



St Margaret Clitherow

Catholic Voluntary Academy

"Love One Another as I have Loved You"

John 13:34-35

Learning & Teaching in The Early Years Foundation Stage at St. Margaret Clitherow Primary Academy



*"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will
counsel you with my loving eye on you"*

Psalm 32

Our School Vision

At St Margaret Clitherow Academy, we believe that every child is special and that 'the child is at the centre of everything we do.' At the heart of our school is our Catholic faith and we strive to ensure that the children develop spiritually and morally as well as academically, physically, socially and creatively.

We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We understand that children develop quickly in the early years and a child's early experiences have a major impact on their future life chances. This is a crucial time for developing their enjoyment of learning, their engagement and motivation.

In EYFS, we aim to:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum which builds on children's interests and experiences, giving them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Offer opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- Ensure quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Promote choice and decision-making to foster independence and self-confidence
- Promote a safe and stimulating environment where children are expected to be kind, respectful and loving towards all others and know that this is how they and their families will be treated too.
- Support children to know Jesus, to reflect on His teaching and to make it part of their own lives.
- Establish strong foundations for all children on which to build their future academic learning.

We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and exciting opportunities for development. We do this through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand learning experiences indoors and outdoors that will give children the chance to build, consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding.

We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to create a firm foundation for the rest of their continuing education.



The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children usually join us in Nursery (F1) following their third birthday. We offer 15 and 30 hours depending on circumstances. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year (F2). Children start Reception full time in September of the school-year they will be five.

The EYFS Curriculum Intent

Our EYFS curriculum follows curriculum outlined in the 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2021) which is based upon four overarching principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our EYFS curriculum, is based on the two age bands of 3 – 4 years old and reception pupils as set out in the non-statutory guidance – Development Matters (2021). The birth to 3 years band is used to inform planning for children working below their chronological age.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on topic led learning, our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. Early reading, language and communication is given a high priority in our curriculum to ensure that we meet the needs of the children in our school and give them the best start in their educational journey.

The EYFS framework (2021) is based on seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. There are three areas that are particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

“Children learn as they play. More importantly, in play children learn how to learn”

Fred Donaldson

Curriculum Implementation

At St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy, we deliver learning for all of the areas set out in the EYFS framework through, planned purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play in the Early Years classroom is essential and contributes to the development of the whole child. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Through practice they build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. We provide opportunities for all children to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. We promote communicate with each other so can investigate and solve problems.

We endeavour to provide the children with meaningful opportunities that they may not have experienced prior to starting our school. Therefore, our curriculum is based on a variety of topics that change throughout the year (see Long Term Plan). The topics we have chosen allow us to explicitly teach the fundamental concepts that the children require in order to meet the Early Learning Goals. The learning is planned on a half termly basis and the learning stems from a high-quality text each week which allows us to teach, embed and extend the children's vocabulary.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and delivering all provision, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and how they organise their own play. Consideration is given to creating opportunities for the children to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning defined in the EYFS framework. 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.



Role of the Adult

Adults within the setting play a pivotal role in the children's development. They respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions, whilst also providing effective feedback to move each child's learning intentions forward. Each child in the EYFS setting has a named keyworker. Although each child has an allocated keyworker, all staff work closely together to meet every child's learning and ensure care is tailored to meet individual needs. Adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- Demonstrate/model and work alongside children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support, reassure and encourage
- Encourage children to be problem solvers and investigators
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child / other adult / parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure

Planning

The Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning and feed into weekly planning. However, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations and discussions with children then lead the direction of the planning. The planning is based upon the half termly themes with discrete RE, phonics and maths directed teaching. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. The Reception and Nursery teachers work closely to plan for progression. All staff are involved in evaluating provision and planning changes or enhancements to support or extend children's learning. Children in Nursery and Reception take part in whole class, small group sessions and 1:1 sessions which are tailored to meet their age and stages of development. These group activities include activities from all areas of development. In addition, both classes take part in weekly PE sessions.



Diversity and Inclusion.

We believe that all our children matter and we value the diversity of all individuals within the school. We believe that equality of opportunities for all those in our care is paramount and all our policies, procedures and practice will reflect the rights of all children and adults including those with special educational needs or a disability, all ethnic and cultural groups and those with English as an additional language. We ensure that there are links within our curriculum to celebrate all the communities we serve and learn about individuals from all cultures. At St Margaret Clitherow, we understand the importance of having a fully inclusive curriculum. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff work closely with parents/carers and the school SENDCO to ensure that the provision is tailored to meet individual needs. Information on how we support and make the curriculum accessible to pupils with special educational needs and disability can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Information Report on our school policy's page.

“Reading makes all other learning possible. We must get books into our children's hands early and often”

Barack Obama

Reading and Phonics

In the EYFS, we prioritise reading. Books, stories, poems, and nursery rhymes are shared with children daily. We read texts repeatedly so that children become familiar with story language, join in with familiar words and phrases and foster a love of reading.

In addition to this, each week we also ensure that children choose a book that they like from the book corner. Children will bring their, “sharing book” home so that an adult can read and discuss the words and pictures with them. This book is purely for children's enjoyment as we want to instil a love of reading from the very earliest years.

Communication between home and school is encouraged via each child's reading diary.

Phonics is taught daily throughout Nursery and Reception in line with the whole school using the Little Wandle Phonics Scheme. Within daily phonics lessons, children focus on specific sounds within a set lesson structure of review, teach, practise, and apply. The reading of tricky words (common words that cannot be sounded out e.g., said) is also taught in daily phonics lessons. Children are assessed on an ongoing basis but more formal assessments are carried out each half-term. Any children who have gaps in their phonics knowledge are quickly identified and additional “Keep Up” support is provided. We ensure that children's independent reading books match the phonics that they know.

Curriculum Impact

Assessment

At St Margaret Clitherow, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe and interact with children on a daily basis to identify their level of achievement, knowledge, interests and learning. These observations and interactions are used to shape future planning, interventions and provision. Staff also value observations shared by parents/carers of their child at home.

By the end of the first three weeks at school baseline information will be gathered on all FS1 children in all Prime areas of learning. These assessments will be used to plan steps for all children. Each child in F1 will have a learning journey to showcase their achievements, successes and progress in Nursery.

We undertake various statutory assessments throughout the year to identify each child's stage of development. Within the first 6 weeks of a child starting in Reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language that is delivered in English. It is clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The purpose of the RBA is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.

At the end of EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels of development (emerging)

The profile reflects ongoing observations, interactions with the children and discussions with parents/carers. Assessment at St Margaret Clitherow does not involve prolonged breaks from interaction with children and does not require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether a child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own professional judgement against age related expectations.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) within our academy. This is done through discussions with all staff in the EYFS and SLT. In addition, the profile is moderated at Trust events throughout the year and by the Local Authority to ensure consistent assessment judgements. The EYFS profile is submitted to the Local Authority in June of each academic year. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Monitoring

The quality of the EYFS curriculum and provision will be monitored throughout the year. This will be done in the following ways:

- **Work scrutiny** – Subject leads and SLT will sample work in the different areas of learning. Teachers will act on feedback to improve the provision.
- **Learning Walks and observations** – Subject leads and SLT will conduct regular learning walks across to assess the quality of the provision and learning experiences for pupils.
- **Pupil Voice** – To gain pupil feedback and assess pupils' knowledge in different areas of the curriculum.
- **Teacher Voice** – To gain teacher feedback on the quality of the provision.
- **Regular EYFS staff discussions** – To involve all staff in the planning and implementation of the curriculum to review and refine the provision offered.



“Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children”

Proverbs 17:6

Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children and we value being partners with them in their child’s education. We do this by:

- Using Class Dojo as a communication tool between teachers and families
- Inviting parents to an induction meeting prior to children starting school and completing paperwork to get to know each child’s needs
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time with staff in their new classroom before starting school
- Holding termly meetings for parents, during which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress and next steps for learning
- Sharing planning on the school website about learning taking place each half term
- Suggesting activities that can be done at home to support learning
- Sending home phonetically decodable reading books and library books and encouraging parents to make comments in their child’s reading record
- Having stay and play sessions in Nursery
- Providing end of year reports which outline the progress and achievement made by each child and sharing outcomes from the EYFS profile
- Celebrating children’s achievements with their parents
- Encouraging parents to contribute by sharing learning from home through Class Dojo
- Holding meetings to explain how parents/carers can support their children with areas such as early reading and phonics
- Making ourselves available to parents at the start and end of each day for informal conversations

Welfare and Safeguarding

Safeguarding our children is everyone’s responsibility and our first priority. We recognise that 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. We understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in section three of the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2021) and have regard to the ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance’ and the ‘Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales’.

As a school, we educate children on boundaries, rules and consequences and help them understand why they are important in keeping everyone safe. We provide children with choices to help them develop important life skills of making good and safe choices. Children should be allowed to take risk, but need to be taught when to recognise dangers and hazards. We provide children with the language needed and encourage children to talk to trusted adults about their fears, feelings and worries as well as their joys and achievements. We teach them to safeguard themselves through the NSPCC PANTS programme and our RSE and PSHE curriculum.

All staff receive annual safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge of the safeguarding requirements are up to date. Our full safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the schools Safeguarding and Safety policies which can be accessed on our website:

<https://www.stmargaretciltherow.nottingham.sch.uk/information/safeguarding/>

“Keep me Safe my God, for in You I take refuge”

Psalms 16:1