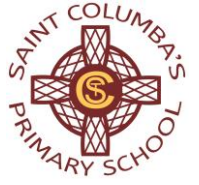




Early Years Foundation Stage at St Columba's Catholic Primary School



Intent

At St. Columba's Primary School, we work hard to provide a stimulating environment that provides exciting opportunities, promotes challenge, exploration, adventure and a real love of learning. It is our intent that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities and people. We aim for our children to be confident and independent, to believe in themselves and interact positively with others. We understand that play is an integral part of learning, and this is at the heart of our early years curriculum. We believe that the correct mix of adult directed and uninterrupted child-initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils. Warm and positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key. We recognise the crucial role that early year's education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based. We value children as unique individuals and ensure that all children including disadvantaged children and those with SEND have the equal opportunities to thrive, make progress and reach their full potential.

Implementation

Our curriculum follows the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early years Foundation Stage. This document specifies the requirements for learning and development in the EYFS and provides the prime and specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum. Through our knowledge of each child and formative assessments we plan exciting and engaging activities that will move the children's learning forward. This may involve following a class theme or focus where we take advantage of cross curricular links in order to combine transferable skills and develop a wide-ranging vocabulary which underpins the children's learning. We prioritise creating a 'language rich' environment through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories and providing time for quality interactions between adults and between peers. Trained staff ensure that interactions are positive and progressive, allowing children to flourish and gather words at pace in order to

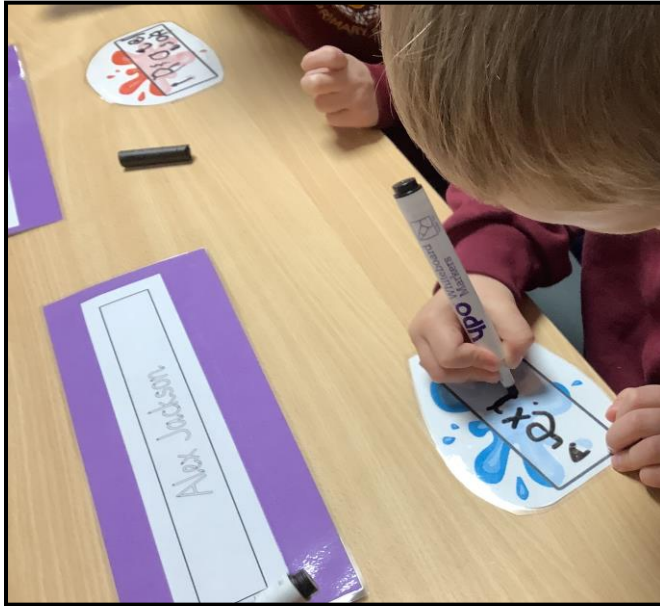
become confident communicators. Children are encouraged to become early readers through enjoyment of books and the systematic teaching of phonics using the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds' phonics programme. The children learn nursery rhymes and develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and exploration. We want our children to become confident mathematicians who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.



Our children enjoy spending time outdoors in their natural environment - in all weathers. They love their Forest School sessions. Our Forest School creates an immersive, fun and educational environment where children learn to love and respect the natural world while acquiring life skills. Our Forest School helps St. Columba's children develop self-esteem and confidence, as well as social skills outdoors. It provides a valuable environment in which children can develop a strong, positive relationship with the natural world.

The children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play. The curriculum is taught through topics, which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors. Topics are supported by quality key texts. These are chosen carefully to encourage children's speech, language and communication development. All planning however, is flexible and responsive to children's needs so plans can be changed and adapted dependent on children's interests. Disadvantaged children and children with additional needs are supported to reach their full potential through targeted support, timely referrals to outside agencies such as Speech and Language and the health visiting team, small group support, adaptation of resources and intervention through play with our staff. We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education. We work hard to create strong partnerships between home and school. Parents

are able to view curriculum planning on our website to inform them of what their child is learning each half term and to explain how they can support this at home. Parents enjoy engaging in their child's learning through 'Stay and Play' sessions, different workshops, curriculum evenings and various assemblies through the year. As part of the learning and teaching process, children are assessed in relation to their progress towards Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. These judgements are made on the basis of accumulative observations and in-depth knowledge of the children acquired through ongoing assessment and the excellent knowledge teachers have of their students. These ongoing assessments are used to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year.



Impact

The first few years of a child's life is crucial for brain development. Therefore, creating a safe and nurturing learning environment where children feel ready and able to learn is vital. We constantly strive to do this by gaining trust from children and maintaining positive relationships with parents and carers.

From their varied starting points, we aim to ensure that all children make good progress in all areas of learning. Using the Characteristics of Effective Learning we help build children's resilience and independence. Towards the end of Reception, we prepare and enable children to be ready for the more formal structure of Key Stage One.

In the Early Years, we lay foundations for each child's educational life and so it is crucial that we make a positive impact on each and every child. Our job is to excite and inspire the children we teach, and ensure they move on to the next stage of their educational development with a positive attitude towards learning, that hopefully lasts for a lifetime!

Our curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure relevance and to ensure the voices of our pupils, parents, staff and governors are heard.