

# ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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## Contents

### 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

### 2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

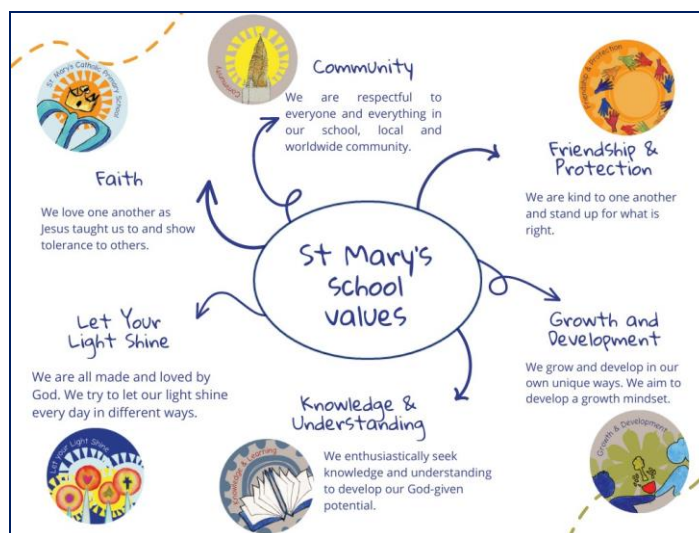
Teaching in the EYFS setting at St Mary's Catholic Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document "The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (September 2021). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: A 'Unique child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Effective Teaching and Learning.'

The Learning and development requirements comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development (described below in Curriculum)
- The early learning goals (described below in Curriculum)
- The assessment requirements

### 3. Our Vision

To build a spiritual community, secure in its love of God and its respect for itself and each other. A dynamic community which is enthusiastic for learning and which embraces the achievement of potential for all.



## 4. The Curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage aims to support future learning by providing a caring and supportive atmosphere in which all children are given the opportunity to succeed. The principle of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to provide effective education that is carefully structured according to each child's needs by practitioners who understand and can implement the curriculum. The first year of school is a unique and special time in every child's life and needs to be valued as such. The staff recognise that all aspects of child development i.e. emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, spiritual and social are interwoven and equally important. The aims below set out the rationale behind the teaching of early years in our school.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and development needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates- physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the staff looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation of others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions that differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.
- Providing a welcoming environment for children and their families, establishing positive relationships with parents.
- Keeping parents well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress.
- Making careful observations in order to support and extend children's learning appropriately
- Ensuring that children with special educational needs are identified and receive appropriate support.

The seven areas of learning and development shape our curriculum. Like previously mentioned, these are inter-connected and are crucial for children's development to thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

### **Active Learning through Play**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we recognise that young children learn best through active learning. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that the Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has the ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at St Mary's Catholic Primary School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play is also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

## **4. Structure of the EYFS**

Within St Mary's Catholic Primary school, we have two classes of reception (FS2) children. Each class has a teacher and a learning support assistant to support the development of 30 children. As a team, we aim to support children's learning through curious and exciting activities, both adult led and child initiated. Through an enriched environment, children are supported with skills and attitudes which enhance their social, physical and intellectual development.

The children share a large outdoor provision promoting their physical development, health and general well-being. The framework references to both the 'indoor and outdoor environment' indicating that outside there should be planned and purposeful activities, rich stimulating experiences and activities that stimulate children's interest and curiosity.

Children enter the school building at 8.40am when the school bell goes. Children will come in by themselves and are encouraged to be independent by being responsible for their own belongings. They bring a snack (fruit or vegetable only) and drinks bottle into school for afternoon snack time.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary school, a long term plan shows how skills and development are supported to provide children the best opportunities to meet the Early Learning Goals. The early year's team develop termly topics relating to children's interests and ensures development for each individual child is supported.

All areas for learning and development are planned for and available to access within the continuous provision.

We use a systematic approach to phonics and use the scheme Read, Write Inc. which develops children's knowledge in reading and writing.

We provide educational trips and visits within the local community to create excitement around themes and learning opportunities. We also provide children with the opportunity to develop their cultural understanding and awareness.

Short term planning will be used to show how teachers plan for children to engage in purposeful learning.

## 5. Assessment

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Regular assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis. Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA 2020) is carried out during the children's first six weeks upon children entering the setting. The purpose of this assessment is to provide an on entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 can be created. The content of the RBA consists of mathematic tasks and literacy, communication and language tasks.

## 6. Partnership with Parents

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. An effective partnership with parents is essential to ensure regular support and sharing of information. We aim to work closely with parents in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. This will inevitably have a positive impact on children's learning and development. We aim to do this in several ways:

- Discussions with head teacher and early years staff prior to seeking admission
- School prospectus
- Welcome evening talk where staff explain routines and are available to talk to parents
- Taster sessions
- Home visits prior to starting
- A weekly newsletter informing parents of events within the school
- Information and photographs of what has been covered in class are shared on Parent Hub and google site
- Model lessons displaying phonics and number
- Practitioners are available to talk to parents every day
- Communication via the Home/School Planners which are looked at by a member of staff every day

- Parents evenings- parents are invited to attend a parents evening during the first term after their child has started school and a parents evening in January after Christmas assessments
- A mini progress report giving details of the Easter Assessments.
- Formal report of achievement is given annually in the final half term of the school year

We value the role of parents as the children's primary educators. All of the above will give them the many opportunities to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports our staff in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests. We will also give suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits, coming in to school to help with reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work, or stay and play mornings when they are invited to learn with the children in the classroom environments.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School has a friendly open-door ethos. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

### **Induction Procedures**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School provides full time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Once parents have received notification of a place at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, they will be invited to attend a welcome evening, during this evening parents will meet all the Foundation staff, the staff will talk about how the setting works and the routines of a typical day in the life of the Foundation Stage children. There will also be time for informal chat and parents' questions, and 'welcome packs' will also be distributed at these meetings including a School Prospectus and necessary questionnaires. Parents will also be given a September start date in this pack.

Before they start school in September, all children are offered a morning taster session during the summer term. The purpose of the initial visit is for the children to meet the staff and become familiar with their new school environment.

Also in the summer term, Foundation teachers will contact the nursery settings which the children attend. The aim of these phone calls/visits is to help teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order for them to make the transition period to St Mary's Catholic Primary School as smooth as possible.

At the start of the new academic year in September, staff will undertake a home visit to see the child in their home. The purpose of this is to meet the child in a familiar setting. Where children live across two or more homes, a visit will only be made to the main residence. Children will then start school during the second week of term.

The admission number is 30 children in each of our two Foundation 2 classes. The Foundation 2 children are split equally (where possible) by age, sex, and taking in to account any children with English as an additional language (EAL) and learning support needs.

## 7. Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at St Mary's Catholic Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, family background, SENs, or disability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at St Mary's Catholic Primary School.

## 8. Special Educational Needs

Practitioners will plan for children who have special educational needs or need additional support according to the school's SEND policy. Practitioners will strive to work with parents to remove any barriers to learning. When necessary, practitioners will work with staff from other agencies to help children with special educational needs to reach their full potential.

We recognise the importance of offering challenging material and activities that are relevant to a child's interest.

## 9. Management Responsibility

- i) The Foundation Stage lead is responsible for:
  - The strategic direction and development of the Foundation Stage
  - Keeping up to date with developments within the Foundation Stage and sharing information with colleagues
  - Supporting and monitoring teaching and learning
  - Leading and managing staff
  - Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources
- ii) The Foundation Stage Governor is responsible for reporting back to the full governing body.

Reference

A.Ragan

September 2024

Review Date: September 2025

## Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See safeguarding and child protection policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See attendance policy

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Administering medicines policy	See administration of medicines policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See lockdown policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See visitors policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See children missing in education policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy