

St James the Great RC (VA) Primary and Nursery School



Foundation Stage Policy

Summer 2005

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Rationale

From St James the Great Mission Statement:

“... the school will provide a framework within which all pupils are enabled to develop the highest possible level of achievement, fulfilling their academic, moral, physical and spiritual potential.”

This policy reflects the values and philosophies of St James the Great in relation to the teaching and learning goals of the children in the foundation years. The policy is a framework, within which all staff work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy should be read in conjunction with the QCA document, Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage, which sets out what pupils should be taught in different areas of learning.

Definition of Foundation Stage

In St James the Great the Foundation Stage includes children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Aims

Because research has shown that children learn more in the first five years than at any other time in their lives, we seek to achieve the following aims:

- To ensure that the transition from home to school is a happy time, thereby enjoying the process of learning.
- To begin to move from inherited faith to personal faith.
- To experience equality of opportunity in a caring, safe and secure environment, in order to ensure the inclusion of all.
- To value and build upon the varied experiences which each child brings to school.
- To treat each child as an individual and provide opportunities for his/her all-round development, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- To learn attention skills and perseverance, in particular the ability to concentrate.
- To foster the development of skills, concepts and attitudes which further each child's intellectual development.
- To cultivate positive attitudes, values and beliefs and develop an understanding of, and respect for, each other.
- To experience personal achievement and appreciate the achievements of others.
- To develop respect and responsibility for self and others enabling every child to become a happy, confident learner.

Home, School and Parish Links

At St James the Great we recognise the importance of the role of parents and the significant influence that they have already played in the early education of their child. We wish to build a firm partnership that benefits and enhances the development and well-being of their children, by keeping them informed of their child's progress, thus enabling them to continue to be actively involved in their child's education.

We will build on the religious foundations laid by parents by fostering links with the parishes of St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's. We value our strong links with the clergy of both parishes

who visit regularly. We participate in daily acts of worship and join in celebrations and non-Eucharistic prayer services throughout the year.

Areas of Learning and Early Learning Goals

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into six areas of learning:-

- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Communication, language and literacy.
- Mathematical development.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Physical development.
- Creative development.

The six areas help practitioners plan the learning environment, activities, experiences and framework for the Early Years curriculum. This does not mean that all young children's learning is divided into these areas. One experience could provide a child with opportunities to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

Early Learning Goals

The early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage, but are not a curriculum in themselves. The goals are spread across the six areas of the curriculum and provide the basis for planning through this stage, so laying secure foundations for future learning. The stepping stones within the early learning goals identify the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need by the end of the Foundation Stage. During the Foundation Stage some children will exceed the goals and begin to work at National Curriculum levels; other children will be working towards some or all of the goals.

Links to the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy

The early learning goals are in line with the objectives in the strategies for teaching Literacy and Numeracy, which should be taught throughout the Reception Year. At St James the Great Reception teachers cover the elements of the Primary Literacy and Numeracy Strategy which facilitates a smooth transition to Key Stage One.

Class Organisation and Teaching Styles

Within any one class children are given opportunities to work as a class, individually and in a group. The learning task or activity and the resources being used influence how the class is organised.

Assessment

St James the Great has adopted formally Aspects in Nursery and PIPs in Reception. The progress of the children is assessed through frequent observations and is recorded to create a Foundation Stage Profile for each pupil, which is shared with parents at appropriate intervals. This is in line with statutory requirements.

Planning

The Foundation curriculum is planned in three sections:-

- Long term – based on the school's topic cycle which will be covered at any given point in time and main curriculum focus.
- Medium term – planning activities, objectives and assessment opportunities for each topic.

- Short term – weekly and daily plans stating clear activities and learning objectives, with assessment criteria if relevant, for each activity to be covered during the week.

The work will be planned collaboratively and as far as possible Nursery Nurses and other adult helpers will be involved in all planning. Planning is available for subject leaders on our staff shared area of the network enabling them to monitor and track the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Inclusion

All staff at St James the Great will ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the whole curriculum and opportunities to make the greatest progress possible in all areas of the Foundation Stage.

Staff will ensure that all children feel secure, included and valued. No child should feel excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, home language, family background, special needs, disability, gender or ability.

At St James the Great we aim to provide a happy, stimulating and secure environment for all children, where individual abilities are recognised.

All children are given the opportunity to develop skills to the very best of their ability. We believe in early intervention and provide equipment, resources and learning activities to meet the individual needs of those children in the Foundation Stage who need additional support or who have particular needs or disabilities.

St James the Great School works with parents to identify learning needs, responding quickly to any areas of difficulty and formulating effective strategies to meet individual needs.

Enrichment opportunities will be provided for children who are considered to be able, gifted or talented.

Leadership and Management

There is a Foundation Stage Manager who is jointly responsible with the Key Stage One Co-ordinator for overseeing the Foundation Stage, ensuring continuity and communicating information to colleagues, management and Governors.

Priorities relating to the Foundation Stage will be identified in the School Improvement Plan as appropriate. It is expected that all staff and Governors are aware of the Foundation Stage and the importance of this stage in relation to the children's learning and its impact on raising standards across the school.