**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Overview**

Foundation Stage will be marked by excellence, enjoyment and fun. Our intention is to develop quality and consistency in the provision of education and welfare for the children in this school. It will fully meet the standards and statutory requirements set out in the ‘Child Care Act 2006.’ All children will experience excellent provision and will enjoy their time in the Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

* A Unique Child
* Positive Relationships
* Enabling Environments
* Learning and Development

**A Unique Child**

At St. Margaret’s Anfield Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, and confident. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children. All children at St. Margaret’s Anfield Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that every child matters. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

* planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
* using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;
* providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
* providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
* using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
* planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
* monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

**Positive Relationships**

At St. Margaret’s Anfield Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We believe that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We are committed to establishing parent partnerships through:

* providing opportunities for the parents and children to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions
* inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
* offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress in our nursery and reception classes and allowing free access to the children’s work and observation portfolios
* encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher to share their child’s achievements or if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress. Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
* providing a range of opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: parent workshops, stay and play sessions, class assemblies, home school link books, self registration sessions.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children. In our Nursery, we operate a ‘Key Person’ system. This gives the child the reassurance to feel safe and cared for. It also helps to build strong relationships with their parents. In Reception, the class teacher acts a ‘Key Person’ to all children in the class supported by the Teaching Assistant. We work hard to maintain good links between the Children’s Centre and the school. Regular planning meetings are undertaken by the EYFS practitioners to ensure continuity, to moderate assessment judgements and to share good practice.

**Enabling Environments**

At St. Margaret’s Anfield Primary School we understand that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development and learning. We begin by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning. This information allows us to plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

**Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The Medium Term Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These are used as a guide for Short Term Planning. Practitioners adapt teaching objectives in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher, Key Person and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children’s individual portfolios. They also contain information provided by parents and carers. At the end of the Foundation Stage we record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child’s level of development is recorded as either emerging, expected or exceeding age related expectations.

**The Learning Environment**

The EYFS environment is organised to allow children opportunities to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces. Classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to locate equipment and resources independently. The children have access to enclosed outdoor areas which has a positive effect on the child’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities to extend the learning and for children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

**Learning and Development**

At St Margaret’s Anfield Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. Practitioners value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

**Play and Exploration**

The EYFS framework states that, 'children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.’ Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, they learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or communicate anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

**Active Learning**

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

**Creativity and Critical Thinking**

‘When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things.’ Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

**Areas of Learning of Development**

The EYFS is made up three prime areas of learning

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

There are also four specific areas of learning which are

* Literacy
* Maths
* Understanding of the World
* Expressive Art and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Our aim is to help every child achieve the ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes of Staying Safe; Being Healthy; Enjoying and Achieving; Making a Positive Contribution; Achieving Economic Well-being. This policy should be read in conjunction with all our other policies which apply equally to the Foundation Stage.