



Darlington Street • Tyldesley • M29 8DH

T 01942 883773 E enquiries@admin.saintgeorgescentral.wigan.sch.uk

www.saintgeorgescentral.wigan.sch.uk

## **EARLY YEARS POLICY 2014**

### **Introduction**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic approach to education that encompasses all areas of learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage at St George's Central CE Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting including teachers, teaching assistants and non-teaching adults.

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

In the EYFS setting at St George's Central we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start to their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order for them to develop to their full potential.

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 different rates;
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children are happy and know they are valued by practitioners;
- Nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community;
- Encouraging children's independence and decision making;
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required to work together harmoniously;
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ from their own;
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development;
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development;
- Provide effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and out.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework**

Teaching in the EYFS setting at St Georges Central is delivered in accordance with the government's document "The Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage" (March 2012).

The curriculum is centred on three prime areas of learning.

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

***'Never settle for less than your best'***

Practitioners must also support activities through the four specific areas which enhance and strengthen the prime areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- The World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. All areas of development are given equal weighting and value. Characteristics of learning form an important part of child development and we aim to provide a learning environment which supports and values the different ways children learn. At St George's Central we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of the child's education.

### **Active Learning Through Play**

At St George's Central we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at St George's Central practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within our settings.

### **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at St George's Central. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats - written notes, photographs, examples of children's work and, most recently, using the "Orbit" application which enables practitioners to use iPads to make written observations and take photographic evidence which can be directly linked to EYFS stages of development. All practitioners are involved in observing children.

***'Never settle for less than your best'***

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work and talking with children about their task or play.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new EYFS Profile (2012). This is updated at least once each term to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Baseline assessment is carried out using the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering our school. Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

Judgements are validated by the LEA, either through moderator visits to the school or practitioners attending moderation meetings, usually in the Spring Term. Early Years practitioners meet regularly to moderate internally and agree levels of development based on the evidence collected.

### **Parents as Partners**

At St George's Central we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Therefore practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual. This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular newsletters, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn Term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into school. Another parents' evening takes place during the Spring Term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development.

Individual targets are shared termly with parents and a written end of year report gives feedback on children's progress, achievement and targets for the coming year. Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open craft afternoons and assemblies. The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

Signed: (Headteacher): *M Grogan*

Date: February 2014

Signed: (Early Years leader): *J Heywood*

Date: February 2014

Signed: (Chair of curriculum committee): *S Yates*

Date: February 2014

***'Never settle for less than your best'***