

EYFS Curriculum

Curriculum intent

What is the intent of EYFS curriculum?

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) team at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has constructed a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give children, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced following the guidance of the new non-statutory framework, Development Matters 2021. It builds on what children know and can do, towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for their future learning.
- There is a sharp focus on ensuring that children acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and, in Reception, secure a knowledge of phonics, which gives them the foundations for future learning.
- Many children display poor language skills and speech difficulties on entry. Therefore, all children undergo a 'speech and or language link' assessment on entry to ensure any potential difficulties are identified and addressed swiftly so that all children can communicate effectively, understand and use an ambitious range of vocabulary. This develops the early skills needed to ensure development of fluent and confident readers.
- The school's approach to teaching early reading and synthetic phonics is systematic and ensures that all children learn to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.
- The school has the same academic ambitions for almost all children. For children with particular needs, such as those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), their curriculum is designed to be ambitious but to meet their needs.
- The EYFS curriculum provides no limits or barriers to the children's achievements, regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances or needs. The high ambition it embodies is shared by all staff.
- Children are highly motivated and are eager to join in. They share and cooperate well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and respect for others. Children consistently keep on trying hard, particularly if they encounter difficulties.

Curriculum Implementation

How does the curriculum overview allow all children to achieve?

- Children benefit from meaningful learning across the curriculum because the staff are knowledgeable about the areas of learning they teach. They manage the EYFS curriculum and pedagogy in relation to the learning needs of their children.
- Staff are expert in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics and ensure that children practise their reading from books that match their phonics knowledge.
- Staff work closely with 'Medway Early Years', a local EYFS support company, to ensure EYFS staff have a skill set and knowledge of the early years that is at the forefront of practice.

- Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) access training tailored to their experience level to ensure Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is effective.
- Staff present information clearly to children, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They communicate well to check children's understanding, identify misconceptions and provide clear explanations to improve their learning. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary.
- Staff read to children in a way that excites and engages them, introducing new ideas, concepts and vocabulary.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the teaching of early mathematics. They ensure that children have sufficient practice to be confident in using and understanding numbers. The mathematics curriculum provides a strong basis for more complex learning later on. Over the EYFS, teaching is designed to help children remember long term what they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. This is checked well by staff and leaders. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and avoid unnecessary burdens on staff or children.
- Staff create an environment that supports the intent of an ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced curriculum. The resources are chosen to meet the children's needs, interests and promote learning.
- The curriculum and care practices promote and support children's emotional security and development of their character. Staff teach children the language of feelings, helping them to appropriately develop their emotional literacy which set out the personal, social and emotional development (PSED) area of learning.
- Leaders and staff are particularly attentive to the youngest children's needs.
- The layered pastoral approach of the school is also firmly embedded within Foundation Stage to ensure all children feel safe and happy within school.
- Restorative justice is implemented within EYFS at a developmentally appropriate level to support personal development and emotional literacy and security.
- Staff give clear messages to children about why it is important to eat, drink, rest, exercise and be kind to each other. They teach children to take managed risks and challenges as they play and learn, supporting them to be active and develop physically.
- Staff provide information for parents about their children's progress, in line with the requirements of the EYFS. They provide information to parents about supporting their child's learning at home, including detail about the school's method of teaching reading and how to help their children learn to read within numerous face-to-face parent information sessions.
- The role of the parent is celebrated and utilised effectively in the Early Years. Parents attend 'new intake sessions' before children start school to understand what their child's experience will be. Once children are in school, parents attend a 'Curriculum Evening' to further understand the approaches to and content of the children's learning. In addition to whole school 'Bring Your Parent to. . .' sessions where parents join their children in class to participate in a particular aspect of learning there are a wide range of opportunities for parents of EYFS children to remain informed and involved with their child's learning.
- Use of the Class Dojo platform allows parents to log in to view the observations and comments about their child's learning as well as posting their own observations and events from their child at home so that the knowledge of the child is a 'whole view' incorporating home and school understanding of the child.

- Monthly reading sessions are a success and facilitate a love of reading with children. In these sessions, parents are invited to class to participate in 'Families and Fairy Tales'.

How is assessment used to identify and fill gaps?

Assessment is used consistently and strategically following a 'plan, do and review' cycle to evaluate children's progress, knowledge and understanding. It is a valuable tool used by teachers to be able to identify individual strengths and areas for development to inform next steps in planning and teaching. Teacher, peer and self-assessment, oral and written feedback and formative and summative assessments inform next steps, interventions, reviews and provision to ensure children are supported and extended.

SEND/Disadvantaged

Our aim is to make our SEND and Disadvantaged children to feel valued and included, and to have high aspirations. Inclusion is embedded in our practice and teachers regularly review and reflect upon their own practice to ensure progress is made. Teaching is adapted and responds to the strengths and needs of all learners.

Curriculum Impact

What does impact look like?

- The impact of the curriculum on what children know, can remember and do is strong. Children demonstrate this through being deeply engaged and sustaining high levels of concentration.
- Children are highly motivated and are eager to join in. They share and cooperate well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and respect for others. Children consistently keep on trying hard, particularly if they encounter difficulties.
- Children develop detailed knowledge and skills across the 7 areas of learning in an age-appropriate way. Children develop their vocabulary and use it across the EYFS curriculum. By the end of Reception, children use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing speed and fluency.
- Children are ready for the next stage of education. They have the knowledge and skills they need to benefit from what school has to offer when it is time to move on.
- A transition package for all children is implemented which straddles the summer break to support the children in getting ready to attend school in September.
- Parents are required to attend a range of transitional activities to ensure their child is being well supported in the transition from pre-school into school.
- Parents attend some activities with their child (stay and play sessions, story time, coffee morning) so that children become accustomed to the new school environment with the support of one of their key attachment figures. A letter in the post to new children, as well as a home visit, from their teacher helps to build confidence and familiarity. Children are then encouraged to attend 'stay and play sessions' independently of their parents before starting on a staggered build-up of sessions.
- All children are looked at and considered individually to determine which children require a personalised transition package based on individual needs. This may consist of social stories, additional visits to the nursery to build bonds or to the school to increase familiarity, shorter stay and play sessions, additional sessions,

family support and/or liaising with external agencies to support the child in starting school feeling confident and prepared.

- Transitions out of EYFS into Year 1 are also carefully managed. All year groups carry out transition projects so that all children feel confident in their new class and with their new teacher before the end of July. Following on from a 'Transition Project' with 'MEY' the transition into Year 1 is a graduated approach as opposed to a distinct change, which continues into Year 1. EYFS and Year 1 staff work together to slightly increase the formality and expectation at the end of EYFS and to provide a more child led provision at the start of Year 1.
- By the end of Reception, children have the personal, physical and social skills they need to succeed in the next stage of their education. Most children achieve the early learning goals, particularly in mathematics and literacy.
- To improve the children's development for writing, daily fine and gross motor sessions take place after lunch to set a calming start to the afternoon.
- Children enjoy, listen attentively and respond with comprehension to familiar stories, rhymes and songs that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children develop their vocabulary and understanding of language across the 7 areas of learning.
- Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. They listen intently and respond positively to adults and each other. Children are developing their resilience to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Children are beginning to manage their own feelings and behaviour, understanding how these have an impact on others. They are developing a sense of right from wrong.
- The impact of the curriculum on what children know, can remember and do is strong. Children demonstrate this through being deeply engaged and sustaining high levels of concentration. Children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do well. Children with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.