



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Faith is at the heartbeat of our school, as we walk with Jesus through life. St Mary's provides a safe, happy, positive place to learn, where everyone reaches their full potential. By showing respect, love and care to one another, without exception, everyone is valued in our school community.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Children will firstly join the Nursery in the term that they turn three if they are eligible for two year old funding, otherwise children's funding commences the term after their third birthday. The children join the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through "teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

Aims

- To foster positive attitudes to learning including confidence, curiosity, responsibility and independence.
- To promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning for all our children to ensure that none are excluded or disadvantaged.
- To provide children with a well-planned curriculum which fosters enthusiasm for learning and is challenging and progressive within a stimulating environment.
- To develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of learning through first hand experiences.
- To provide opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning in a variety of safe and stimulating environments both indoors and outdoors.
- To establish and maintain a close partnership with parents/carers, families and pre-school providers in our community.
- To use focussed assessment and record keeping based on direct observation of children and discussion with them. To use this to inform future planning, monitor progress and build on children's prior learning.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique Child

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 to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity
- planning challenging activities for all children
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare:

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

"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 understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

Positive Relationships:

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through building secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents and Carers as Partners:

We recognise that parents are children's first 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:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school; making sure the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.

- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: learning together sessions, celebration assemblies, and school trips;
- providing parents with an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision;
- providing parents with online access to their child's learning journey, to which they can contribute to and comment on to inform planning and address 'next steps' for their child.

Enabling Environments:

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where 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.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual online learning journey. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are:

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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is used as an essential part of children's development, building their confidence as they learn to: explore; think about problems; and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

Practitioners ensure there is a balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected

that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These 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;
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2012)

Assessment:

Our assessment of pupil progress through the EYFS is based on regular and close observations as well as questioning, listening and discussion with individual children. In this way, we are able to make professional judgements about what children have learnt as well as through the activities children have completed. Annotated photographs and observations are placed into each child's individual online Learning Journey. We involve all adults who come into contact with the child and regard parents as especially important in this respect.

We therefore want to ensure that parents are able to contribute to the assessment process through an ongoing dialogue between home and school, including online access to their child's Learning Journey. On entry to school we make initial assessments of what children already know, understand and can do. On a half-termly basis we track each child's progress against the phases of development in the Development Matters document (September 2012). Each child's progress will also be discussed in data meetings with the Head Teacher.

Transition

From Pre-school settings:

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and routines;
- During the summer term parents are asked to complete an entry profile and a separate 'all about me' child entry profile;
- The children are invited to a series of transition sessions in the reception class;
- The key worker/s makes visits to the pre-school settings. This enables us to gather essential information to aid the transition process.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1:

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in areas of strength and areas for development. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. We meet with the year one teacher to

discuss the “next steps” for each child in their learning. Our aim is that they are secure, confident and excited about moving on.

This policy was prepared by Samantha Bowman and Sarah Correnti

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