session which supports children's physical development.

Teaching in preschool is done through small groups during different parts of the day. Teaching is delivered by different members of the Early Years team and involves teaching of key maths skills, phonics and modelling of different activities that children have access to around the classroom. This teaching is important as members of staff can make observations on children and can then make judgements on where children may be and how they need to be observed during that week.

Teaching in Reception is done through whole class teaching everyday. A key maths skill is taught at the start of the week, activities supporting this are then provided in continuous provision for children to access and for adults to observe each children's individual learning and to support and challenge where needed. Phonics is taught through whole class teaching 3 times a week and consists of whole class engagement which is then followed by group work. This is essential in supporting and challenging each

child where appropriate. Teaching of other areas of the curriculum also takes place during the week followed by continuous provision around the classroom.

Assessment

In both Preschool and Reception the preschool manager and Reception teacher baseline each child when they arrive so that all staff know where the children fit into the Early Years Framework and where they may need support but also where children need to be challenged further. Half termly assessments are carried out to monitor children's learning and progress. Observations and learning journeys are used continuously to support the assessment process.

By the end of preschool children should be entering reception secure at 30-50 months in all 7 areas of the Early Years Framework. In Reception it is a statutory requirement to assess each child against the Early Learning Goals (from The Early Years Outcomes document) at the end of the Reception Year. Children are assessed at the end of the Reception Year as to being – Emerging (Working towards the Early Learning Goal), Expected (Have achieved the Early Learning Goal) or Exceeded (Have exceeded / surpassed the Early Learning Goal).

Each child also has their own learning journey where children's work that is done at school is kept, this provides a bank of evidence to support and back up teachers judgements on where children are sitting in the Early Years Framework. It is also a way of showing the amazing journey children go on from starting in preschool to finishing in Reception.

All staff in preschool and Reception are always observing the children through continuous provision and whole class teaching. In preschool these observations are put into children's learning journeys. In reception, these observations are recorded and are evidenced either on working walls or floor books associated with that lesson or area covered.

Parent involvement

In Reception there is a google classroom page for the class where the teachers will put up some weekly pictures showing what the children have been up to that week. Parents are able to access this page, this is a great way for parents to be involved in their child's learning and can see what they have been learning about in school.

Due to Covid 19, we haven't been able to have the parents into school as much as we would like. However, we plan to organise some stay and play mornings during the 2022-2023 academic year. This is a lovely way of parents being able to spend some time in their child's school environment, see where they learn and be able to be involved in this.

Transition from Preschool to Reception

As a school we are very lucky that our Preschool is next door to our Reception classroom so the transition from Preschool to Reception is a smooth and successful process. As we get nearer the summer

term we provide the children and parents with different opportunities to begin this transition process early so that children and parents are supported during this.

- Children attending Preschool are invited to a weekly story time with the Reception teacher during the summer term. This helps the children to get used to their new learning environment as well as beginning to form a relationship with the reception teacher and other staff members.
- A parent evening is run by the Reception teacher at school. Here the Reception teacher discusses what the expectations are in reception and what teaching will look like. It is also a time for parents to discuss any concerns or worries they may have with the class teacher.
- Children in Preschool are able to take a story pack home every week during June, this includes a story book from our reading scheme Rising Stars and a simple activity to complete. Reading is a vital part of learning at St Barnabas so we feel starting this before children enter reception is a way of parents and children having quality time reading a book together and can also to see the importance of reading.
- We run 2 transition mornings where the children will spend the morning in the reception classroom getting to know their new teachers and having an insight to their new classroom and routines.

Safeguarding

In St Barnabas all staff have regular and up to date safeguarding training. All staff know who the designated safeguarding officer is in school and this is who we go to if a safeguarding issue/concern arises and we then follow the correct procedures. In Preschool the Preschool manager is the designated safeguarding officer so any concerns/issues that occur will go to the manager who then follows the correct procedures.

Here is a link to our whole school safeguarding policy and information provided on our website.

<https://st-barnabas.dowmat.education/statutory-information/safeguarding/>

SEND

All children will have access to the full curriculum either by the provision of additional support or through differentiated tasks planned to suit the needs of individual children or groups. Open ended challenges activities are planned to stretch the more able in any area of the Early Years curriculum.

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Role of Early Years Manager and class teacher

It is the role of the Foundation Stage Manager under the guidance of the Head Teacher: -

- To oversee and support the delivery of Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and to ensure progression and development.
- To monitor planning and quality of delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- To be aware of key developments within Early Years and carry out training days and staff meetings when required.
- To analyse assessment data to inform learning and teaching within the Early Years.
- Identify key areas for development – implement annual action plans, reviewing and evaluating progress and developments.

Written by: Sophie Wyatt

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