



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School
We
'Grow together in Christ'
'Live and learn in God's love'
by
Developing the potential of every individual
by providing the best education through experience of
our Catholic, Christian Community within which
all members can grow in faith.

'This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment'.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.'

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)



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

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
 - a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

At St. Mary's we aim to achieve this by:

- setting the standards for individual learning, development and care to enable each child to fulfil their potential.
- ensuring that learning and development is planned around the individual needs and interests of the child and informed by the use of on-going observational assessment.
- Underpinning our practice with the EYFS four principles:

A Unique Child
Positive Relationships
Enabling Environments
Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise 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, stickers, prizes, positive reinforcement, good role models as well as celebration assemblies, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude and love of learning.

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. Our planning takes into account the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities, children who are more able, 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 by:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experiences, and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
 - Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources that are accessible to all children that promote challenge and develop the child's own experiences.

- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Working in partnership with parents by reporting on their child's progress and developing learning provided by feedback from parents about their child's development;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Positive Relationships

At St Mary's we recognise that children learn to be independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring and respectful relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Visiting children and their parents at their homes before they start school
- Inviting the children to visit us before they start school
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts school
- Regularly updating with parents by sharing planning and assessment information
- Sharing learning journeys showing the most up-to-date progress and achievement of their child
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: collective worship, class assemblies and sports days
- Operating an open door policy for parents with concerns or queries
- Providing opportunities in the children's learning journey for parent to make contributions relating to their children's achievements.

Enabling Environments

At St Mary's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This is indicated on weekly planning. 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 both formal and informal observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's learning journey and activity books. They also contain information provided by parents. Assessments will be made on Target Tracker each half term to track the progress of pupils through the Early Years Outcomes attainment bands.

This information will feed into the formal reporting of attainment at the end of the Reception year through the EYFS Profile. Within the final term of reception, we will provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs.

The Learning Environment

Our setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We provide a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

The Foundation Stage has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. The setting offers the children opportunities to explore by using their senses and being physically active and exuberant. In the outdoor environment we provide children with a wide variety of adult led and child initiated activities and opportunities for the children to work independently and collaboratively both on large and small scales. We value the outdoor environment as an integral learning area for all children with unrestricted access.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early year's settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and the delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

• Playing and exploring

Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'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 practise and build up ideas, 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.

• Active learning

Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need 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.

• Creating and thinking critically

We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

'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. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.'

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Policy monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Early Years Lead, and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole staff every two years.

The Teaching & Learning Committee of the governing body monitors our Early Years policy annually. This committee reports to the full governing body and advises if the policy needs modification. This Committee gives serious consideration to any comments from parents about the religious education programme, and makes a record of all such comments. The nominated governor require the Headteacher to keep a written record, giving details of the content and delivery of the Early Years programme that we teach in our school.

This policy was reviewed March 2018

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To be reviewed Spring 2019