



EYFS Policy

St Mary's C.E. Primary School 2025-26

It is our belief that there is something *extraordinary* and *wondrous* in everybody as *unique creations of God*. We *value* all our children as *children of God* and *celebrate difference* and *diversity* within a *safe, encouraging* Christian school environment in which all *flourish*.

Therefore, all will aspire with God's strength to reach for the stars.

"I can do all things through him who *strengthens* me." Philippians 4:13

Intent

Through the teaching of EYFS, our aim is for children to build on prior experiences and provide quality first teaching so our children will acquire new knowledge and skills and have new experiences through an engaging and enabling environment. This will allow the children to be happy and positive about learning, enabling us to develop their lifelong love of learning.

Early Years Foundations Stage Policy

Aim

At St. Mary's, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents / carers and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth to five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practices within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- 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 and parents / carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balance curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents / carers and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person approach to develop strong relationships with individual

children

- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors

Implementation - Our EYFS Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied

The **specific** areas are:

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

In the Early Years, we write medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas (please refer to our curriculum map). We also link each topic to a book or a range of books.

We also follow the children's interest where appropriate. These plans then inform our short term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Reception teach literacy using The Write Stuff, which is focused around a book. It helps children to build their confidence with sentence structures, gives them the understanding of the whole piece that they are writing and enables children to organise their ideas.

Impact

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Each term parents are informed about their child's attendance and progress, with reports written once a year.

All children entering Nursery and Reception carry out an Early Communication Screen assessment which assesses speech sounds, understanding and vocabulary according to their age. Any child scoring 3 or under is automatically referred to our on-site independent speech and language therapist. She carries out a more detailed assessment and groups children with similar needs together so an intervention can take place.

When children enter Reception, they are required to take part in an activity based assessment for language, communication and literacy and mathematics. This is carried out within the first six weeks of a child entering Reception.

Within the final term for Reception, we provide the parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals. The parents are then given the opportunity to feedback on these judgements.

The Reception class teachers take part in Local Authority moderating events which ensure consistency with government guidelines.

The teaching and pedagogy are reviewed and evaluated regularly through weekly team meetings. To support all EYFS staff we hold regular CPD opportunities to inform our practice. We ensure the areas we discuss and develop are reflected in changes and developmental in terms of our classroom practice.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Child Protection, Illness and Injury.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Mary's, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of the children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the children the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

Parents as partners and the wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways. See Parents as Partners policy.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all the children.

Signed date

Next Review Date: July 2027