

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Thomas More RC Primary School, we have a 26 place Nursery class that currently offers the 30 Hour Entitlement and a 45 place Reception class.

In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We aim to support children in their learning through "teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

## **Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by all practitioners working with them
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the wider world
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and expectations for behavior
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

## **Curriculum and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the Early Years, children learn and develop at a rapid pace. Every situation that they find themselves in is a learning opportunity! We are continually observing the children and aim to plan and provide learning experiences that meet their needs and interests. Our half termly plans are based upon a theme and a text which aim to engage and challenge the children in their learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum contains seven areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. These are underpinned by four themes; A Unique Child + Positive Relationship + Enabling Environments = Learning and Development. Further details of these can be found in the links below to the Foundation Years website and also within our Early Years Policy.

Religious Education is taught through the Diocese approved religious syllabus; 'Come and See.'

### **Starting Nursery/Reception**

Leaving parents for the first time or moving from Nursery into Reception is a big step in your child's life. To make this as easy as possible we offer a 'taster' session in our transition week, usually in July, to enable your child to experience their new environment and teachers. We also invite parents to 'sign up' for a Home Visit. This involves two members of our Early Years team visiting you and your child in your home environment. We find these visits very beneficial to the children upon their transition into Nursery/Reception as it provides an opportunity for the staff to meet your child in the home setting and also an opportunity for parents to have conversations and share information about your child with the Early Years team prior to starting at St Thomas More.

### **September**

For our Nursery children, we initially 'stagger' sessions for our Nursery children. We find this enables the children to ease into the new routine, become familiar with the new setting, practitioners and children and allows them time to 'settle in.' We gradually increase the time they stay within the setting before staying 'full time.'

For Reception, children start school in two groups. Further information will be provided when you attend the Parents Information Meeting in May.

Your child will be excited about starting Nursery or school but may also have worries e.g. mixing with other children, sharing toys, using toilets etc... He/she may be happy to leave you at first but may later want you to stay. Talk to your child about this and about what they will do every day.

If you are anxious about your child settling in keep these worries to yourself. Be positive, Nursery/School is a great place to go to! Tell your child that on the first day you will leave them for a short time. When you feel it is time to go, tell your child, tell the teacher and leave immediately. All children are different, so please don't worry if your child takes a little longer to settle or, if they don't want you around at all! Rest assured, even if your child does cry when you leave it is unusual for them not to calm down, so don't be unduly worried.

### **The Nursery/School Day and Routines**

Times:

- Nursery - 8.40am - 3.10pm (for those children accessing the 30 Hour Entitlement)
- Nursery **Part Time sessions** - 8.40am - 11.40am or 12.10pm - 3.10pm
- Reception - 8.40am - 3.10pm

Please bring your child to their entrance and wait with them until the session begins. **Please be on time!**

We ask parents/carers to collect children promptly at the end of their session/day. If for any reason, you are unable to collect your child on time try to let us know so that we can reassure your child. If someone different is going to collect your child please let us know, especially if it is someone we are unfamiliar with. Please inform us of any changes in family circumstances which might affect your child, this information will always be treated as confidential.

If you arrive late with your child please report to the School Office so that your child can be registered and then taken to their classroom.

**At all times Nursery and Reception age children must be delivered and collected by an adult.**

### **Absence and Illness**

If your child is absent, please contact the school by telephone or email and on their return send a written note. If your child is unwell, has been sick or had diarrhoea, please keep them at home for 48hours after the last bout of illness. This is for their own wellbeing and also in the interest of other children and staff. Do not send a sick child to Nursery or into school.

If you have any concerns about your child's sight, hearing or speech development please contact your Doctor or Health Visitor as soon as possible. If your child has a health problem or any medical conditions please tell us. Let us know the outcomes of any health or medical assessment so that staff are aware of your child's needs.

## **Medicine**

We are able to administer prescribed medications only, upon the completion of a consent form which is completed by parents. If your child is asthmatic, please let a member of the team know and send in an inhaler which can be kept in school and complete the relevant forms/Asthma card.

## **Snacks**

Snacks are provided during the course of the school day. These consist of fruit/vegetable, cartons of milk and water. We do ask for a weekly donation of £1 for snacks which enable us to provide a wider variety including; crackers, breadsticks, toast etc.

## **Clothing**

It is advisable to dress your child in clothes that are easy to pull up/down for going to the toilet. Clothing, particularly trousers with belts or buckles are not suitable as children cannot deal with them independently, as are shoes with laces. As part of our curriculum we play/work outside whenever possible every day. Your child will get dirty! Please make sure that your child has suitable clothes e.g. wellingtons, hat, gloves and a sensible, warm coat for the winter. In the summer, the sun's rays can be harmful to young skin so we advise wearing a sun hat outside and applying sun block before coming to school.

**Important: Please mark or clothing, including shoes and wellingtons clearly with your child's name.**

## **Birthdays**

St. Thomas More is a Healthy School so sweets are not shared on birthdays. However, we do celebrate each child's birthday and make the day special for them.

## **Toys from Home**

We do not allow children to bring any toys or valuables to school unless we request that they are brought in for a specific purpose. Lost or broken toys can cause upset.

## **Health and Safety**

For the safety of all children cars must not be driven onto the school premises at any time. Please park cars in the Parents' car park.

Climbing/play equipment must not be used unless supervised by a staff member - this is especially before the start and at the end of the day, when you are responsible for your child.

Dogs are not allowed on the school premises.

## What you can do to help

You can help your child by practising these skills:

- Putting on and taking off own coat/jumper/cardigan.
- Hanging their coat on a peg.
- Going to the toilet independently and dealing with their personal hygiene. **Children entering Nursery/Reception must be 'toilet trained'.**
- Washing and drying hands.
- Using a tissue.
- Tidying toys
- Set aside a time each day to sit quietly, read a story, say rhymes or sing songs with your child.

**Finally...** You are always welcome at St Thomas More School. If you have any queries or questions about your child or the Early Years Foundation Stage, then please come and talk to us. We will do all we can to help.