

EYFS Curriculum Statement

Intent:

At St John Fisher and Thomas More we aim to provide an early years curriculum that fosters creativity, independence, curiosity and wonder. We aim to create life-long, confident learners who have a secure foundation of knowledge and skills to build upon throughout their education. We also seek to develop children's emotional resilience and social skills to enable them to have the confidence and self-belief to take risks and tackle any challenges they may face throughout their lives.

We aim to provide a curriculum that is rich in language and fosters a love of reading. We also seek to ensure our curriculum remains broad, balanced and full of opportunities for children to explore their own creativity and the world around them. The children's interests and individual needs are at the heart of all we do, but we also acknowledge the need to broaden children's interests and extend learning by exposing them to high quality learning opportunities.

Rationale:

We know that many of our children enter our EYFS below the national expectations for their age, with communication and language often being significantly behind. With this in mind, we have created a curriculum with talk and reading at its core. We believe that by giving children the opportunity to communicate and exposing them to a wide range of vocabulary through adult modelling and stories, we provide an excellent foundation for future learning in all subjects.

All aspects of learning within the EYFS framework rely on children having well developed communication skills. Without the ability to communicate, children will find socialising with others, explaining their thinking in mathematics, asking questions about the world and decoding unfamiliar words in books extremely difficult. Talk affects all areas of learning and this is why our curriculum seeks to provide varied, high quality opportunities for talk and all topics are centred around key texts.

Our children also enter Nursery and Reception with varied life experiences and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. With this in mind, we aim to provide a curriculum with rich and varied learning opportunities that enhance the cultural capital of our children. We take children on educational visits, learn about other cultures and festivals, grow plants and vegetables, provide access to high quality outdoor learning and have strong community links to provide families with the support they need at home.

Implementation:

At St John Fisher and Thomas More, we provide a curriculum which carefully balances child-initiated play with adult led activities. In nursery, more emphasis is placed upon child-initiated learning and although the children do take part in some adult led activities, these are informal and very much play based. In reception, we

still offer a balance of child-initiated play and adult led focus tasks, but the frequency and length of the focus tasks increases gradually throughout the reception year. In order to encourage independence and help prepare the children for KS1, Reception children also complete independent, weekly tasks (Rainbow Challenges) designed to consolidate their learning.

Our EYFS curriculum has been mapped out and planned with the Characteristics of Effective Learning and a progression of knowledge and skills in mind. We deliver the EYFS curriculum using half termly topics based on key texts. Nursery 2 and Reception follow the same topics and have a 2 year planning cycle. Key texts and learning within these topics are differentiated for each age group. Our topics have been selected by considering common children's interests and the stepping stones needed for learning in KS1. Our two year old provision follows the interests and needs of the children but staff ensure they prepare the children for our Nursery 2 curriculum by teaching them key skills and knowledge during the year. For example, in order to prepare our toddlers for their farm topic in Nursery 2/Reception we ensure they know the names of some farm animals and the noises they make. Our two year old planning primarily focuses on the Prime areas of learning and developing the Characteristics of Effective learning.

All topics within EYFS have carefully considered key vocabulary that we will teach during the half term. This key vocabulary is split in to different tiered levels of language. Tier 1 focusses on everyday language used in conversations, Tier 2 is language found regularly in written texts and Tier 3 is subject specific, academic language. We identified that many of our children have limited Tier 2 language and therefore this is our main priority when planning key vocabulary.

Reading and phonics are taught by following the Read, Write Inc programme of study which starts in Nursery 2. Children are taught in small groups with teaching being tailored to the needs of the children in those groups by using assessment information.

Within EYFS we have a robust observation, assessment and planning cycle. We gather observations of 'significant moments' in a child's learning and development and use these observations to inform planning and the next steps in learning for individual children. These observations are gathered both formally and informally, with some being recorded in the children's online learning journeys. Each room has a Next Steps wall which details each child's next steps in learning. This ensures that adult-child interactions are targeted and purposeful and that all staff and parents are aware of how to move learning forward. The next steps walls are driven by observations made in the moment during play and the children next steps contributes to our weekly planning. We also make termly assessments of the children which informs our adult led and environment planning. Assessment in EYFS is purposeful and workload sensitive, although staff are expected to record significant moments in learning and development, practitioner knowledge is primarily used when making overall judgements of a child's learning. We are

reflective in our approach and will adapt planning following analysis of assessments made.

We work in partnership with parents to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children. We provide regular parent workshops, which are delivered in partnership with other local services such as Sure Start and community nurses. These workshops vary in their focus but often centre around developing reading, writing, maths and communication skills. We offer stay and play sessions throughout the year and invite parents to our many 'Wow Events'. We offer an open-door policy to our parents and staff encourage parents to contribute to the children's online learning journeys and to the next steps wall by completing a 'proud cloud'.

Impact:

The impact of our curriculum is measured using assessment procedures and comparing our data with other schools nationally. We aim for children to all make at least good progress from their individual starting points and for children to have achieved a good level of development by the end of the EYFS. We aim to be broadly in line with the national average for the percentage of children achieving GLD and for our children to be well prepared for learning in KS1. The gaps in learning identified on entry to EYFS will have narrowed significantly, with many children closing these gaps completely and meeting age related expectations by the end of Reception. Children with SEND will have the support they need to make excellent progress from their individual starting points and against their personalised targets.

We aim for children to be engaged in and enthusiastic about their learning. By the end of the EYFS children are keen to try new things; they can make connections between previous learning and experiences during interactions with others and link this to new learning. Children's language will have developed across all areas of learning and children will enter year one with a love of stories. Children leaving EYFS will be emotionally resilient and considerate of others, they will be prepared for the challenges that Key Stage One will bring.