

# The St Michael Steiner School Early Years

## Early Years Foundation Stage policy

This policy sits alongside our Early Years Curriculum Policy which contains more detailed information about the specific Steiner Waldorf early years curriculum. Alongside this Steiner Waldorf early years curriculum we abide by the statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014), which is relevant for education and care in registered schools and settings between birth and five years old. In our kindergartens we also have children who are older than five years. Please see our separate policy for the Older Child in kindergarten.

Steiner Waldorf Kindertagesstätten have all applied and received modifications and exemptions from those areas of the EYFS Learning and development requirements and Assessment Arrangements which are in conflict with the Steiner Waldorf approach, such as the Literacy, Maths, IT, Assessment arrangements and EYFS Profile, etc. A list of these and exemptions are available.

This document will provide information and should be read by inspectors intending to visit.

### 1. The learning and development requirements:

The areas of learning and development consist of three prime areas and four specific areas.

**PRIME AREAS:** These are *communication and language*, *physical development* and *personal, social and emotional development*. These cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations and building blocks for later formal learning. They are applied and reinforced by the specific areas.

**SPECIFIC AREAS:** These are the areas in which providers must also support children, and through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are: **literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design.**

The seven areas are described in more detail below:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy** development - we have full exemptions and do not have to deliver this area
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. However, with the modifications we have received, we do not have to deliver the written number.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, modern technology and the environment. We have modifications and do not have to provide ICT/Electronic technology.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and (modern) technology.

### 2. Early learning goals and assessment regulations

In our kindergartens, we show through our normal assessment procedures (which include formative and summative assessments) how the children are meeting expected levels, are exceeding them, or are below the expected level ('emerging'). We share a brief report on each child, along with the characteristics of learning, with the parents and Class 1 teacher.

**Play and teaching:** we are responsible for on-going judgements about the balance between play and teaching, between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults.

**English as an additional language:** the relevant requirements give clearer focus on the reasonable steps providers must take, including the assessment of children's skills in English, and we will support those who might need it.

### **3. Welfare requirements:**

We adhere to all the welfare requirements. You can find copies of our policies and procedure and risk assessments in the office.

#### **Planning:**

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and develop these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

#### **NOTES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

The following documents are kept together for Inspectors, and for parent information in the school office.

The EYFS is a statutory framework for all providers caring for children from Birth to statutory school age (the 1<sup>st</sup> September following the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday). This can be found at <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/EYFS-Statutory-Framework-2012.pdf>

**EXEMPTIONS INFORMATION:** we are exempted from aspects of the EYFS along with all Steiner Waldorf kindergartens, including the area of Literacy, written numbers and use of ICT.

**The Guide to the EYFS in Steiner Waldorf Settings** is a useful tool to understanding and interpreting the Steiner Waldorf curriculum, and relating it to the EYFS available in the file, or to download from [www.steinerwaldorf.org](http://www.steinerwaldorf.org)

**About Steiner Early Childhood Settings** includes much information about what we do in the kindergarten, and why. It is a tremendous resource for parents and inspectors. It is available to download from [www.steinerwaldorf.org](http://www.steinerwaldorf.org)