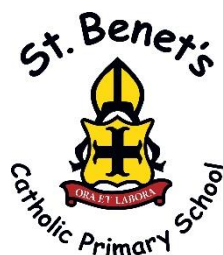


# **The Catholic Schools of the Waveney Valley**

## **Early Years Policy**

**2021 - 2023**



**Reviewed by: Glynis Reynolds**

**Approved by: Governing Body**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Next Review: July 2023**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experience between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. *A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.* Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS, Department for Education, 2021).

### **1. Vision Statement:**

In the early years in St John the Baptist CMAT, we want children united in God’s love to become happy, confident, well rounded individuals with a love for learning. Our children are provided with a safe and stimulating environment that fosters independence; where they are enabled to learn through play, to explore and express their own ideas knowing that they are valued. We are committed to providing the best possible start to their school life, nurturing positive attitudes, teaching them skills and giving them experiences which will ensure their well-being and success both now and in the future.

***'To think, to feel, to do' - Pope Francis***

### **2. Intent:**

At the Catholic Primary Schools of the Waveney Valley (CPSWV) our aspirations for the children in our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is as follows:

- All children to achieve their individual potential, through provision which builds on their prior learning (from home and early years settings)
- Ensure a high level of well-being for children so they are able to access learning,
- Nurture children’s natural dispositions and interests.
- Create an environment that fosters independence where children are encouraged to explore and express their own ideas knowing that they are valued.
- Provide valuable, purposeful and enjoyable learning experiences appropriate to the child’s stage of development.
- Ensure children have a broad range of opportunities.
- Provide children with a solid foundation for their continuing education.

### **3. Implementation**

Our aim is achieved through the following procedures:

#### **3.1 Transition**

Before children start with us, we liaise with their current early years provision and parents/carers to obtain information to enable us to help children settle with us in a smooth fashion. We also arrange a visit to their current setting or home before children visit us to provide them with a familiar face. We then aim to provide a series of transition visits to our school for the children, initially with parents and then independently. Once they start with us, we give children time to familiarise themselves with their new environment, the grown-ups working with them and each other.

#### **3.2 Curriculum**

Our early years curriculum outlines broad themes and key learning experiences we want to

provide for our reception children. Our aim is to ensure they have adequate opportunity to progress towards the early learning goals (ELG's) whilst gaining skills and knowledge relevant to their interests and have a secure foundation of skills and knowledge to build on in Key Stage 1 (KS1) irrespective of their experiences prior to starting school.

Concurrently, there is an inbuilt flexibility within our curriculum ensuring we are able to follow children's interests throughout the year and therefore provide learning opportunities which capture their enthusiasm whilst meeting their developmental needs.

Our curriculum is aligned with the Areas of Learning stated in the EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, 2021),

Prime Areas –

Communication and Language  
Personal, Social and Emotional Development  
Physical Development

Specific Areas –

Literacy  
Mathematics  
Understanding the World  
Expressive Arts and Design

Whilst we consider areas of learning individually, we also strongly acknowledge that most quality activities and provision encourage development across multiple areas simultaneously.

We also ensure our provision and practice is shaped by the overarching principles discussed in the EYFS Statutory Framework –

- Every child is a *unique child*
- Children glean strength and independence from *positive relationships*
- The importance of *enabling environments*
- The importance of *learning and development* and consideration of “*the characteristics of effective teaching and learning*”

See Appendices 1 and 2 for further details on how our practice considers these.

### 3.3 Observation and Assessment

During the initial weeks of term, we complete baseline observations to establish a clear understanding of where each child's learning needs are when they join us. This is in addition to completing the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) as detailed in the EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, 2021) which we complete within a child's first six weeks of starting reception as per statutory requirements. These baselines proceed, regular ongoing observation and assessment of children's skills and knowledge allow us to identify their learning needs. Observations are made when children are engaged in child and adult-lead activities.

Milestone observations are recorded in children's personal learning journeys on Tapestry which provide a clear picture of their progress and skills. Other sources of evidence of children's ability and learning include Phonics books, English/Topic books, Maths books, Religious Education books, class big books containing whole class activities and discussions, scrapbook style displays and annotated weekly plans.

Once observations have identified individual children's learning needs, we utilise the following planning and delivery methods to meet these needs.

This ongoing observation also allows us to identify any children who may need some additional support to reach their potential and continue to progress with their learning.

### 3.4 Planning and Delivery

- Child-initiated activities - During continuous provision time children are free to initiate their choice of activities. In order to progress children's learning and skills in relation to the needs identified through observation, the environment is enhanced and resourced with consideration to these needs.
- Objective-led planning - By identifying learning needs and current attainment through observation, next step objectives are identified for groups of children. Adults then deliver these objectives through careful intervention in child-initiated activity, but only when appropriate and relevant.
- In the Moment planning - In the moment planning occurs when adults observe child-initiated activity and then in opportune and appropriate moments, often initiated by the child, the adult will scaffold the activity to move the learning on.
- Adult-lead Activities - When appropriate, we use pre-planned, adult guided focus activities, to cover key skills and knowledge in an engaging way, relevant to children's interests and needs.

### 3.5 Timetable

Our timetable is organised to provide adult-lead time daily, alongside large periods of uninterrupted time when children can access continuous provision. During continuous provision time they will experience both periods of independent play and times when adults sensitively join in their play to move learning on.

Daily adult-lead sessions are timetabled for the teaching of specific skills and knowledge (for example phonics). We aim to ensure these adult lead sessions are practical, hands on experiences for the children where they are enabled to be active learners to ensure high levels of engagement.

### 3.6 Working with Parents

We recognise that parents are a child's first teacher, and that by working together we can provide the best opportunities for the children in our setting. We aim to foster positive home school links by:

- Holding a new parents meeting to share key information with parents before their children start with us, and offering guidance on how they can support their child at home.
- Having parents attend transition visits with their children.
- Parent's evening twice a year as a formal update on their child's learning.
- Encouraging parents to help in the classroom and on school trips.
- Welcoming parents into the classroom for events, for example Reading and Maths Cafes.
- Encouraging and being available for an open dialogue with parents.
- Sharing children's learning achievements with parents via Tapestry, and encouraging parents to share their children's activities at home.

#### **4. Impact**

The impact of our provision on individual children is monitored through ongoing formative assessment of their learning as discussed above. Summative assessment also occurs termly as a measure of progress and as a chance for reflection on any areas that need more consideration.

We use the EYFS Development Matters (DfE, March 2020), non-statutory curriculum guidance to assess children's individual pathways and development, alongside our own professional judgement to ensure all children are progressing on their individual trajectory.

This frequent monitoring enables us to identify any children who may benefit from further intervention, and then communicate with parents and when necessary, we liaise with our special educational needs and disability coordinator (SENDCO) on how best to support the child. If this arose, we would also liaise with parents at this time.

At the end of the academic year, we assess children's individual attainment against the ELGs, as set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework. This summative assessment is shared with parents and the KS1 teacher who will be teaching the child next and reports to the local authority as required.

## Appendix 1

### Overarching Principles

<u>Unique Child</u>	<u>Positive Relationships</u>	<u>Enabling Environments</u>
<p>We recognise children are individuals and have different interests and learning needs, ongoing formative assessments allow us to recognise and identify these, and then respond appropriately.</p> <p>We value the diversity present in our children and families, and ensure this diversity is represented in our provision (for example in dolls, books and small world provision).</p> <p>The provision of open-ended resources allows children to follow their own interests.</p>	<p>We prioritise adults spending time with children and providing quality interactions to initially form relationships and then to maintain these.</p> <p>In the moment planning in particular allows children and adults to work in a collaborative joined up manner, engaging in sustained shared thinking.</p> <p>We also aim to build effective relationships with parents and provide smooth transitions for all as detailed in our policy (see point 3.6 in policy)</p>	<p>Our environment is thoughtfully resourced and enhanced based on needs identified through ongoing assessments.</p> <p>We ensure resources are accessible to children at all times so their play can maintain momentum and allow good levels of engagement.</p> <p>We aim to ensure our outdoor provision is not a replica of indoor provision, but a complimentary extension.</p> <p>We ensure children have access to flexible, open ended but challenging resources.</p> <p>Weekly planning considers enhancements and modifications to the environment.</p>

## Appendix 2

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

<u>Playing and Exploring</u>	<u>Active Learning</u>	<u>Creating and Thinking Critically</u>
<p><u>Children “investigate and experience things”</u></p> <p><i>Children are free to explore resources of their choice.</i></p> <p><i>We enhance the continuous provision with attractive enhancements that encourage investigation – e.g. pumpkins in Autumn, ice in winter and windsocks in the wind.</i></p> <p><i>Our curriculum considers key experiences we want all children to have with us.</i></p>	<p><u>Children “concentrate”</u></p> <p><i>As children have choice of their activities and their interests are considered and followed, they are able to show high levels of engagement.</i></p> <p><i>Long periods of undisturbed time in continuous provision allow children to sustain their concentration for longer lengths of time.</i></p>	<p><u>Children “have and develop their own ideas”</u></p> <p><i>By ensuring there are key skills and experiences we want our children to have (as stated on our curriculum) we enable them to use these to develop their own ideas – for example exposing them to different media, enables them to use this in their independent play.</i></p> <p><i>Open ended and accessible resources enable them to follow through their ideas in their play without relying on adults to provide resources.</i></p>
<p><u>Children “have a go”</u></p> <p><i>Children are encouraged to initiate their own activity, and as they have control over their activities during continuous provision, they feel able to take risks.</i></p> <p><i>Adults supporting their play are able to encourage children to keep trying and have a positive growth mindset.</i></p> <p><i>Positive growth mindset is encouraged through our growth mindset work.</i></p>	<p><u>Children “keep on trying”</u></p> <p><i>Following children’s interests and allowing free choice about activities encourages high-level of engagement and intrinsic motivation, therefore when things do not go to plan children have a desire to continue.</i></p> <p><i>Collaborative work with adults within play allows adults to encourage resilience.</i></p> <p><i>Our work around growth mindset through JONK helps children identify strategies to keep on trying.</i></p>	<p><u>Children “make links between ideas”</u></p> <p><i>Through observations of children’s play we are able to see potential opportunities for them to make links.</i></p> <p><i>Enhancement, through adult interaction or provision of resources, enables us to encourage the making of links.</i></p>
	<p><u>Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</u></p> <p><i>Following children’s interests ensures they enjoy their activities and can meet the goals of their choosing, harnessing their intrinsic motivation to achieve.</i></p> <p><i>We also provide children with special areas to display work they are proud of and encourage them to consider what they would like us to share with their parents on Tapestry.</i></p>	<p><u>Children “Develop Strategies for Doing things</u></p> <p><i>Children make decisions about their activities and follow this through. If things are unsuccessful, the availability of resources means they can try alternatives.</i></p> <p><i>Provision of consistent resources allows children to revisit things repeatedly and develop their methods.</i></p>