

# St Nicholas School

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

### September 2020

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers education from birth to 5 years. At St Nicholas School we have 8 classes with reception aged pupils. We work closely with the Croydon SEN Early Years admissions team to identify children whose needs can be best met at our school and with feeder nurseries and families to ensure a smooth transition into school.

#### **INTENT**

In the EYFS we aim to set the building blocks for each child's future education, developing independent learning skills across all 7 areas of learning and development, through a play-based approach. This is done through a topic-based curriculum differentiated to reflect our children's differing needs and learning styles, taking advantage of both indoor and outdoor environments and further enhanced where possible by educational trips. We support pupils to follow classroom routines and structured activities tailored to their individual needs to maximise learning potential.

At St Nicholas School we aim to build on the experiences, interests, skills and knowledge of the individual child, working in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies, e.g. Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists using a multi-disciplinary approach. We aim to offer children opportunities to explore and respond through an engaging and accessible curriculum.

We promote social and emotional development to encourage children to have consideration for others and build their own self-esteem. All children are respected and valued and we provide learning experiences to support physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment. Children develop independence skills in learning and self-help.

We believe all children should have a happy and positive experience of school. Through celebrating success and achievement, children should develop a love of school and learning. The EYFS provides children with the opportunity to learn to feel part of the wider school community and support transition into KS1.

Children will be prepared as far as their developmental stage permits, to reach the Early Learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage, or if not, to make at least good progress from their starting points.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Throughout EYFS at St Nicholas School, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework (2017) for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We have a curriculum that is child-centred and that is based upon topics which engage the children. We encourage active learning to ensure the children are motivated and engaged, building on children's interests and their likes to support learning. All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Children in the EYFS are vertically group with year 1 children who continue to follow the EYFS curriculum, which remains the most appropriate for their developmental stage. Advantages for

reception aged children include having older role models for communication, behaviour and independence skills and being able to manage care needs more effectively with less impact on learning.

## **Mathematics**

Maths learning is supported through structured taught activities in small groups, play-based activities and exploration using a multi-sensory approach. Maths is made fun through songs and actions as well as through physical activities.

## **Communication and Language**

Children are encouraged to develop listening skills through 'Circle time' activities, e.g. listening to interactive stories and rhymes or drama games. Communication group activities are planned in conjunction with Speech and Language therapists and delivered to encourage listening and responding, turn-taking and choosing. Specialist approaches such as 'Attention Autism' help develop joint attention skills while eye-contact and early vocalisations are encouraged using methods such as 'Mr Tongue' and 'Intensive Interaction'.

## **Literacy**

Reading: Children have weekly 1:1 reading sessions with staff from their class. We follow letters and sounds to teach phonics but recognise that many of our children may learn to read through whole word recognition due to their special educational needs, so words in the environment are also important.

Writing: - Daily opportunities are provided to promote fine motor skills development, reinforced by creative approaches, e.g. 'dough disco' using theraputty. Those children who are ready to start to write letters follow a multisensory approach programme 'Handwriting Without Tears'.

## **Personal, Social and Emotional**

Children are encouraged to interact with their peers and build play skills. They are supported in all areas of self-help while building independence and increasing self-confidence.

## **Understanding the World**

Activities offered will include hands-on experiences, encouraging exploration, observation and problem-solving and include the outdoor environment, to stimulate children's interest and curiosity.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

Through a wide range of art and craft activities children develop their imagination and refine their abilities using a variety of materials and tools. In addition to painting, children are given the opportunity to engage in model-making, collage, clay and printing. Pupils develop an appreciation of sound and rhythm and are encouraged to use their voices for singing and to experiment with a variety of percussion instruments.

## **Physical**

A specialist PE teacher engages the children in developing gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance and ball skills. Children have regular access to areas around the school that reinforce physical development, including the soft play room, trim trail, playground and large climbing apparatus.

## **Assessment, Recording and Planning**

Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals (ELGs) 3 times during reception year with reference to development matters, with the final assessment reported to parents in the annual report and to the Local Authority. An on-line learning journey programme '2BuildaProfile' is used to record evidence of progress throughout and is shared regularly with parents to celebrate achievements. Pupil passports are used to set individual targets linked to Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes. These are evaluated and next steps agreed 3 times a year, shared with parents at parent's evenings and EHCP review meeting. Planning follows the Early Years Foundation Curriculum, taking account of children's individual abilities and is topic-based.

## **IMPACT**

Children gain a wider experience of the world around them through opportunities to explore and exposure to a range of learning topics in all key areas of learning. They have made good or better progress towards meeting all 17 ELGs. Children develop their play skills and begin to interact socially with their peers. They feel happy and safe in their school and part of the school community.

Children develop independence skills and are confident to explore their environment and to ask an adult for help when needed. Their self-help skills have improved in line with their developmental level.

Children have met or are closer to meeting their ELGs and are prepared to move into KS1. They have learnt school routines and expectations, providing them with skills to be ready to learn.

Children have developed positive relationships with adults and peers and trust adults to support them when needed. They are proud of their achievements.

Parents feel that their children are happy at school and make the best progress their developmental stage allows. They have developed good relationships with school staff which enable them to support their children's development and learning outside school.

Graham Bolding and Michelle Samuels  
Updated June 2020

To be read in conjunction with the Communication Policy, PSHE Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy and Assessment Policy.