



Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Voluntary Academy

Foundation Stage Unit Policy

The Foundation Stage unit provides education for children from three years of age to the end of the reception year. This encompasses nursery aged (F1) and Reception aged (F2) children. It offers children the best possible start and opportunity for success. The unit follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) in line with statutory requirements.

In the unit there is a minimum 1:13 ratio of practitioners (teachers and teaching assistants) to children at all times. All children have a named key worker. The welfare of every child is of paramount importance and children are cared for, nurtured and valued. The environment is a safe and secure place to be physically and emotionally and the welfare requirements in the EYFS are adhered to.

Admission Arrangements

Admission to F1

Children are admitted to the unit in the term following their third birthday (starting in September, January or April). Parents/carers must apply for a place at the unit. The final application date is 31st March (for children who will qualify for a place during the following academic year). Parents wishing to register their child to commence F1 Education can do so by contacting the School Office during the school day. Attendance in F1 is part-time either for morning or afternoon sessions, each providing up to 30 places for Early Years learning opportunities.

An orange admissions form is completed by a parent (before 31st March). The admission form is placed in the appropriate file in the school office. Children are ranked following the same priorities as F2 (see Admission Policy for Catholic Primary Voluntary Academies in Nottingham City). Parents are then contacted by letter, during the Summer Term, to be offered a place.

Parents must return the slip accepting a place for their child, and state their morning or afternoon preference, by the date given on the letter in order for a place to be allocated. This slip acts as written confirmation that the place has been accepted. If parents ring the school to verbally confirm acceptance of the place, they will be instructed to return the slip by the deadline. Children whose slips haven't been received will be contacted before the deadline to ensure they received the personalised acceptance letter and to remind them of the deadline. These calls will be recorded using the Admissions Telephone Log. After the deadline, if a place acceptance slip has not been received by the school, the place will not be allocated.

Children are offered five half day sessions per term-time week.
Sessions are three hours in duration:

9.00-12.00 and 12.30-3.30.

Admission to F2

Children are admitted to F2 (Reception year) through the Nottingham City Council online admissions to school application process. They must also complete an orange admissions form for the school. Children are admitted in September of the academic year in which the child becomes five years old. (ie they will have their fifth birthday between 1st September and 31st August that year). The standard number for admissions to F2 at Blessed Robert Widmerpool CVA is thirty. If the number of pupils seeking admission to the school exceeds the number of places available then the priority given will follow the Admission Policy for Catholic Primary Voluntary Academies in Nottingham City (see attached document). Having an F1 place does not affect applications for F2. F2 children attend 9.00-3.30 every week day in term time.

Transition

Children who have a place in F1, will be invited to some Let's Get Ready Sessions. These will take place the term before the child is due to start. Children will initially be settled by their parent/carer and, when ready, will be allowed to stay and play in the unit for part of a session (between 1 and 2 hours) in order to get to know the staff, other children, environment and expectations. Parents will also be offered the opportunity to meet as a group and learn more about learning and teaching within an Early Years setting and about how to support their child to be ready for F1.

To aid transition to full-time school (F2), F1 children who have accepted places in F2 for the September, will be invited to a week-long lunch club during the summer term. They will stay later (if they have a morning place) or arrive earlier (if they have an afternoon place) and eat lunch in the hall, supervised by up to two members of staff from the Foundation Unit.

Learning and Teaching

Play is at the heart of learning and teaching in the unit. Through indoor and outdoor play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and 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.

Parents, families and carers are welcomed and valued. Daily informal discussion between staff and parents/carers forms the basis of the partnership which supports children's learning, well-being and development. Planning, homework, letters and annual reports (F2 only) are communicated in writing and there are termly 'stay and play' open days for parents/carers (with parents' meetings for F1 children). F2 children have two parents' evenings per year. When three-year olds are getting ready to start attending the unit, there is a welcome meeting for these children and their families.

In the unit, enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning are fostered. Children are provided with a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities, some of which are continuously available and some which are specific to the current focus. Provision is made for learning across all aspects of curricular. Activities are planned to

provide first-hand experiences following children's interests, develop children's communication, relationships, independence, emotional well-being and confidence. All children make progress through staff knowing them well and carefully planning and supporting them at their own developmental stage.

EYFS provides the basis for planning throughout Foundation Stage Unit. Medium term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning linked to the school's Catholic RE syllabus. Short term plans identify specific learning intentions, activities, questions, resources and vocabulary. There are typically three group times per session where children gather with practitioners in groups to develop early reading skills (including phonics), early mathematical skills and other aspects of curricular. Focussed activities are planned for the week which are directed by and assessed by practitioners.

Once child have settled into the Unit (typically after one term), they will start to take part in Forest School sessions. The Forest Schools approach is a philosophy for effective teaching and learning. In brief, skills and experiences gained through using the outdoor environment create more effective learners in the classroom. The children will not just learn about nature, but also about working together, making choices for themselves, taking care of themselves and others, being respectful to others and having their own opinions and needs valued. The sessions take place in Glapton Wood.

Inclusion

All children are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. Realistic and challenging expectations ensure progress for all children across all aspects of curricular.

The needs of all children are met through resources, relationships, environment, teaching choices, planning and assessment.

Resources are selected for their educational potential, to reflect diversity and be free from discrimination and stereotyping. There are planned opportunities that build and develop engagement, self-esteem and confidence. A wide range of teaching strategies and contexts are used. This takes place within a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.

Children's English language and communications skills are not a barrier to learning.

Assessment

Continual assessments are made of children's learning which are used to inform future planning. Observation of children learning is central to assessment in the unit. All are children's learning is assessed and records kept. Each child has a Learning journey book and these are available for parents to see during the Stay and Play sessions. Further details are available in the Unit's assessment policy.

This policy will be reviewed in October 2016.