

October 2021


# St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Thomas Aquinas Academy Trust



Love One Another as I have Loved you  
John 13:24

EYFS Policy

Policy Date:	January 2022		
Policy Review Date:	January 2023	Charlotte Crosse	
Ratified by Governing Body: Bernard Attard- Chair of Governors			

## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. This policy adheres to the Statutory Framework for the EYFS Framework 2021. Early childhood is the foundation which children build the rest of their lives. At St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy, children join the Reception Class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We endeavor to 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 broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” (*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021*)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

**A unique child** - 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 and 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 and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

**Positive relationships** - We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

**Enabling environments** - We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

**Learning and development** - The Foundation 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.

## Aims and Objectives

At St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy we aim to

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.

- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents to develop excellent relationships and value their contributions to ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability learn and make progress.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong 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 school;
- ensuring that the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'stay and play' sessions;
- supporting children through the transition from pre-school to Reception
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the first half term of the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics.

### **Structure of the EYFS**

Reception welcomes pupils in the September after they turn four. They have access to full school days from 8.50am until 3:05pm. In some circumstances We consider offering a transition plan and/or part-time timetable to all pupils on an individual child basis, dependent on the needs of the pupil and how we can best support their first years in a school setting.

At St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy we welcome 40 pupils within the Reception year. This means there are too many children for one class per

year group. In accordance to our class setting policy, children in the EYFS are split between two classes depending on their birthday, with the 10 oldest children going into the Reception and Year 1 class and the youngest 30 children in the Reception class. However, further consideration may be given to children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and multiple births.

Admission into Reception is controlled by the Local Authority and applications are made via the Leicester City Council website. In addition, all applicants wishing to apply for a place at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy should complete the Supplementary Information Form. Please see our Admissions Policy for more information.

### **Health and Safety**

At St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2021, at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy we undertake:

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer." (Statutory framework for EYFS 2012)
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times, a record of accidents and injuries is kept and parents are informed immediately when the child has had a head injury. At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate is available at all times when children are present and will accompany children on outings.
- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment is in place.
- There is a fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- There is a safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting.

### **Transition**

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into Reception, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they meet staff, know about school procedures and have an opportunity to ask about anything they are

unsure of.

- During the summer term parents are encouraged to complete an “All about Me” form which is used to support transition and to inform planning during the Advent term.
- The children are invited to visit their reception class.
- During the summer term teachers will contact the children’s preschool setting. On some occasions the class teacher may visit the children in their feeder settings to meet the child, share their learning journey and speak to the setting staff.

## Curriculum

### Our Intent

Our Early Years strives to promote communication and language, physical development and personal social and emotional development as the golden threads that are woven into our everyday curriculum. We believe that by highlighting these prime areas, we are facilitating and unlocking a world full of potential for our children. We provide a learning experience that is bespoke to St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy and to every cohort, based on their needs identified at baseline, emerging trends and our continual on track assessments to support our planning and provision. Every member of our team is actively involved in high quality observation and interaction; promoting exploration and curiosity through play.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

### Implementation

Our EYFS follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS. All seven areas of the curriculum are important and all are inter-connected.

Three of the areas are known as the ‘Prime Areas’ and these are:

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

Good development in these areas gives children the basic skills that they need to be successful in all other areas of learning. Therefore, we have a strong focus on supporting children in these Prime Areas across the EYFS at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy.

The other four areas of learning, known as the Specific Areas, are:

- Literacy (includes Reading and Writing)
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We also teach RE using the 'Come and See' programme recommended by the Diocesan Education Service – please refer to the Religious Education Policy.

Each half term, EYFS staff introduce a new theme of wonder to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching during the day. The timetable changes throughout the year to take into consideration the changing needs of the children. These sessions are followed by small focused group work. This means the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

### **Literacy**

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to encourage a love of reading right from the start. In EYFS we have 'Our Recommended Reads'. The aim is to expose children to a range of books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop their vocabulary and comprehension. We also have focus stories each week which will be embedded in our provision through activities, story sessions and on display for children to access independently. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories.

### **Phonics**

We follow the DFE validated 'Little Wandle' programme to ensure consistency across the school. During their first few weeks at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy whilst we complete our baseline assessments children will focus on Phase 1 which concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills and lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in Phase 2. The emphasis during Phase 1 is to get children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin developing oral blending and segmenting skills, prior to Grapheme Phoneme Correspondance (GPC).

Once baseline is complete the children are introduced to Phase 2, 3 and 4 where they will develop GPC and segmenting and blending skills to decode words. Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school through guided reading groups. They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers.

### **Mathematics**

In Reception, we follow the White Rose Maths Scheme of work which is divided into 3 weekly units. High quality learning environments and meaningful interactions with adults, support children in developing mathematical thinking and discussion. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations which are then rehearsed applied and recorded within their own child-led exploration. Children in Reception have short daily, Maths carpet sessions to develop fluency, revisit key concepts and address misconceptions.

### **Wider Curriculum**

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' EYFS staff have a good understanding of how Early Learning Goals's (ELG's) feed into the National Curriculum through our robust planning. In reverse, colleagues throughout the school are also aware of the key ELG's that link to each foundation subject and the progression of the subject.

Exciting, purposeful and contextual activities are planned to build on children's natural curiosity. For example, building a boat for their favourite toy enables them to think like a 'Scientist' and 'Engineer' as they explore a range of materials and test out their own ideas.

Building further on vocabulary, children will be encouraged to employ subject specific language and terminology in foundation subjects, and such vocabulary will be modelled, both verbally and orally, by supporting practitioners through the children's play.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, but we have a range of additional intervention and support for children who may not be reaching their potential, or are showing a greater depth of understanding and need further challenge. This includes, for example, sessions for developing speech and language through our NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) programme, social skills through 'Fun Time', fine motor skills through 'Funky Fingers', phonics through 'Keep up sessions, and mathematics through targeted Continuous Provision activities. In addition, we have may have children on Education Health Care Plans, where bespoke pupil passports have identified that additional learning and interventions may need to take place out of the classroom.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders ensure staff develop good subject knowledge.

### Impact

Baseline:

Prior to children starting, staff spend time familiarising themselves with the child's previous settings, seeking information from parents and reading previous learning journeys to gain an understanding of the whole child and their current stage of development. During the first half term in Reception, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual's starting points in all areas

so we can plan experiences to ensure progress. The following baseline assessments are also carried out.

- The RBA (Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment)

This assessment focuses on 'Language, Communication and Literacy,' and 'Mathematics.' The purpose of this is to contribute to a final measure of the progress children make from Reception until the end of KS2.

- NELI (Nutfield Early Language Intervention)

NELI is an evidence-based oral language intervention for children who show weakness in their oral language skills and who are therefore at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading. The assessment informs us if the child is at expected for their age or requires intervention from trained NELI practitioners.

- Ongoing Observation:

All ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing / making. Some observations are uploaded using Tapestry and shared with the supporting parents and carers.

#### Assessment:

Phonic assessments are carried out using the Little Wandle Phonics Tracker every six weeks to quickly identify pupils that are not making expected progress. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' through daily keep up sessions rather than 'catch up' where possible.

Informal 'On track' assessments are completed through interactions and our knowledge of the child each half term. We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Also, if the class teacher has any concerns about the progress of a child, we will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them. Progress will also be shared with parents through parents' evenings in Advent and Lent terms and through end of year reports in the Pentecost Term. In Pentecost 2, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is also completed where the class teacher will judge whether the child has met each of the 17 ELG's. They will be assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected.' Whilst there is no judgement to state if a child is exceeding beyond an ELG, teachers, have a duty to provide a narrative for both parents and the Year 1 teacher.



Impact is also evident through our successful transitions into Year 1. EYFS staff have a good understanding of how ELG's link to the National Curriculum, and through our robust planning and delivery across the spectrum of subjects – both core and foundation - children leave the EYFS stage with the skills, knowledge and confidence to continue their journey as scientists, historians, artists and geographers.