

**WELCOME TO
ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



*Christ is the centre of our school community
where we live, love and learn together*

We are the Reception Practitioners who will be supporting your child:

Miss T Mc Grory
Mrs K Cook
Mrs Barrows

We appreciate that starting school is a big step for both you and your child and at St Thomas More School we aim to make this a happy and positive event. We hope this booklet will explain all you need to know about the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum your child will be following.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. Therefore, we see parents as important partners in children's learning. Hence, we value parent's opinions and the information they give us and involve them whenever possible. When parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on their child's development and learning. Some examples of partnership co-operation include;

- Offering home activities for parents and children to work together i.e. reading, language and number work.
- Children are given weekly library books which parents are encouraged to read with their children at home.
- Parents are encouraged to join in educational visits.
- Newsletters are circulated to parents on a regular basis.
- Parents are invited to class Masses, Assemblies and Celebration meetings.
- Parental Consultation meetings (Parent's Evening) in Autumn and Spring Term.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education in our school is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as Christian values permeate all aspects of the curriculum and all relationships.

Religious Education lessons in all classes are a minimum of 10% of the class timetable, in addition to daily prayer, the celebration of Mass and weekly assemblies.

Our primary aims for Religious Education lessons is to help our children to become religious and literate in their faith. There are numerous cross-curricular activities that deepen the children's understanding that stem from Religious Education lessons, such as drama, writing, I.C.T., art and music. Thus our children have a diversity of experience that support their development and understanding of their Catholic faith.

OUR AIMS IN TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To guide our pupils to grow in knowledge, understanding and love of God through:

- Nurturing pupils' faith when it is present and to facilitate its emergence when it is not.
- Preparing and involving pupils in sacramental celebrations.
- Providing a relevant curriculum and ensuring that at least good standards in teaching and learning are evident.
- Encouraging pupils to be part of the parish community.
- Teaching pupils how to pray.
- The patronage of St Thomas More.
- Promoting an awareness of other cultures and religions, developing respect and consideration for others so that all pupils are prepared to live in a multi cultural society.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEME OF WORK

Our current long term overviews and detailed medium and short term plans for Religious Education are based on the Archdiocese of Birmingham curriculum strategy for Religious Education 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'. This shows clear coverage of the four areas of study, namely Revelation, Church, Celebration, Life in Christ, from the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools ensuring continuity and progression.

It provides us with a framework to ensure that pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith and traditions grow commensurately with other subjects.

The Religious Education long term overview and medium term planning for each year group, is collaboratively planned within each planning phase. The short term weekly plans are written by each class teacher. A range of

resources are available to support the delivery of Religious Education in the classroom.

All **learning outcomes** for our children stem from the four areas of study: Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ as detailed in the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools.

Within each term's planning opportunities are provided to develop specific skills and attitudes, and children are actively encouraged to investigate the faith with the same enthusiasm and rigour as other subjects.

In the first three weeks of the children entering Reception they will be assessed on their Religious knowledge. The children will be shown some Religious Artefacts like a Bible and a statue of Mary and asked some questions.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

In Reception your child will be taught under the new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (September 2008), which helps to support children's learning, development and welfare from birth to the age of five. Effective practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built upon four guiding themes. They provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. These themes are:







1. A Unique Child- every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Positive Relationships- children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or key person.
3. Enabling Environments- the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
4. Learning and Development- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

PLAY

Play underpins the delivery of all the Early Years Foundation Stage and the development and learning for young children. Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is key in which young children learn with enjoyment and learn many new skills from being involved in purposeful, structured play. Whilst in Reception, your child will spend periods of time involved in activities planned by the practitioners, and periods of time doing child-initiated activities they have chosen themselves. This enables your child to build up important relationships with other children, and allows them to use their own initiative and problem solving skills, it is through these experiences that children learn and develop.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

All children are unique and to reflect the age ranges (from birth to the age of five) in the Early Years Foundation Stage broad developmental phases have been created. These phases emphasise that each child's progress is individual to them and that different children develop at different rates. A child does not suddenly move from one phase to another, and they do not make progress in all areas at the same time. However, there are some important 'steps' for each child to take along their own developmental pathways. The six broad developmental are:

	Birth- 11 months
	8-20 months
	16-26 months
	22-36 months
	30-50 months
	40-60+months

AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of six Learning and Development areas;

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication, Language and Literacy**
- **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**
- **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**
- **Physical Development**
- **Creative Development**

All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. These six areas of learning are underpinned by the four principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage i.e. A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development. Each area of Learning and Development is divided into aspects, the aspects for each area are:

1. PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Dispositions and Attitudes-** is about how children become interested, excited and motivated about their learning.
- **Self-confidence and Self-esteem-** is about children having a sense of their own value and understanding the need for sensitivity to significant events in their own and other people's lives.
- **Making Relationships-** is about the importance of children forming good relationships with others and working alongside others companionably.
- **Behaviour and Self-control-** is about how children develop a growing understanding of what is right and wrong and why, together with learning about the impact of their words and actions on themselves and others.
- **Self-care-** is about how children gain a sense of self-respect and concern for their own personal hygiene and care and how they develop independence.
- **Sense of Community-** is about how children understand and respect their own needs, views, cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

2. COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- **Language for Communication-** is about how children become communicators. Learning to listen and speak emerges out of non-verbal communication, which includes facial expression, eye contact and hand gesture. These skills develop as children interact with others, listen to and use language, extend their vocabulary and experience stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

- **Language for Thinking-** is about how children learn to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and how they use talk to clarify their thinking and ideas or to refer to events they have observed or are curious about.
- **Linking Sounds and Letters-** is about how children develop the ability to distinguish between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They develop understanding of the correspondence between spoken and written sounds and learn to link sounds and letters and use their knowledge to read and write simple words by sounding out and blending.
- **Reading-** is about children understanding and enjoying stories, books and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, both fiction and fact, and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.
- **Writing-** is about how children build an understanding of the relationships 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.
- **Handwriting-** is about the ways in which children's random marks, lines and drawings develop and form the basis of recognisable letters.

3. PROBLEM SOLVING, REASONING AND NUMERACY

- **Numbers as Labels and for Counting-** is about how children gradually know and use numbers and counting in play, and eventually recognise and use numbers reliably, to develop mathematical ideas and to solve problems.
- **Calculating-** is about how children develop an awareness of the relationship between numbers and amounts and know that numbers can be combined to be 'added together' and can be separated by 'taking away' and that two or more amounts can be compared.
- **Shape, Space and Measure-** is about how through talking about shapes and quantities, and developing appropriate vocabulary, children use their knowledge to develop ideas and to solve mathematical problems.

4. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

- **Exploration and Investigation-** is about how children investigate objects and materials and their properties, learn about change and patterns, similarities and differences, and question how and why things work.
- **Designing and Making-** is about the ways in which children learn about the construction process and the tools and techniques that can be used to assemble materials creatively and safely.
- **Information, Communication and Technology-** is about how children find out about and learn how to use appropriate information technology such as computers and programmable toys that support their learning.

- **Time-** is about how children find out about past and present events relevant to their own lives or those of their families.
- **Place-**is about how children become aware of and interested in the natural world, and find out about their local area, knowing what they like and dislike about it.
- **Communities-**is about how children begin to know about their own and other people's cultures in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences between them in a diverse society.

5. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Movement and Space-** is about how children learn to move with confidence, imagination and safety, with an awareness of space, themselves and others.
- **Health and Bodily Awareness-** is about how children learn the importance of keeping healthy and the factors that contribute to maintaining their health.
- **Using Equipment and Materials-** is about the ways in which children use a range of small and large equipment.

6. CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- **Being Creative- Responding to Experiences, Expressing and Communicating Ideas-** is about how children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch or feel and how, as a result of these encounters, they express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- **Exploring Media and Materials-** is about children's independent and guided exploration of and engagement with a widening range of media and materials, finding out about, thinking about and working with colour, texture, shape, space and form in two or three dimensions.
- **Creating Music and Dance-** is about children's independent and guided explorations of sound, movement and music. Focusing on how sounds can be made and changed and how sounds can be recognised and repeated from a pattern, it includes ways of exploring movement, matching movements to music and singing simple songs from memory.
- **Developing Imagination and Imaginative Play-** is about how children are supported to develop and build their imaginations through stories, role-plays, imaginative play, dance, music, design and art.

ASSESSMENT BY PRACTITIONERS

Through the six areas of Learning and Development a continuous assessment of the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should acquire by the end of their academic year is carried out throughout the year. These are done through the statutory Early Learning Goals as a set of thirteen assessment scales, each of which has nine points and provides the planning structure throughout the EYFS to lay a secure foundation for future learning. Assessments are based on practitioners' observations of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities and therefore a way of summing up each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the EYFS. This information is then used to complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, an important feature of the Profile is the ongoing dialogue between parents/carers and practitioners. The Profile is used as an important transition tool from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage One.

CONCLUSION

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework consists primarily of:

- i. Four guiding themes- A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Learning and Development.
- ii. Developmental Phases.
- iii. Six areas of Learning and Development and their aspects.
- iv. Assessment criteria and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

The aim of the EYFS Framework is to continually monitor a child's progress and development, ensuring your child reaches their full potential.