

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

At St Gregory's School we aim to provide a high quality early years experience, creating a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. In partnership with parents and carers, we seek to enable children to become creative and critical thinkers and active learners for life.

This policy links with the **Every Child Matters** agenda, in that every child has a right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being.

*"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age 5 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 Early Years Foundation Stage'  
Department for Education, 2017

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five and the final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. We greatly value the important and distinct role that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. In our school, all children join us, part time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. After two weeks they begin attending school full time to continue their learning journey.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

## A Unique Child

### *Child development*

At St Gregory's School 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, at varying rates. Children joining our

school have already learnt a great deal at one of a range of settings, and have a variety of experiences and range of abilities. It is the privilege of Early Years practitioners to build upon this prior learning and extend children's experiences. Every area of development - physical, cognitive, linguistic, spiritual, social and emotional - is equally important. We recognise the importance of the role of the child in his/her own development and we support, encourage and praise children's positive attitudes and dispositions.

### *Inclusion*

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St Gregory's School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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 through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- 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;
- encouraging children to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children;
- asking parents whether there is a need for any specific services and equipment for children who may require additional support;

- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

The early identification of children with special educational needs is important and procedures listed in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice are followed throughout the school. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the schools SEND Policy. The reception class teacher would discuss these targets with the child, as appropriate, parents or carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The schools SEND Co-coordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. The class teacher liaises between parents, SENCO, health visitors, speech and language therapists, school nurse, educational psychologists and EAL teachers in order to meet the needs of individuals. For further information see SEND Policy.

#### *Keeping Safe Health and Well-being*

'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.'

It is important to us that all children at St Gregory's School are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist and how they can take responsibility for their own safety. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We believe children should be allowed to take some risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards and dangerous situations.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children, (see whole school Safeguarding Children Policy). We recognise that we have 'a shared responsibility' and there 'is a need for effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise if children are to be protected from harm and their welfare promoted'

'Working together to Safeguard Children'  
H M Government 2006

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, 2017. At St Gregory's School we:

- promote the welfare of children
- attend to child's physical well-being. We ensure children know the importance of eating healthy food, keeping clean, exercise and we ensure they have access to the outdoors and caring relationships.
- attend to child's emotional well-being. We support children in making friendships and acquiring a positive sense of self. We ensure they feel a sense of belonging and encourage them to take responsibility and join in by helping with manageable tasks.
- 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.

### Positive Relationships

#### *Respecting each other*

At St Gregory's School we recognise that it is vital for fellow professionals, parents and children to listen to and respect each others views and feelings. We have an 'open door' policy where parents can speak to the teacher at any time to seek information, advice or voice any concerns they may have. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with all children and their families.

Children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships, therefore we seek to help children understand and discuss their feelings, assist them in their play and help them to make friends.

Early Years practitioners will develop mutual respect by joining in with their play and discussing things that interest them.

#### *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. At St Gregory's

School we have found that when parents and practitioners work together in reception class, the results have a positive impact on children's development.

We encourage strong school/parental links through:

- \*talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- \*requesting parents complete a questionnaire detailing child's attainment in areas of learning, health matters, speech and language concerns etc;
- \*inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school. School brochures are issued;
- \*inviting parents to workshops where they can be made aware of what and what children are learning i.e. phonics workshops;
- \*inviting parents in to class to observe a range of activities and routines which may assist them in supporting their child at home;
- \*outlining the Early Years curriculum and importance of child initiated activities;
- \*sending home 'curriculum forecasts' and topic/themes information and inviting parents to accompany our class on trips and visits;
- \*valuing and utilising parents' knowledge and expertise, inviting them to talk to the children;
- \*inviting parents to contribute artefacts, photographs, comments linked to our current learning objectives;
- \*offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class, times to accommodate parents. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- \*allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' portfolios; encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- \*encouraging parents to contribute, in writing or verbally, to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), detailing children's achievements;
- \*Spencer Bear home visits and written recount of his experiences;
- \*arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Nativity, Enterprise days, Class assemblies, Sports Day, Computer Club, Mass celebration of festivals, Harvest etc;
- \*providing space in the children's 'home record' booklets for parent to leave comments relating to the children's achievements;
- \*asking parents views on their experience of Reception Class and quality of provision, and any changes they would like to see;

\*supplying parents with resources and ideas for helping their child at home i.e. word cards, phoneme cards, phoneme frames, word/caption lists, maths games.

### *Supporting Learning*

Practitioners within our reception class know that they are the best resource a child may have. They talk to children to support their communication skills and help them to solve problems and make links in their learning. This 'shared, sustained thinking' approach is more valuable during activities that the child has planned and is interested in.

### *Key Person*

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 the EYFS teacher acts as 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by other Early Years practitioners. For assessment purposes the Senior Education Practitioner is 'key worker' to a portion of the class. Careful records of the child's development and progress are created by key persons and shared by parents, the child and other professionals.

## Enabling Environments

At St Gregory's School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's learning and 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*

'Practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage' outlines a developmental path and activities and experiences that children may be involved in as they progress through the Foundation year. Close observation of the child, together with written or verbal input from parents, determines where a child is on entry to Reception class and the 'Development matters' column identifies the 'next steps', the developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children will need if they are to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the EYFS. Throughout the year, this cycle of observation, assessment and planning for 'next steps' continues. This is called 'assessment for learning'. Information about the child comes from a range of sources including parents, lunch supervisors, pastoral care teachers, other agencies and children themselves. Formative assessment

may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, play observations, other focused assessment, photographs and annotated children's work.

Information compiled helps the Early Years team to form a medium term plan of around four weeks which will incorporate a theme or topic based upon children's current interests. The medium term plan is used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning. Planning is flexible to take into account unforeseen learning opportunities and is amended and annotated in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. We recognise that good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive.

Regular observational assessments of children's learning ensures that future planning reflects identified needs but also assists in completing the eProfile to record judgements against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELG's).

At parents meetings reference is made to the EYFSP and children's achievements and 'next steps' are outlined so that parents may assist their child and inform us of any achievements they have noted. At the end of the year, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. We give an opportunity for parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

### *Supporting every child*

At St Gregory's we recognise that every child's learning journey takes a personal path based on their own interests, experiences and the curriculum on offer. Therefore we plan learning journeys which are suitable for groups but flexible enough to cater for individual pathways along the way. We also recognise that a child's role in his/her education is paramount. Children must be listened to and their views valued.

### *The Learning Environment*

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely with a balance of indoor and outdoor provision. Early Years practitioners ensure a warm and supportive setting which is accepting of everyone. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas which can be used flexibly and where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Provision is in line with current recommendations and

resources suit different abilities and interests, with enhanced as well as continuous provision. Range and quality of provision and resources are regularly monitored.

The EYFS class leads out onto an enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We provide activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

### *Induction and Transition*

At St Gregory's we realise that it is paramount that children are happy and settle in their new learning environment and that they form a close bond with their key person.

Early Years practitioners facilitate this by aiming to visit children in their setting during July, before starting school. Children may see photographs of their future class and play with some of its resources. Pre-school siblings are always welcome to attend school events such as Sports Day, assemblies, Mass, performances, school photographs and Enterprise Days. Early Year's practitioners find out as much information about the child before the child comes to visit in July or starts school in September. Parents complete a detailed questionnaire to assist in this process and attend meetings where they are given copies of the school brochure and where they may order uniform and reading folders so they may be well informed and well prepared for the September start.

Transition from Reception to Year One is treated just as sensitively. Children will visit Year One for three afternoons in the term preceding September entry. They will already have met their future teacher whilst sharing the outdoor and other areas with Year One and linking with them for activities such as singing in the hall and Christmas parties. Many routines and resources echo those in Reception class so making for a more familiar environment for the children. We also aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements and 'next steps' (detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) with the Year One teacher, as well as information such as medical conditions and needs, SEN and 'gifted and talented' information and sensitive family related issues.

### *Multi-agency working*

In order to achieve the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes for children, we recognise the need to work together across services. Therefore, St Gregory's school works with agencies such as health and social care professionals, speech and language therapists and educational psychologists to best support children and their families.

### *The community*

At St Gregory's we recognise that it is important for our children to make links with their local community and acknowledge and value the many different groups of people and their values and beliefs, that are part of this community, for the benefit of all.

## Learning and Development

At St Gregory's 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 throughout St Gregory's. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have 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.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'  
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

At St Gregory's we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through supported play activities and decide when child initiated or adult led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

'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.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'  
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

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."

At St Gregory's children are given the 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*

At St Gregory's School we plan activities and experiences carefully so that children may secure the broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning, comprising three prime areas and four specific areas. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. Indeed the prime areas provide the essential underpinning of learning and development. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

PRIME AREAS
<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)</b> Children are helped to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
<b>Communication and Language Development (C&amp;L)</b> Children are given opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
<b>Physical Development (PD)</b> Opportunities are provided for children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. They will also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

## SPECIFIC AREAS

### Literacy

Children are encouraged to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

### Mathematics

Opportunities are provided to develop and improve children's skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

### Understanding the World

Children are guided to 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 are enabled to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Opportunities are provided to encourage children to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### **Monitoring and review**

Early Years practitioners will attend regular courses and meetings, to learn about and share current, best practice and ensure that this Early Years Policy remains current and relevant so ensuring the best possible care, provision and outcomes for our children.

Early Years practitioners will attend regular local authority moderation events and also cluster moderation sessions with selected schools. The Head teacher, coordinators and other staff will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. Early Years staff will have our own ongoing monitoring and moderation within our class setting.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Olwen Pickering  
April, 2018