

St Mary's RC Primary School

EYFS Policy

At St Mary's, we strive to live out explicitly the Catholic ethos and mission of our school and we aim to provide the best education for all our pupils in every area of the curriculum.

We believe that our school provides the experience of a living, growing Catholic environment for all members of our community. Christ is at the centre of everything we do

Introduction

The EYFS applies to children from three years of age to the end of the reception year. In St. Mary's School, children join the Nursery during the September following their third birthday; they enter Reception in the September after their fourth birthday. They are admitted according to the school's admissions procedures.

The Foundation Stage plays an important part in introducing the children to St. Mary's School and is a fundamental part of the educational journey the children take as they progress through Key Stage 1 and finally on to Key Stage 2.

Within our local community, there are various pre-school organisations, which are on offer to the children and provide them with a wealth of learning opportunities and experiences. As many of the children joining St. Mary's have attended these establishments, the Foundation Stage education we offer to our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged irrespective of need.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points.
- The content of the curriculum is age appropriate and matches the needs of the young child.
- The learning environment is rich and stimulating.
- The curriculum is designed to encompass both the indoor and outdoor classroom.

EYFS Aims

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

Here at St Mary's RC Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- 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 and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The EYFS at St Mary's is based upon four guiding principles that shape the practice in Early Years settings.

These include:

The Unique Child - at St Mary's 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, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships with Staff and Pupils - All of the Foundation Staff endeavour to promote positive relationships with the children within the Nursery and Reception classes. All staff ensures that individual children are well looked after throughout the day. Staff provide positive role models at all times for the children. The behaviour policy throughout the school is based on a positive approach which focuses on praising examples of good behaviour. Any negative behaviour is dealt with in an age appropriate way in line with school policy.

Positive Relationships with parents - At St. Mary's School we believe that all parents have a crucial role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this by:

- inviting all Nursery/Reception parents/carers to an induction meeting during the summer term;
- inviting all new children to attend a play and stay session in the summer term before they start school the following September;
- providing a staggered start for the new Nursery intake in September thus providing the opportunity for the teacher and teaching assistants to introduce each child to our school within a smaller group setting;
- offer home visits where the foundation stage staff visit each family and discuss issues regarding each individual child in the privacy and comfort of their own home;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- welcoming parents into school each half term for pray, stay, play sessions.
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between the child, parents and school.

Enabling Environments - At St. Mary's School, we plan a Foundation Stage environment that encourages a positive attitude to learning; this includes both the indoor and outdoor classroom. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this promotes independent learning. The children are encouraged to take care of the resources and we strive to enrich their learning by providing a stimulating environment.

Learning and Development - St Mary's EYFS curriculum planning includes approaches that are

- tailored to individual needs
- capitalised on children's interests in order to achieve learning outcomes
- flexible and responsive so that plans can be changed or adapted to follow the interests of the children and respond to external events
- informed by on-going assessment;
- grounded in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

At St Mary's we ensure that the characteristics of effective learning are reflected in planning and practice. We understand that a child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS 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.

St Mary's curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. 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.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

Learning Through Play

At St Mary's we recognise the importance of play in the Early Years. It is through play that pupils are able to:

- Build confidence
- Learn to explore
- Think about and solve problems
- Relate to others
- Develop curiosity and a motivation to learn
- Develop their own communication styles

Planned and purposeful play activities are a key strategy for introducing and consolidating all areas of learning and development. They are also carefully planned to take into account pupils' needs and utilise their interests.

St Mary's Play activities will include a mix of:

- Child initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult Initiated Activities- staff provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- Adult Directed Activities - Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.
 - Here at St Mary's children will complete three adult led activity each week, one for RE, English and Maths (abacus maths scheme) to be evidenced in their books. Children also take part in a daily phonic session (letters and sounds)

Here at St Mary's we believe that play is the most powerful way in which young children learn. Structured play offers the children opportunities to explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. During play activities they practise and build up ideas, learn to control their behaviour, as well as developing their understanding of the need to observe and follow rules. The children are encouraged to think creatively alongside others as well as on their own. The children can communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Most importantly, we do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work'.

The teaching and learning that takes place within the Foundation Stage at St. Mary's School is based on:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that the Foundation staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this informs their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play, talk and other means of communication;
- a carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;

- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of the children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- communication between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- clear aims for our work, and regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage;
- regular communication between all Foundation staff to encourage continuity and progression between Nursery and Reception, and with members of the KS1 department.

Staff within the EYFS will continually make judgements through observations and assessment as to the balance required for pupils between child and adult initiated play activities.

Although we recognise that pupils will be, over time, working towards being able to participate in more adult led activities in readiness for moving onto Year 1, we understand and appreciate that our pupils will develop at different rates and having very specific and individual learning needs.

At St Mary's all teaching and learning will take place within the classroom and outside in the EYFS outdoor provision.

Planning, Recording and Assessment

Schemes of Work (topics) are planned on a 2-year cycle, so that children will not cover the same topic in nursery and again in reception.

Topic planning generally takes place on a two week cycle. This topic might be focused on any area of the EYFS or Liturgical Year. Topics may be altered to take into account children's interests.

Summative assessment is carried out at least once per term. St Mary's use itrack assessment to enable staff to record the progress of pupils. This further allows staff to identify where pupils are expected or better than expected progress and where a pupil may require additional interventions or support to raise progress in a given area.

In the Foundation Stage teachers plan for each half term following the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Short term planning includes a mixture of whole-class sessions, group activities, continuous, enhanced and focused provision, as well as child-initiated activities. All areas of the EYFS Curriculum takes place in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Fundamental to all learning within the Foundation Stage is the emphasis that learning takes place through active learning activities.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage at St. Mary's School reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competences, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Foundation Stage Profile

Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory document and must be maintained in accordance to the procedures outlined in the Profile guidelines. Throughout the year all staff working within the Nursery and Reception classes, including both teachers and teaching assistants will record observations and assessments made on the children's achievements. The Profile is a summative assessment document and includes assessments made on all areas of learning.

St Mary's Online Profile is:

- completed on a termly basis
- used to form the basis of the end of year school report to parents
- emailed home to parents at the end of Autumn and Spring term so that we can inform parents of their child's progress. All parents need to sign permission for us to do this.
- a valuable transition document
- a source of on-going evidence that is collected throughout the year.

Parents will be invited in to school at least twice a year to discuss the progress their child is making.

An annual report is given to parents at the end of the school year. This is in line with the rest of the school and offers comments on how a child is progressing the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Equal Opportunity

At St. Mary's School, we believe that all our children matter and we give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the early learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We accomplish this by providing a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes co-operative learning, with equal opportunity for all. The promotion of equal opportunities is the concern of all our teachers, who ensure that irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability, all pupils in the Foundation Stage receive their entitlement to an education that best suits their individual needs and develops their learning potential.