

# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

### Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, the term “Early Years” relates to those children in the Reception classes. We recognise that early childhood is valid in its own right as an important stage in life. In our Early Years Foundation Stage, we try to give children a variety of learning opportunities at a practical experimental level. This is the building block for applying knowledge and understanding to the same experiences at a more abstract level in later years.

### Aims

- To provide a secure and happy learning environment and through this a positive attitude to school life.
- To provide the stimulus and opportunities for children to become independent learners.
- To provide a broad, balanced curriculum appropriate to the age and ability of each child.
- To make the most efficient use of space, resources and equipment.
- To foster in children an awareness of responsibility and respect for themselves and towards others.
- To help children develop an understanding of right and wrong.
- To help children develop and grow in an atmosphere of God’s love.

### Entitlement

Our Foundation Stage children follow: Early Years Foundation Stage framework based on the seven areas of learning (DFES 2020). This provides a firm foundation for Key Stage One. The children will have access to this as and when they are ready, most notably in Literacy and Maths.

### Content

Our curriculum is inspired by the children’s interests as well as key events throughout the school year. These might include:

- Special Me
- Frozen
- Transport
- Christmas
- Diwali

Extra work will be covered in the areas of Communication Language and Literacy, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Number, Physical Education and Religious Education using the following resources:

- New Development Matters: non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DFES 2020).
- Twinkl Phonics Scheme

- White Rose Maths
- Life to the Full – Religious & Health Education Scheme in conjunction with the Catholic Directory

### **Play**

Play is valued as an important part of the curriculum. It is an essential part of the learning process as it enables children to take control of their learning, to consolidate and unify learning. Learning must be active.

“A child’s play is his work.” Tina Bruce.

Play enables children to:

- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| -discover                | -develop language                 |
| -experiment              | -concentrate                      |
| -invent                  | -use imagination                  |
| -learn new skills        | -share and co-operate with others |
| -express ideas and fears |                                   |

### **Resources**

Each reception class has a teacher and two learning support assistants. Parent helpers are welcomed and encouraged to help.

The classrooms are arranged so that all children have access to a variety of clearly labelled resources and equipment, which they are able to select independently. They are encouraged to take responsibility for keeping the environment tidy.

Our outside play area has a soft play surface, water and sand play, garden area, construction area, mud kitchen, playhouse, storage sheds and a canopy.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Every child will be given equal opportunity and encouragement in Early Years, irrespective of gender, race and disability. For further clarification refer to our Inclusion Policy.

### **Special Needs**

All children will be expected to do their best and to achieve high standards. Where a difficulty is observed the child will receive support to overcome the difficulty.

### **Health and Safety**

All children will be taught safe ways of handling tools and equipment before being allowed to use them unsupervised.

The front door to the Reception block will be kept locked at all times apart from when the children enter in the morning and are dismissed at home time. The children safely wait in the cloakroom area and are called by their teacher to go home when their adult comes to collect them.

Staff, students and volunteers are prohibited from using their mobile phones during any teaching session.

Staff, students and volunteers will never use their camera phones to take photographs of children in the school.

Parents are asked not to use their mobile phones in the classroom.

All photographs taken for assessment purposes will be done so on school owned cameras or school tablets for observation purposes and will remain the property of school. Permission should be received from all Parents/Guardians regarding the taking and publishing of pictures.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

The Reception teachers carry out an Entry Baseline Assessments and End of Year Assessments for all children.

Other informal assessments will go on as necessary and be noted online in their Tapestry Journal or via an individualised Excel tracking assessment sheet.

A reading record will be kept for each child.

Photographs may be taken from time to time of activities and also of constructions, models or art work that need to be dismantled or taken home.

Musical compositions may be recorded.

All necessary information will be passed on to the next teacher at the end of the school year.

### **Information Technology**

Each class has one computer and an interactive Whiteboard and uses relevant software as and when appropriate.

### **Information for Parents**

Pre-school meetings and visits are arranged both to inform parents and to put them at their ease in the school environment. An information pack is given for future reference. They are advised about ways to make the transition from home to school a happy one for both parents and pupils and on how to support their children's learning in the future. Each family has an opportunity to speak at length with the teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Two parents' evenings are arranged each year to discuss children's progress and teachers are always willing to answer queries at reasonable times. All of the children's learning is recorded onto their Tapestry Journal which is an electronic resource for teachers and parents to access. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's online Journal. An end of year report is written for each child towards the end of the summer term.

**Review Date:** January 2023  
**Next Review Date:** January 2025