



EYFS Policy

*At St Mary's we live love and learn with the
guidance of God.*

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Principles.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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 and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships.

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

Enabling environments.

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development.

Foundation stage is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Mary’s we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying the secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the Foundation Stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is

done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At St Mary's we aim to:

- Provide a safe and challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment that is sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, gender or ability have the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, that are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and language
2. Physical development

3. Personal, Social and emotional development

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning

4. Literacy
5. Maths
6. Understanding the world
7. Expressive art and design.

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

Playing and exploring

Active learning

Creating and thinking critically

We ensure that our environment and 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

Observation, assessment and planning

Good planning is the key to making Children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows that the principles of EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs.

All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children. We make regular assessments of Children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects the identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults in the setting. Learning Stories are used to share significant learning experiences of individuals, groups or the whole class. Observations are supported by a range of evidence including photographs and children's work. These observations are recorded and used towards profiles that are kept on all children and shared with parents. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journal. This may include commenting on a child's learning story from school or sharing an experience from home.

We work closely with the families of our children from the moment they start their learning journey in St Mary's. At the end of Nursery and Reception a written report is made for each child and sent home to parents who then come to talk about their child's progress with the teacher.

From September 2016 our EYFS staff will use the Early Excellence Tracking tool to track the progression of the children throughout their Foundation Stage Journey. The tracker looks at children's levels of wellbeing and involvement as well as their progress against the EYFS curriculum.

Learning through play and continuous provision

At St Mary's we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Classrooms are set up with a continuous provision which the children have access to every day. Teachers plan learning experiences based on the children's needs. These themes can be further explored in all areas of the classroom using high quality open ended resources which the children can return to. Enhanced provision is used to extend the children's learning or explore their own interests and ideas. At St Mary's we use a child led approach to planning which allows us to plan for the needs of the children as they progress through their learning journey.

Outdoor play

See policy

The induction process.

In Nursery Parents and children are invited to the setting in the term before they start in the setting. During this meeting the children are able to become familiar with the setting and the staff while parents are given key information about their child starting school. Children are invited to spend a session with their parents or carers so that they can meet their new friends and have a taster session. Parents can ask any questions they may have and learn about the routines and expectations of the setting. The following day the child spends a shorter session on their own in school. If the child is settled they will then join us for full sessions. This process is adapted to meet the needs of the child and how well they adjust to the setting. We also work closely with local 2 year old providers to ensure the child's transition is as settled as possible.

In Reception , parents are invited to school for a meeting with the Reception Teacher, School administrator, Attendance officer and the School Nurse . They find out about school routines and expectations and staff are available to answer any questions. The children participate in transition days where they work in their new classrooms and stay for a school lunch.

Home and school links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely together. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will outline the school's expectations and curriculum offer on the school website.
- We will hold parent consultation meetings three times per year to discuss progress and how the child is settling in.
- Nursery staff will send home a weekly challenge for parents to do with their children and Reception will send home daily reading and numeracy and literacy activities as homework.

- We will operate an open door policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We will conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.

Intimate care

This is any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However depending on the age and stage of a child's development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear and clothes following an accident.

Parents inform staff of those children likely to require such care and a discussion takes place regarding how their needs can be met as closely in school as they would be met at home. Parents provide clean clothing and are always informed when a child has needed such care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

Privacy is maintained as far as possible and staff are always encouraged to change a child in the presence of another member of staff.

Intimate care is given to children who need it in line with our school policy. Parents are always informed when this care is given.

Inclusion and equal opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual education plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.