



**St Matthias Church of England Primary School**

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## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy St Matthias CE Primary School**

**Article 3 The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all areas concerning children.**

**Article 28 Every child has a right to education.**

**Article 29 Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.**

### **Introduction**

*Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill 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.*

*The Early Years Foundation Stage 00267-2008BKT-EN Statutory Framework © Crown copyright 2008*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EARLY YEARS) is considered to be the period of learning from birth until the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

Like other Key Stages in Education in the UK, the EARLY YEARS has its own statutory documents. The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, (DfE, 2014), sets out both the curriculum and welfare requirements and is mandatory for all settings which provide care/education for very young children. All the provision made for the youngest children at St Matthias CE Primary school is underpinned by this statutory framework.

This policy sets out features specific to the early years and sits alongside whole school policies which apply to pupils of all ages.

### **Admissions Process**

Applications forms and information leaflets about both the nursery and school are available from the school secretary. Prospective families are encouraged to arrange a visit.

The Nursery aged children at St Matthias are offered the full fifteen hours free entitlement to nursery provision and although some children may attend additional settings in the afternoon as arranged by their families, it is hoped that each nursery child will take up their full place. (For some of the youngest



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children or those for whom nursery is a very different experience, it is always possible to gradually increase the time spent in nursery so that they begin with less than fifteen hours initially.)

We also offer children the chance to attend for up to thirty hours which allows for families who receive the new thirty hour funding as well as families who would like to pay for additional sessions.

During the spring term, the school will write to families who have placed their child on the waiting list to confirm their place for September. Parents/guardians will then be offered induction visits near to the end of the Summer term. Where the demand for places is high, the school will follow the admissions policy for St Matthias (available on the school website). Children aged three years may join the nursery at any time if places are available. This means that some children may spend longer than three terms in the Early Years Unit and to make sure children make the most of their time we have a curriculum that runs on a two year cycle. Children who attend our Nursery from out of our catchment area may not get a place in our Reception Class.

### Reception class

Following a successful application to the LEA for a school place, each family receives an information pack and an invitation to parents to visit school for an informative induction meeting and for the children, invitations to induction sessions in the summer term. Parents and Carers are also asked to fill in and return several forms regarding their child's health, previous school/ pre school experiences and contact numbers.

As a majority of families usually choose St Matthias school for their child after attending the nursery it is not always necessary to have a phased or staggered start to the autumn term in reception as so many of reception class children are already happily settled and confident within the setting.

### Groups within the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit

St Matthias CE Primary school has two groups of children within the EARLY YEARS;

- A reception class (Max. 30 children) five full days per week during term time.  
A school class for children aged four years by the start of the academic year (1<sup>st</sup> September)
- A nursery class (Max. 26 children) offering five mornings, afternoons or school days per week during term time. This will depend on individual funding. A school class for children aged three years by the start of the academic year (1<sup>st</sup> September).

St Matthias CE Primary School run an Early Years Unit which allows free flow learning between the Early Years Unit and outside during morning and afternoon sessions. This opens up opportunities for children to revisit, master learning and to be challenged with extended learning opportunities.

Additionally, some children in Year 1, particularly those who do not celebrate their birthdays until the summer term, may still be working towards the "Early Learning Goals" (the set of learning achievements that all the foundation stage children work towards reaching by the end of the Foundation stage). Staff working with the youngest children in KS1 will therefore also refer to the EARLY YEARS guidance and at St Matthias the range of learning experiences provided within the Foundation Stage will also be made available to children from Y1 as appropriate.



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Similarly, staff working within the Foundation Stage at St Matthias will refer to the statutory guidance contained within The National Curriculum (DfE 2013) in order to provide a smooth transition, particularly in the teaching of mathematics and literacy as children achieve the early learning goals and work towards national curriculum levels (which for some children may occur during their Reception year).

### Safeguarding

- All staff are recruited following safer recruitment guidelines and will undergo appropriate induction training.
- Visiting staff and students will sign in via the school office, wear appropriate identification and be briefed on the safeguarding policy.
- Visitors will sign in via the school office and wear appropriate badges and be escorted at all times.
- The Early Years gate between the school grounds and the public footpath will be kept locked during school sessions, apart from brief periods to allow access for parents at the end of the morning nursery session (12 noon) and again at the end of the school day (3pm), when it will be supervised by a member of staff.
- All staff will adhere to the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and the school's internet safety policy.
- Any photographs taken to evidence children's learning will be taken using school devices only and will remain within the school premises. Teachers will only release photographs or names for publication in school documents, the wider media or on the school web page after thoroughly checking records of parental consent.
- Any personal devices capable of taking photographs (such as mobile phones) will not be used within the presence of children. (Storage will be available within the staff cupboard)
- Where there is any concern over the welfare and safety of a child within the EARLY YEARS stage, staff will immediately follow the procedures set out within the school's safeguarding and child protection policy. In brief, concerns will be recorded appropriately and passed to the school's designated safeguarding lead or deputy via the early years designated safeguarding lead, Mr Carl Salmon.
- In any kind of emergency situation, such as the arrival of an inappropriate adult to collect a child at the end of a session, there is a telephone within the Early Years Unit that can be used to alert the senior management team.

### Aims and Principles

In common with the wider school community, all work within the Early Years Unit at St Matthias seeks to improve outcomes for all children in terms of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being and is driven by the school's own vision statement.

The EARLY YEARS is also based on principles within four key areas;



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### **A Unique Child**

**Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.**

All children at St Matthias are equally important and valued as unique individuals within their own right. This is not affected by their age, faith, gender, family background, appearance, aptitude for learning, language used or any other factor. Learning activities, within the Early Years Unit at St Matthias, are planned to be inclusive so that children at different stages of development will encounter activities to support their own learning as appropriate to their current developmental stage. EARLY YEARS staff will quickly assess the developmental needs of children joining our EARLY YEARS and continue to monitor progress on an individual basis. Care will be taken to provide targeted support for specific needs and staff will work in partnership with parents and where appropriate other agencies to meet individual needs as set out in the St Matthias Special Educational Needs Policy and in accordance with the "Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years" published 2014.

### **Positive Relationships**

**Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and key people.**

All children learn best when they feel safe and secure and both their physical and emotional needs are catered for. EARLY YEARS staff at St Matthias aim to model calm, respectful interactions and to create a climate where children feel valued and respected and where they can safely learn to understand their own feelings and the feelings of those around them. Children will be encouraged to have pride in their own achievements and to be caring of those around them so that all learners can feel confident within the setting.

### **Parents as Partners**

Parents/Carers remain the primary educators for children of this age and staff are keen to work with families to support their child's learning. Parents are asked to read with their child every day and parents of nursery aged children are invited to come in each day to choose "nursery library" books with their child. Regular "Stay and play" sessions are held when parents are encouraged to work with their child engaged in a specially selected range of activities. Staff will share information regarding the teaching of key skills such as developing awareness of letter sounds or letter formation and parents will be actively encouraged to participate in creating learning journey records of their child's achievements. Formal "Homework" is not set during the Early Years but the children may be encouraged to practise particular skills or find about subjects relevant to their learning at school/nursery. Staff are very grateful to family members who are willing to accompany their child's class on local walks or visits or who are willing to be a visitor and talk to the class about a special interest or their job when such things are relevant to the children's learning. Curriculum newsletters will be sent out regularly, (typically once every half term) outlining key areas of learning with supplementary information provided as needed, these can also be accessed via the school website. The Early Years team typically provide weekly



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updates on current learning opportunities. Parents can engage in the children's learning by accessing their online 'tapestry' account and can add their own observations that will be seen and approved by the Early Years team.

It is generally possible for parents and staff to have brief discussions at the beginning or end of any session, (particularly at the start of the morning as the Early Years operates a "staggered start" system with children able to arrive any time between 8.45 and 9.00am). Appointments can always be made to talk more privately or to have a discussion in greater depth.

There are also after school consultation opportunities, (typically once per term but more frequently if appropriate or for children with special educational needs), when appointments are made for parents to review their child's development with staff and to consider next steps. A full written report is provided at the end of the year.

Early Years staff at St Matthias aim to maintain an awareness of the information and support available to parents of very young children via the Sunshine Children's Centre, Health Visitors and Action for Children in order to be able to signpost these services to families.

### Staff in the Early Years stage

*"Effective practice in the early years requires committed, enthusiastic and reflective practitioners with a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and understanding. Effective practitioners use their own learning to improve their work with young children and their families in ways which are sensitive, positive and non-judgmental."* **The EARLY YEARS 2008**

Staff for the Early Years are selected and their performance monitored by the school's senior management team and staff are expected to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through team working and by attending regular and up to date training. Appropriate staff ratios are maintained at all times for the children's safety and as the children need to feel secure, any cover needed for absence or PPA time is generally done by other members of the team or an experienced member of staff from KS1. The Reception class is staffed by a class teacher (Early Years Manager) and a teaching assistant. Nursery aged children are managed by the Early Years Manager and learning sessions are overseen by the Nursery Lead Practitioner with at least 2 other Qualified Teaching Assistants in class depending on child ratios. The Early Years staff work as a team, meeting regularly to reflect on children's learning and to plan further learning activities based on observations of the children's interests and understanding.

### Liaison with other Early Years settings

Where children receive education and care in more than one setting, practitioners must ensure Continuity and coherence by sharing relevant information with each other and with parents. **EARLY YEARS 2008**



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Care is taken to liaise in detail when children transfer to or from other settings. For example, our reception class teacher will usually visit the settings of any children who arrive without attending our nursery class and the nursery lead practitioner will liaise with the Early Years Manager to pass on child centered transition notes to all receiving reception teachers.

If a child attends another Early Years setting (including a childminder), staff will agree on an effective way to share key information with both parents and other practitioners.

### **Belonging at St Matthias CE School and the wider community**

The Early Years children at St Matthias CE School are very much a part of the whole school and participate in school events such as World Book Day, Christingle service, Circus Skills week, Science Week, School Summer fair and being part of the partnership with our link schools in other countries. The nursery and reception classes join together for worship on a weekly basis throughout the year and they gradually attend more Key Stage 1 / whole school worship times as the year progresses.

Children are encouraged to learn more about their own local community, through short walks or from local visitors and to learn, about the wider world through visitors, pictures and opportunities to experience food/music or activities that originate from other parts of the world

### **Enabling environments**

**The learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.**

#### **Classrooms**

The Early Years at St Matthias boasts two large classrooms with an interconnecting door to allow opportunities for free flow learning. They are furnished appropriately for the age of the children. Each class is equipped with internet linked computers, an interactive whiteboard and a visualiser. The Early Years Unit also benefits from integral children's toilets and a safely gated kitchen area. There is an Early Years cloakroom area. Early Years children have timetabled access to the school hall for movement work and to the school's ICT suite where several children can work at computers simultaneously.

Age appropriate furniture and resources are arranged in zones to facilitate particular types of activities in different areas. Resources are designed to be independently accessed by the children when needed and are therefore stored in child friendly boxes or trays with word and picture labels.

The Early Years has;

- At least one dramatic play area with props to support imaginative play and promote communication as well as providing an enjoyable context for practicing skills such as reading, writing and working with money.
- At least one reading area with attractive, developmentally appropriate books and comfy seating.
- A mark-making area with a variety of tempting materials and example letters/words to support the children in their own writing.



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- A creative area with aprons where children can access paint, glue, modeling clay or other creative materials.
- A construction area with various materials such as magnetic blocks, interlocking blocks and smooth wooden blocks and space to build.
- At least one carpeted area where the whole group can sit together to enjoy a story, listen to one another or make music together.
- A mathematical area where the children know that they can find number lines, bead strings, numerals, dice, regular shapes, measuring equipment and other resources for mathematical play and investigations.
- A listening area where the children can independently access sound makers, instruments or a tape/CD player.
- At least one computer area and frequent access to portable devices such as tablet computers or programmable toys.
- Resources such as miniature animals, people and vehicles for small world play which supports the development of communication skills and creativity.
- Resources for exploratory play such as magnets, mirrors, torches or natural materials etc. to promote scientific exploration.
- Sensory play areas where children can work with materials such as water or sand.

### Outdoor learning area

A crucial part of the Early Years teaching space is the Early Years outdoor learning area. Outdoor learning offers children greater flexibility for being active and for working on a large scale. It offers unique opportunities to observe and experience different weather conditions, mini-beasts, natural materials and seasonal changes such as plant growth and decay and allows greater freedom for sound making and messy creative activities. Both the nursery and reception classrooms have direct access into an excellent outdoor learning environment which comprises a variety of surfaces, a large play building, a playground area, a covered, "all-weather" area, a garden area, access to water, materials for large scale construction and a store for outdoor learning resources. It is expected that children will work outdoors for at least part of every session sometimes to pursue independently chosen activities and sometimes to participate in planned, structured learning activities.

### Maintaining a safe and healthy environment

All policies and practise in the nursery will have due regard for the Worcestershire health and safety guidelines and St Matthias Academy policies.

Safety is paramount and as with other areas of the school, regular risk assessments will be made and safety checks carried out daily. Children will be supervised throughout by suitably qualified, vigilant staff. When children first join the nursery, parents/guardians are asked to provide details of anyone who has their permission to collect their child at the end of a nursery session. Also, before children attend any sessions without their parents or carers, school staff will have collected written information including details of any known health conditions (such as asthma or epilepsy), any known allergies, emergency contact details for parents/guardians, doctor's surgery information and permission to authorize emergency medical treatment. This information is typically gathered during settling sessions



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made by Early Years staff just before the children start nursery through school/nursery application forms. All important health information will be shared with all staff responsible for supervising children and recorded in the school office.

If a child becomes unwell at school or nursery, staff will administer first aid if needed and aim to make them comfortable and parents will be contacted. Parents are asked to ensure that children do not attend school/nursery if they are suffering from a condition which may easily be passed on to another child.

Wherever possible, parents/guardians are asked to administer medicines outside school/nursery sessions but if necessary, special arrangements can be made involving written permission and directions.

In order to remain safe, young children need to learn about safe working practices and to learn to estimate risks and make sensible decisions. The children will therefore be taught some simple safety rules and practices such as checking the stability of structures which they have built before climbing on them or using the climbing ramp one at a time.

### **Resources/budget**

Early Years staff will review teaching resources at least annually and prepare a report for the head teacher on any new or replacement resources needed and liaise with subject leaders as appropriate. The head teacher will allocate a budget for the foundation stage based on knowledge of resourcing requirements across the whole school.

## **Learning and Development**

### **Characteristics of effective learning**

All children within the Early Years are actively encouraged to enjoy their learning and to develop characteristics that will equip them to be effective, lifelong learners. Staff will strive to provide learning opportunities at an appropriate developmental level, which excite and motivate. Staff aim to model, teach, highlight and praise effective learning behaviours such as curiosity and exploration, looking and/or listening closely, noticing patterns and testing ideas, persistence and perseverance, concentration, teamwork and communication skills and creative thinking and problem solving. These characteristics of effective learning are set out within the Early Years and prepare children for lifelong learning and staff will observe and monitor individual children's progress in this important area.

### ***Learning through experience***

The Early Years gives a summary of the learning that each child should achieve by the end of the foundation stage in each curriculum area in terms of a set of "Learning outcomes" and these provide the aims for the teaching in the Early Years at St Matthias so that learners are well prepared and ready to benefit from more formal education in KS1.





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*Young children learn best through play and experience. While playing children can express fears and re-live anxious experiences. They can try things out, solve problems and be creative and can take risks and use trial and error to find things out.*

Early Years Practitioners in the early years at St Matthias aim to provide an environment which motivates children to confidently explore and investigate. Adults then help them to reflect on what they have learned, acknowledge behaviours that supported their learning and inspire them to challenge their thinking further. Staff in the Early Years at St. Matthias aim to ensure that there is an optimum balance between adult led activities providing new information or supporting the development of a new skill and child led activities when children select resources and activities that interest them and explore and practice skills at their own pace. Optimum learning is likely to occur when adult led activities and child initiated activities are linked for example, when the adults respond to the children's interests and provide books or resources for the children to find out more about something they had previously shown an interest in or when adults model activities and then make the resources available for children to revisit and explore to consolidate the skills the adult had demonstrated. Staff observe children carefully so they can monitor each child's development, plan next steps in learning, provide verbal commentary, resources and experiences that follow the children's needs and interests and ensure that all children engage in a healthy balance of leaning experiences.

*"Children need to be stretched, but not pushed beyond their capabilities, so that they can continue to enjoy learning"* Early Years

A crucial role of the foundation stage is to ensure that children enjoy learning so that they leave the Early Years excited and motivated to learn with a belief in their own capacity to achieve.

The Early Years curriculum includes three prime areas of learning which provide a crucial foundation for all learning and a further four, important, specific areas of learning;-

### **Prime areas of learning**

#### ***Personal, Social and Emotional Development***

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

This area of learning includes both developing personal independence skills and ensuring that children enjoy learning and develop confidence in their own ability to learn so that they enter the next phase of their education with a positive outlook on learning. Teaching about emotions and relationships is aided by incorporating our PSHE curriculum which includes The Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board 'Healthy Relationships- A whole School Approach' and 'SEAL' resources. Much of the learning in this area is underpinned by the quality of interaction between children and practitioners, the ethos of the setting and the way that the environment is organised to allow children the freedom to make choices and work independently.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development includes the following aspects:



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**Making relationships** – Developing the skills needed to work collaboratively

**Self-confidence and Self-awareness** – Developing self-esteem and the ability to show empathy

**Managing feelings and Behaviour** – Developing the skills needed to express emotions appropriately

### ***Communication and Language***

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Staff aim to provide engaging joint activities that will encourage children to concentrate, to model spoken language at an appropriate level and to respond positively to children's attempts to communicate. Children are given frequent encouragement and opportunities to listen to and use language, to interact with others, to extend their vocabulary and experience stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

Communication and Language includes the following aspects:

**Listening and attention** – Developing the children's ability to focus and concentrate and in particular to focus on sounds.

**Understanding** – Developing the skills needed to process and comprehend spoken language.

**Speaking** – Developing effective spoken communication skills

### ***Physical development***

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control; and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

The physical development of young children is encouraged through the provision of frequent opportunities for them to be active and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. They are supported in using all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. The children are encouraged to gain confidence in recognising and dealing with their own physical needs and in learning about the importance of making healthy choices in relation to food and exercise. This is reflected in the allocation of time and encouragement of physical activity and the range of drinks and snacks offered. It is an overall aim that food and drink in the Early Years will comply with both the healthy school's policy and official government guidance on nutrition so that healthy eating habits are promoted from an early age. All children in Early Years are entitled to a carton of milk and a piece of fruit each morning. Fresh



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drinking water is always available in both classrooms at all times. Children in the nursery class often prepare additional snack items (such as spreading toast or sandwiches or baking bread) and toast is typically provided as a snack in both classes. The nursery children go home for lunch but the reception class are entitled to a hot school lunch (or they may bring a packed lunch). Children are not permitted to bring sweets or fizzy drinks or to share each other's lunches in case of allergies.

Physical Development includes the following aspects:

**Moving and handling** – Learning to move with confidence, imagination and safety, with an awareness of space, themselves and others and learning to use simple tools and equipment including pens and pencils.

**Health and self-care** – Learning the importance of keeping healthy and the factors that contribute to maintaining their health and learning and to deal with their own physical needs including toileting and hand-washing.

Independent toileting and effective hand washing are seen as a developmental skills to be taught and encouraged and staff will support children who are still achieving consistent skills in this area. Individual skills and needs are discussed during nursery home visits/family interviews and parents are encouraged to send appropriate resources such as spare clothing for children who are developing toileting skills. Early Years staff will endeavour to lend suitable spare clean clothing to children as needed. The procedures for managing personal hygiene reflect the guidance within the Worcestershire Continence policy.

### Specific areas of development

The four specific areas of learning are:

#### ***Literacy***

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Staff aim to develop children's enthusiasm for reading and writing by providing a wide range of illustrated books which are of interest to the children, by enlivening stories with pictures, props, sound effects, masks or miniature figures, and by working with the children to produce meaningful labels, captions and signs. Staff spend a significant proportion of time sharing books and other written material with the children.

The National Primary Strategy document, "Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics" provides detailed guidance to staff on how children are taught to listen and attend to sounds, how children learn to associate particular speech sounds with written letters and how this knowledge



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can be applied to enable them to begin to read and spell. A significant part of each nursery session will be dedicated to promoting language and literacy skills. During their time in nursery, the children will be encouraged to develop their ability to represent items or ideas using spoken words, drawing, written words, role play and models. Daily phonics teaching is also provided in the reception class with daily opportunities for writing.

Literacy comprises the following aspects:

**Reading** Developing enjoyment and understanding of stories and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

**Writing** Build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

### ***Mathematics***

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, space, and measures.

Learning activities in the Early Years at St Matthias to complement this area of learning are generally play based, practical and fun and may be linked to a story context (For example, sorting out the possessions of the three bears based on their size) or be part of an investigation (for example if a group of four toys were to share a picnic basket of play food in a fair way, what could they each have?).

Mathematics comprises the following aspects:

**Numbers** – Developing a secure understanding of quantity, learning the sequence of numbers and developing the skills needed to count, calculate and solve real number problems.

**Shape, space and measure** – Developing awareness of relative size, weight or capacity, learning to compare the shape of different items and the ability to notice patterns.

### ***Understanding the World***

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.



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Children in the Early Years at St Matthias will be given frequent opportunities to learn more about the world around them through visits and practical activities involving real materials where appropriate, through visitors to the school and through non-fiction books, stories, role play and miniature world play. Staff will maximize the possibilities available through ICT to enable children to learn from suitable photographs, videos and sound recordings-their own wherever possible and through internet based maps and videos and computer simulations where appropriate.

Understanding the world includes the following aspects:

**People and communities** – Learning about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and developing an awareness of events of personal significance in either the past or future.

**The world** - Developing awareness of similarities, differences, patterns and change in the world around them including places, objects, materials and living things.

**Technology** – Developing awareness of and competency in using information control technology.

### ***Expressive Art and Design***

Expressive art and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Frequent opportunities will be provided for the children to explore resources and refine their skills in using both musical instruments and creative materials. All children will be encouraged to represent their own ideas through a wide range of media during their time within the foundation stage. This will include opportunities to respond to and create music, dance and drama and to experience working with a variety of media including malleable materials, recycled resources, textiles and various types of paint, ink, chalk, pens, crayons and pencils.

Expressive art and design includes the following aspects:

**Exploring and using media and materials** – Learning to make music, songs and dances and to safely use a range of tools, techniques and materials to explore form, colour, texture and design.

**Being imaginative** – Learning to represent their own creative ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories.

### **Religious Education in the Foundation Stage**

As a Church school, St Matthias uses the “Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Worcestershire”. For children in the Early Years this means making provision for the children’s spiritual, moral, social and



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cultural development and laying the foundations for more formal religious education in Key Stage 1. Staff will consider the children's development within the four central concepts within the agreed syllabus, namely;-

- **Beliefs**

The children will encounter stories about some special people including key religious figures and be made aware of some special times or festivals. Age appropriate religious vocabulary will be introduced and the children will be aware that some people have beliefs about God.

- **Expression and Celebration**

The children will have opportunities to learn that when people pray they believe that they are talking and listening to God and to know that there are special places where people gather to pray and special objects and ways of behaving. The children will encounter some religious symbols.

- **Living and Belonging**

The children will be taught that they are each special and the importance of treating others well with respect and kindness. They will be encouraged to see the difference between right and wrong and be shown how to say "sorry" when appropriate.

- **Search for Meaning and Purpose**

The children will be encouraged to consider their own responses to everyday events and to realise that their responses of joy, wonder and sorrow are likely to be shared by others. They will be encouraged to show care and concern for others, for all living things and for the immediate and wider environment.

In addition to a detailed working knowledge of the Early Years curriculum, Early Years staff will also have knowledge of the new National Curriculum for England, 2013 and this will be used to plan learning experiences for any children exceeding the early learning goals.

### **Monitoring and evaluation within the Foundation Stage**

In addition to providing desirable learning outcomes for the Early Years in terms of the "Early Learning Goals", the 2012 Early Years document also gives a complete developmental profile of how a child might gradually build up this learning at each developmental stage from birth to age five years plus in its "Development matters" section. This information is used to track each child's developmental progress throughout their time in the Early Years.

As outlined above, careful observations, both planned and structured and spontaneous, are crucial for an informed view of each child's current levels of skill and understanding. Early Years staff constantly



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note observations (mentally, on paper or electronically) which are then added to photographic evidence of learning, examples of the child's work and information from parents to create a profile for each child. Staff note each child's progress in each of the three prime areas of development and the four specific areas but they also make observations on how each child approaches their learning as described in the "Characteristics of effective learning" section of the Early Years guidance. The child's viewpoint is also represented as they are often involved in the selection and description of photographs and examples of drawing, writing and mathematical mark-making. Staff typically summarise this information half-termly in order to monitor individual progress, to highlight "next steps" for each child, to evaluate provision within different areas of the curriculum and to direct future planning. These profile records form the basis of discussion between parents and practitioners throughout the year and highlight areas where individual children have particular skill and enthusiasm and areas where more encouragement, specific teaching or additional learning experiences are needed. A written summary is provided for parents at the end of the nursery year and then shared with the child's reception teacher.

At the end of the Early Years, staff will use all the information collected to assess for each individual child whether they have achieved or exceeded each of the seventeen early learning goals or whether there are any goals which are still emerging. This summary information is shared with parents, the school leadership team, the local authority and their receiving Year 1 teacher.

### Special Educational Needs

Staff are fully aware that children grow and develop at different rates and progress is assessed on an individual basis. Learning activities are planned to cater for the full range of learning needs within the group. Early Years staff aim to provide appropriate additional visual cues such as photographs, objects, symbols or signing and spoken language at a suitable level for any pupils who need them whilst their verbal skills are still developing. Additional adult support will be available for those less confident with an activity. Activities will often have variable successful outcomes allowing all learners to be challenged to succeed at the most appropriate level. Staff will also provide differentiated resources as needed for example spring-loaded scissors to support children learning to operate scissors or jig-saw puzzles or varying difficulty etc.

Swift initial assessment allows staff to plan learning experiences tailored to meet individual needs and close monitoring of progress enables staff to implement a graduated response to meeting particular needs without delay. Any child showing developmental delay or particular difficulty in any aspect of the curriculum will prompt staff to meet with parents to share concerns and possible support strategies. If concerns remain following a short period of targeted encouragement and support, staff and parents will meet again to discuss whether any other agencies should be invited to provide guidance and support and to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific) targets and to record on an individualized provision map the support to be provided to enable the targets to be met. Targets will be reviewed with parents regularly (for example after half a term) and new targets set if needed. Where children are not able to contribute verbally to such meetings, observations of their preference will be used to ascertain their views. Early Years staff with guidance from the SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) will maintain working knowledge of the current "Local Offer" for services for to support children with special educational needs and will remain committed to working in partnership effectively with relevant specialists from health, education and social care. Should concerns persist over one or



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more aspects of a child's development despite specialist advice and targeted support staff will meet with parents to discuss whether it would be appropriate to ask the local authority to make an assessment of whether an individual "Education, Health and Care Plan" would be beneficial. An EHC plan would specify the type of support likely to be needed to enable that child to achieve individual SMART educational/developmental targets and would be subject to a formal review within a year.

### **Uniform**

Nursery aged children wear play clothing which is practical and comfortable with school uniform or part uniform as an option. Reception class children wear school uniform. All children are expected to wear sensible footwear suitable for indoor and outdoor play and to bring a coat and/or sunhat as appropriate. Families are invited to send "Welly" boots for use in the garden/field. Early Years staff keep some waterproof clothing, aprons and boots to lend to individual children for particular activities as appropriate. In summer, parents are asked to apply sun cream before school/nursery sessions. Staff will ensure that time in direct sun during the hottest part of the day is limited. For movement work in the school hall, the nursery children remove any warm jumpers or loose clothing and work in bare feet whilst reception children change into school PE kit and pumps.

Policy reviewed and updated by C. Salmon, Early Years Manager Oct. 2017

Presented to governing body: 6.12.17

Anticipated review date: Autumn 19