**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.**

At St. George’s Catholic Primary School we encourage each child to recognise their own value both as an individual and as part of the school family. We expect and encourage a high standard of positive behaviour in relationships with other pupils, staff, parents and visitors.

We aim to enable every individual, made in the image and likeness of God, to learn, grow and reach their full potential.

We aim to be a loving Christian family living the values of the Gospel… developing caring relationships with the local and wider community

(School Mission Statement aims)

***To learn with kindness, respect and friendship through God’s love.***

At St George's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing a high quality early years’ education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

***‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’***

**(Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012)**

At St Georges Catholic Primary School, we have one FS1 (Nursery)class and one FS2 (Reception) class. Our 26 place nursery provides the requirement of 15 hours per week through offering a daily morning session with a qualified teacher and level 3 qualified Teaching Assistant. Extra wrap around sessions are available at a cost of £15 per session. Our 30 place Reception class also has a qualified teacher and one teaching assistant.

Our foundation stage comprises of two separate classrooms with a shared outdoor area. Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child-initiated experiences throughout the day. Most sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Reception children also have access to the nursery areas of provision during some afternoon sessions to allow them the opportunity to experience the full range of continuous provision activities tailored to their age and ability.

**The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

● The Unique Child

● Positive Relationships

● Enabling Environments

● Learning and Development

**The Unique Child**

At St George's we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self‐assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

**Positive Relationships**

At St George's we recognise that children learn to be independent confident learners from secure relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

**Enabling Environments**

Additionally we believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through various observation methods, we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

Our Foundation Stage is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classrooms and outdoor areas are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We also offer our children an opportunity to be independent during our rolling snack table, where the children can serve themselves snack, select, wash, dry and put away their own equipment.

**Learning and Development.**

Our school follows the EYFS framework in delivering the curriculum. This framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. Three of these areas are seen as particularly important in the development of the children's potential for learning and success in all other areas of learning and relationship development.

Our school follows the Archdiocesan scheme 'Come and See' programme in line with the rest of the school. Please see RE guidance.

**The Prime Areas** :

* Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
* Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self care
* Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

**Specific Areas:**

* Literacy - Reading and Writing.
* Mathematics - Number, shape, space and Measure
* Understanding the world - People and Communities, The World, Technology
* Expressive arts and design - Exploring using Media and Materials, Being Imaginative.

**Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

**Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’

**Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.

**Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Most observations of the children will highlight what Characteristic of Effective Learning has taken place or was in evidence.

**Planning**

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. We have a two year topic cycle so both classes are working together on the same overarching theme; topics are usually based on the children's predictable interests and are a starting point in which to spark the children's interest such as 'into the woods, sparkle and surprise or up, up and away'. We then plan a range of possible directions that the topic may go in line with the children's interests. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to and what the next steps are for our children.

Reception children also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the “Letters & Sounds” document and in line with school policy. They also follow the Abacus maths scheme in line with whole school policy.

**Play**

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.” (“Early Years Foundation Stage”, DFE, 2012)

At St George's, we support children’s learning through planned play activities, and decide when child‐initiated or adult‐led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.  Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. Adults plan weekly objectives that they would like to see the children learn and develop. These objectives are then taken into the child's play as we believe that this offers us a true insight into ability and understanding.

**Assessment**

During the first few weeks in Nursery and Reception our children are given a baseline assessment, this gives us an insight to our children's starting points against all areas of learning. We use a range of strategies throughout the year in order to build a picture of each child's understanding, learning and development. These include photos, annotated notes, observations and the use of online monitoring software. These are all combined into our learning journey books. This assessment is then combined on a termly basis to help us highlight gaps in understanding and to enable us to develop specific next steps for each child as well as highlighting progress made. Any children not making the expected progress in the prime areas specifically will have intervention programmes put into place to develop this area.

**Parents as partners**

Parents can request to see their child's learning journeys at any point in the year and have the opportunity to add comments to the books at parents evenings three times a year. We ask the parents to complete a parent voice form on a termly basis to help us highlight any concerns they have and to also help parents feel involved with the learning and assessment of their children.

Children have a home visit from nursery staff prior to starting nursery. This is an opportunity to ask any questions or voice any concerns they have. Staff will also get an insight into the child, their likes and dislikes and what their current interests are. This information will then help staff plan activities that will help the children to settle into nursery effectively.

We offer a range of workshops throughout the year to help our parents further support their children at home, these may include phonics, maths or reading workshops or whatever the parents feel they need.

**Key workers**

Each child gets assigned to a key worker in both nursery and reception. The key worker is responsible for keeping their children's learning journeys up to date and ensuring that any next steps are completed for each child. The aim is that the key worker is able to build a secure relationship with each of their key children. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children’s well-being now and their future successes.

**Safeguarding**

‘Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.’ (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At St George's, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence; Promote good health; Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so; Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for; Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

**Transition**

As we offer free flow access to our outside area and we follow the same topics and work closely with each other, the children are familiar with the reception staff and classroom by the time they start in reception. We find that this eases them into their reception year with ease and less stress for both the children and the parents.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child’s new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to go through the school handbook, Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals, Explain about holidays and absences Etc.

**Forest School**

We offer our reception children the opportunity to access our forest area once a week. Our Forest School sessions are run by our reception teacher, a qualified level 3 Forest School Practitioner. The children have the opportunity to use tools, toast on a fire and get close to nature. Please see Forest School handbook for further details.

Autumn 2015