



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

'To walk hand in hand with God, loving Him, loving each other and ourselves.'

Our Foundation values of Respect, Kindness and Resilience are at the core of everything we do and are instilled in our children at every opportunity.

Our Aims:

- To provide a secure, safe, caring and stimulating environment
- To ensure that all children are valued
- To build on what the child already knows and develop a positive attitude and enjoyment for learning
- To provide a range of opportunities to learn through direct experience, enquiry, drama and active exploration in the classroom and outdoors, using a wide variety of equipment and materials
- To encourage independence and confidence
- To value the role parents and carers can play to work together in partnership
- To prepare children for the next stage of their learning

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we adhere to the statutory guidance stated in The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage April 2017, and the four guiding principles that shape the practice in Early Years settings.

- Unique child – We recognise that every child is unique and is continually learning, resilient and capable, confident and self-assured
- Positive relationships – We recognise that children learn to be strong, secure and independent through positive relationships
- Enabling Environments – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers
- Learning and Development – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with SEND

1. The Curriculum

Our Curriculum embodies our EYFS staff mantra : ‘Process over Product’ and ‘Happy children learn’ and also adheres to the Ofsted Framework 2019 guidelines for Curriculum Intent:

‘The school’s curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before, and towards those defined end points.’

Our play based curriculum is vocabulary rich, creative, engaging and accessible to all children. We are responsive planners and where possible, we plan learning experiences from the children’s interests and believe they should play an active role in generating ideas for the curriculum. Our Curriculum is well sequenced and builds on logically and sequentially, leading to secure learning. Each theme is introduced by a ‘hook’ to entice children in and ends with a celebration and an opportunity to reflect on learning. Themes are supported by knowledge organisers that are shared with the parents. We want children to be engaged in the learning process and for their learning to be relevant and purposeful. Therefore, we believe that children learn best by doing. We immerse our children in a rich learning environment providing vast communication and language, early reading and writing opportunities both indoors and outdoors. All staff in Foundation have been given training on high quality interactions, which is refreshed frequently as we feel high quality adult/child interactions are crucial to developing communication skills and subsequently reading skills.

According to the ‘Good Practice in Early Education’ research report, January 2017, good practice in relation to curriculum planning includes approaches that are:

- Tailored to individual needs
- Capitalised on children’s interests in order to achieve learning outcomes
- Flexible and responsive so that plans could be changed or adapted to follow the interests of the children and respond to external events
- Informed by on-going assessment
- Grounded in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- Playing and Exploring – engagement
- Active Learning – motivation
- Creating and Thinking Critically – thinking

These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. In order to make them more accessible to our children we have 'Learning Heroes' who embody the characteristics of effective learning and with whom the children identify. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development. Three of the areas are seen as particularly important and are therefore called the 'prime areas'.

The three prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

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

Continuous Provision

At St Mary's we aim to ensure:

- A clearly defined learning environment designed to allow and encourage children to extend and deepen their understanding of the EY curriculum
- An environment that facilitates independence, curiosity and hands on, play-based learning
- Enables children to consolidate recent learning, practise new skills and follow their own interests
- Staff enhance Continuous Provision through careful intervention and high quality interactions
- Carefully chosen and organised, high quality resources and experiences that are constantly available for children to access independently across every area of their learning
- Clearly labelled resources for children to access independently

2. Outdoor Learning

The environment, both indoors and outdoors, plays a key role in enabling and extending children's learning and development. We have access to separate outdoor classrooms for F1 and F2 throughout the day, and also access to the school field. We have dedicated outdoor sessions led by a Level 3 Forest School practitioner, following the Forest School ethos to learning, as well as growing opportunities supported by 'Edible Schools'.

All children are able to explore the outdoor learning environment and the unique opportunities that outdoor learning presents.

Organisation of Activities:

We organise our day to have a balance between child led learning and focused learning with an adult. Our curriculum and environment are designed to meet the needs of the children in our school. Hence, we have prioritised the impact of high quality interactions by ensuring that an adult is free to be a 'play ranger' during the sessions to observe and extend learning during continuous provision. The classroom and outdoor area in EYFS is set up in a way for children to become independent learners and to carry out meaningful experiences to support their learning .

Adult led activities cover a range of curriculum subjects throughout the day and are taught in small groups and are tailored to the needs of the children, building on knowledge and skills and consolidating learning for the long term.

30 hour children in F1

For those children who are entitled to 30 hours provision, we have places in Nursery for children to attend for the whole day. They have a dedicated lunchtime area where learning opportunities are maximised and we ensure that these children have enhanced provision during the afternoon.

Assessment

- We have been part of the pilot scheme for the new Baseline in September 2019.
- Children entering our Foundation Stage settings are observed during their first weeks to provide baseline information. Contributions from parents through the information to setting sheets are used to help inform these judgements.
- Monitoring of each child will take place through observations (both planned and incidental), discussions, photographs and record keeping.
- In F1, children are assessed on entry into Nursery, at strategic points in the year and assessed on exit from Nursery.

- In F2, children will be formally assessed at strategic points during the year and phonically assessed at the end of each phonic phase.
- At the end of the Reception year, children are assessed in relation to the revised early learning goals against three levels. This is discussed with Year 1 staff and will inform their planning and help teachers to decide on the children's next steps of learning.
- An end of year report summarising the achievements from the Early Years Foundation Stage is sent to parents.

4. Transition

Changing from a pre-school setting or within school, moving year groups can be daunting for both parents and children. We aim to make this transition as easy and comfortable as possible for all involved.

On entry to F1, the teacher will make a home visit with the child's parent/carer before the child starts in Nursery.

The child will then come in with their parent/carer for an hour on their first day. How the child copes with this is assessed to see whether the child attends their next hour session independently or with their parent/carer.

On entry to F2, the practitioners organise a meeting during the Summer Term to meet the new parents. This is an informal meeting which allows our new parents and children to meet the Head Teacher and their new class teachers and also to be given information about the school.

If appropriate, the F2 teacher will visit children new to the school at home or in their Nursery setting. We also transition children in to school gradually during their first weeks in September, in order to support their emotional well-being.

We work very hard to prepare our children for Year 1 and time will be allocated to prepare the children for the more formal approach in Year 1, where there is less free flow and individual choice of activities. The activities are still very practical and play based and will be adjusted to the needs and interests of the children. The outdoor space is still very much used during the transition period and follows the 'group learning' system.

5. Welfare and Safeguarding Children

We believe that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We regard the welfare and safeguarding of our children with paramount importance. We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead based full time in the Foundation

Stage at St Mary's and follow the same safeguarding procedures and systems as the rest of the school. In addition to this,

- We have devised an Intimate Care policy which we follow.
- A Foundation risk assessment is in place to review the health and safety arrangements on a regular basis.
- A daily safety check of the environment is made and recorded daily.

6. Partnership with Parents

We greatly value the contribution and knowledge which parents and carers bring. In order to draw on this effectively, we try to include parents as much as possible.

The following are types of formal meetings which are offered to parents:

- New parent/carer meetings before a child starts school
- Home visits
- F1 Stay and Plays for Reading and Numeracy
- F2 Phonic and Numeracy workshops
- F2 workshop to prepare for Year 1 and the Early Learning Goals
- End of year parents' meetings and written reports on children's progress
- F1 and F2 Next steps.... These are sent home termly to support parents on what children need to know next in order to progress.
- Links through learning activities as and when appropriate, e.g. story sharing workshops, reading diaries, stay and play sessions, star of the week book, fundraising events
- Foundation Celebrations – F2 class assembly, Nativity Family Celebration, Easter Bonnet Parade, Sea-side Day and the F1 Graduation Ceremony

7. Equal Opportunities

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities policy, no child in the Foundation Stage will be discriminated against or disadvantaged because of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.

Pope Francis: 'We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected.'

See also:

Assessment Policy

Admissions Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

Forest School Policy

Intimate Care Policy