



EARLY YEARS POLICY

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement

LEARNING TO LIVE OUT OUR CALLING WITH
COMPASSION AND LOVE

Rationale

This policy is intended to outline provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

The term 'Foundation Stage' refers to children between the ages of three and five years old and describes their curriculum throughout both the Nursery and Reception years. Parents and carers may choose to start their child in our Nursery in the academic year in which he or she has his/her fourth birthday, or, where provision allows, they may choose to enrol them the term after they turn three. Transition into Reception occurs at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five.

Intent

At St. Mary's Primary School, our over-riding aim in the EYFS is for our pupils to develop a positive foundation for lifelong learning. We will achieve this by promoting and supporting the four key principles in the EYFS statutory framework.

1. A Unique Child – Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or adults in school.
3. Enabling Environments - The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
4. Learning and Development – Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure that all children and their families feel safe, valued, included and respected.
- Provide each child in the Nursery with a key worker with whom they can build a secure attachment.
- Promote parents as partners in their child's learning through regular dialogue and collaboration.
- Help children to feel secure and develop relationships with adults.
- Promote a safe, challenging, rich and varied indoor and outdoor learning environment.
- Ensure all seven areas of the EYFS plus Religious Education, are given equal coverage and that planning uses observations of the children and meets their next steps in learning.
- Use praise and encouragement to help children achieve their best.

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 and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Inclusion

This policy operates in line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy. Every child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

All children are encouraged to achieve their best. Early identification of any additional needs is crucial, and concerns will be discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity. The school's inclusion manager will also be used for further help or advice. Liaison with other professionals will take place where appropriate.

Safeguarding and Welfare

At St. Mary's Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We are committed to:

- Promoting the welfare of children.
- Promoting good health, good oral hygiene, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensuring all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensuring that the premises, furniture, and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensuring that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our setting.
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Ensuring that mobile phones and personal cameras are not used within the Early Years areas.

Intimate Care

Staff should follow the guidelines set out in the school's policy.

Implementation

Teaching and Learning

At school we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. All staff work together to foster the characteristics of effective learning: Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creativity and Critical Thinking.

Environment

At St Mary's Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Classrooms will have clearly accessible areas, which will be attractive and suitably resourced. Children should be able to select and use resources independently, learn to take responsibility for them and tidy them away.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We know that early literacy and communication skills are central to future learning, so our curriculum is based around themes linked to texts we share, from a variety of genres. These themes might be chosen in advance by staff or could be based on children's interests, next steps or special events. Reading and revisiting texts allow new concepts to be explored, vocabulary to be introduced, and a love of reading developed.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher

and LSAs. These observations are both formal and informal and may be recorded in a variety of ways (including electronic profiles) and then used to inform our judgements. Key Workers will play a key role in observing children in their groups and contributing to their profiles.

Within the final term of the year we provide a written summary to parents/carers, reporting their progress against the stages of development or Early Learning Goals. They are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher.

At the end of the Reception year the EYFS profile results are sent to the LA.

Curriculum

The EYFS Curriculum is divided into seven equal areas of learning. Within each area, children develop through different ages and stages. The Early Learning Goals, when children are approximately 60 months old, are the national expectations for children at the end of the Reception year (and Foundation Stage.)

Details of the seven areas of learning from the EYFS and a summary of what each of them mean for children are as follows:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involve enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Daily Routine

In Nursery pupils will begin each day within their key worker group to foster security, relationships and routine. As well as prayer time and register there will also be opportunities to share news and achievements.

Daily, taught, phonics and maths sessions will also take place during the morning, as well as opportunities for outdoor activities, adult led activities and child-initiated play. Key workers will also use this time to identify, and work with, targeted pupils who need support or extension in specific areas of learning.

Afternoon sessions will also have opportunities for adult led and child-initiated play.

In Reception routines and learning will become more formalised. Daily phonics, literacy and numeracy sessions are increased as the children progress, so that, by the end of the summer term in Reception, they are suitably prepared for the National Curriculum. For more able children this may be introduced sooner, whilst for others the Early Years curriculum may continue in Y1. There will still be both adult led and child initiated activities, as well as opportunities to learn outdoors, plus opportunities for targeted support.

- Assist in teaching an agreed timetable as set out by the Teacher and adapt to ever changing circumstances.
- Work closely with Teachers on a day-to-day basis to implement new initiatives and practices.
- Work collaboratively with other colleagues within the setting and school.
- Actively support the smooth running of the class on a day-to-day basis using initiative and independence.
- Implement effectively all current and up to date safeguarding and child protection policies and practices.

Transition into Nursery

- School tours are offered to all incoming parents and children.
- Parents are invited to an 'Induction Meeting' and receive an 'information pack' with information about the school.
- Prospective FS1 children are invited to attend Nursery with parents for a visit.
- Liaison occurs with a child's previous setting to obtain further information.
- Previous settings are contacted to ask if any learning records can be shared and visits are arranged where possible
- A baseline record is completed within the first three weeks of entry into Nursery.
- The Foundation Stage staff are always available before and after school to chat to parents.

Transition into Reception

- Discussions occur between Nursery staff and staff from other settings.
- School tours offered to all incoming parents and children.
- Parents are invited to an 'Induction Meeting' and receive an 'information pack' with information about the school.
- Prospective FS2 children are invited to attend Reception for a visit.
- A national baseline assessment is completed within the first six weeks of entry to Reception.
- The Foundation Stage staff are always available before and after school to chat to parents.

Transition into Year 1

Teaching staff meet to discuss the children's progress. Foundation Stage teachers inform the future teacher of the child's level of ability, special educational needs and any other information relevant to the wellbeing and development of each child.

Information is used to identify groups of pupils to meet specific needs, adjust/fine-tune the curriculum and set future targets. Links are made between Early Learning Goals and National Curriculum.

Opportunities are provided for Y1 staff to meet and get to know the FS2 children in the Summer Term. Pupils will also visit the Y1 classrooms.

Parent Partnership

As parents are a child's primary educators it is vital that we build strong and positive partnerships with them in the Early Years to strengthen a child's journey through school. Communication is key and we will foster this by:

- Providing opportunities for Stay and Play sessions, workshops, and Parents' Meetings during the year.
- Sharing learning experiences via Facebook.

- Providing important information on the school website.
- Using Class DoJo as a communication tool between parents and the class teacher.
- Sharing information about their child's learning with them at regular points through the year.
- Having staff members available before and after school each day for messages or concerns.

Admissions

We have one intake for children starting Reception which is in September each year.

We have one intake for children starting Nursery which is in September each year. Where space allows, additional groups of 'Early Threes' (children who have turned three by the end of the previous term) may be admitted. Criteria for all admissions are set out in the school's admission policies.

Policy Reviewed by: Mrs D Ball

Early Years Lead

Date: 4th October 2021

Signed: Mrs D. Mellor

Headteacher

Date:

Policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2022

Appendix 1

I have read and agree to abide by the content of the Early Years Policy for St. Mary's Catholic Primary School.

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