



ST.MARY'S RC
PRIMARY SCHOOL

WE PRAY, PLAY & RESPECT ALL

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

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1. Our Mission Statement

‘As the family of St. Mary’s, learning and growing in God’s love, joyfully, we pray, play and respect all, changing our world forever.’

Our mission statement encapsulated in ‘We play, pray and respect all’, along with our Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church, underpins the values of this policy.

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St. Mary’s RC Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

2. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad 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
 - Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
 - Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
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3. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

4. Structure of the EYFS

Our Foundation Stage Unit consists of two Nursery classes (morning and afternoon) and two Reception classes. At St Mary's, children join us in Nursery at the beginning of the school year in which they are four or in Reception at the beginning of the year in which they are five.

The maximum number of children in the nursery is: 60 part time places. This is 30 places per morning or afternoon session. Full-time places are available and accessed through both the Government 30-hour funded entitlement and private funding. In Nursery, the children are taught by one class teacher and two teaching assistants. Each child in Nursery is allocated one of the three adults as their key person.

There are two Reception classes. Each class has 30 places available and is taught by a class teacher and one teaching assistant. The class teacher is the key person in Reception.

5. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance which applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences reflect their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children **learn and develop** at different rates and in different ways.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

These prime areas are those most essential for children's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 specific areas. These are:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

In addition to these seven areas of learning, we observe and promote the way they learn through the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'. These include 'Playing and Exploring', 'Active learning' and 'Creating and Thinking Critically'.

5.1 Planning

The planning within EYFS is based around different themes. The staff plan for a broad and vibrant curriculum that builds on children's prior knowledge and offers a wide range of first-hand experiences, enabling all children to succeed. There are well planned areas of provision including a wide range of activities, resources and materials. Opportunities are provided for planned activities as well as spontaneous self-chosen activities. It is important that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

The staff consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in our care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

5.2 Teaching

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in Early Years. Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure the children learn specific skills and knowledge. Through children's structured play, they can practise these skills and allow their learning to be embedded.

Both Nursery and Reception follow daily timetables which provide set times for adult-led sessions and time for children to learn through continuous provision. Teachers plan for both adult-led and child-led sessions based on children's needs and any gaps in their learning.

Adult-led sessions must include but are not limited to a daily Storytime and Phonics session (Phase 1 phonics for Nursery and RWI for Reception), Mathematics, Religious Education, Physical Education and Music with Mr. Doherty.

5.3 The Learning Environment

Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms are 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 classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to access equipment and resources independently. In our Foundation Stage setting, the staff provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities both indoors and outdoors.

5.4 Outdoor Provision

The EYFS unit has an enclosed outdoor area and the children in Nursery and Reception have access to the outdoor learning space daily. We provide all weather clothing and parents provide wellies to enable us to access the area all year. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In this area EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices. The Nursery children can access the outdoor classroom at all times through free flow provision. The Reception children will have access to the outdoor provision through free flow provision after their morning RWI phonics session and after their afternoon whole class carpet session.

6. Assessment

As each child enters the Early Years Foundation Stage, they are assessed in all seven areas of learning. This provides us our on-entry baseline data. Over the year the children's development and progress is tracked and recorded through the age-related development bands. (EYPT Trackers are updated termly for the Local Authority – October, February and July). Examples of the children's learning, showing their individual level and stage of development are built up over the year. These examples are celebrated in their Learning Journeys (electronic in Reception) and workbooks. They will include photographs, pieces of writing or drawing and observations/notes.

At St Mary's, on-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

The main EYFS assessment method is through adults' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Adults make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. stickers, whole class grids, photographs). All adults are involved in observing 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. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of written work or talking with children about their task or play.

At the end of the Reception year, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. The children are assessed against the 17 EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Exceeding expected levels or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

A report is then sent to the Local Authority and to parents/carers.

7. Working with parents

We value the involvement of parents and carers in school and we believe that by working together we can significantly impact children's confidence and learning. We encourage parents to participate in their child's education in a number of ways.

- Providing information about their child's family, interests and hobbies before starting school
- Attending a Welcome Meeting prior to their child starting in Nursery or Reception
- Attending a Phonics, Reading & Maths Meeting to support parents/carers in helping their children
- Open Sessions for parents/carers
- Reading the home reading scheme books & practising key words & phonics
- Daily contact with staff (before and after school)
- Helping with homework
- Attending Parental Conferences to discuss their child's progress and achievements
- Sharing and contributing to their child's Learning Journey

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Early Years Leader, Claire Braisdell and the School Leadership Team annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.