



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy For St Mary's C.E. School

**Approved by Curriculum & Standards Committee:
Date of next review:**

**Autumn 2016
Autumn 2017**

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Early Years education is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and is an education which endeavours to provide active learning through play.

Introduction

At St Mary's Church of England primary school the Early Years Foundation Stage consists of three reception classes each with a teacher and teaching assistant. Each classroom has access to a shared outdoor area. Almost all the children who enter reception have previously attended a playgroup or nursery setting. In this policy the Early Years Foundation Stage will be known as the EYFS.

Admissions and Induction

Please see school admissions policy for details of entry criteria and pattern of school entry.

Induction may include:

- Pre-school visit by the parent and child;
- Home visits carried out by class teacher and teaching assistant during September;
- New parents information meeting during the term before the child starts school;
- Informal welcome evening for new parents in the autumn term;
- Staggered admission dates allowing children to start in a smaller group;
- Initially parents may accompany their child into the classroom at the start of the day and
- Children are met on the Reception playground by the class teacher at the start of the day.

Aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage

We recognise and value the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development in order to improve outcomes for all. We believe that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being.

We believe that childhood is a time of play, and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the reward of achievement, and acquire our life skills. The EYFS setting, with its bright, colourful, well planned, stimulating environment, encourages the children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to live full satisfying lives and become confident, active members of a diverse constantly changing society.

It is through this process that children will work towards (emerging), achieve (expected) and in some cases work beyond the level of development (exceed) expected at the end of the EYFS.

We aim to:

- Provide a welcoming and safe environment for children and their families;
- Ensure that all children feel included, safe, secure and valued;
- Establish positive relationships with parents and carers;
- Build on what children already know and can do and celebrate achievement;
- Help children make links in their learning;
- Stimulate positive attitudes and dispositions to learning;
- Encourage independence;
- Value children's interests, providing an appropriate balance of teacher directed learning and child

initiated activities;

- Help children build friendships and learn to co-operate with each other;
- Provide a solid foundation in the seven areas of learning through well planned, rich and stimulating experiences;
- Ensure that all experiences encompass appropriate challenge;
- Help children to value diversity in others;
- Ensure that barriers to learning are identified and children are assisted to overcome them;
- Ensure that children with special educational needs are identified and receive appropriate support;
- Keep parents well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress; encouraging parents to contribute wherever possible.

Teaching and Learning

In the Reception classes, the children's learning is holistic and takes place across all aspects of the daily routine. Our aim is for each child to learn and develop physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually, as well as intellectually.

Children's interests and motivations are used as starting points for teaching and the activities we plan take account of children's everyday experiences. We ensure that children can learn through first-hand experiences.

We encourage pupils to become independent in their learning and we provide appropriate opportunities for them to take responsibility and make choices and decisions.

The curriculum supports consistent daily routines, which encourage children to feel safe and secure and help them gain confidence in their ability to learn, supported by positive relationships.

We believe that planned, purposeful play is a central part of young children's learning and underpins all aspects of their development. The outdoor classroom is as important as the indoor classroom environment as a space for playing and learning.

The **four principles** that shape practice in the Early Years are:

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

There are seven areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The first three are called the *prime* areas and they help to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. There are four *specific* areas through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Prime Areas

Communication and Language

Opportunities for children 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

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

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.

Specific Areas

English

Development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children can access a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics

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

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

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.

There are three **characteristics of effective learning** that run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development. They are:

- playing and exploring
- active learning; and
- creating and thinking critically.

DfE 2012

Planning and Assessment

Observation, assessment and evaluation are planned for and used throughout the year to inform planning that will allow the children to succeed in their next steps of learning and ensure that each child's differing needs are met. Half-termly topics are based on the seven areas of learning that make up the EYFS curriculum including appropriate skills. Assessment is based around ongoing observation and the recording of progress towards the 17 Early Learning Goals. (Further clarification: EYFS profile handbook 2013)

In line with whole school methodology, Assessment for Learning (AFL) is part of EYFS practice.

Assessment opportunities include:

- All observations, assessments and recording are an integral part of teaching, as they inform future planning for children's needs and development;
- Careful observation carried out whilst children are engaged in child initiated activity/play, in order to gain an insight into children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts;
- Careful observations carried out during focused group work/whole class teaching in order to assess children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts;
- Informal observation both in the background and whilst participating with children;
- Discussions with children about their interests and their learning;
- Baseline assessments of key skills and aptitudes on entry to initiate each child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile;
- Ongoing recording of progress against Development Matters in the EYFS;
- Exchange of information with parents at parent teacher meetings providing a two way process where teachers and parents share their understanding of a child;
- Pupil progress meetings with the Senior Leadership Team;
- Annual school report relating to the EYFS goals;
- Information is gathered from previous setting initially and at the end of the reception year each child's progress is discussed with the receiving teacher;
- Parental and child voice is crucial in assessing and tracking children's progress
- The Early Years Coordinator works with the Year 1 teachers to assist transition and planning for each child and
- Participation in moderation internally, across other schools and with the Local Authority.

Parental Involvement and Community Cohesion

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value a close relationship between teachers and parents. We recognise the need for a secure and happy transition from home to school and organise the classroom routines accordingly.

We believe that home support is vital in furthering the development of the individual child. We aim to build good relationships with parents and carers by keeping them informed about the life of the school and their child's progress; ways in which we aim to do this include:

- Discussions with Headteacher and EYFS staff prior to seeking admission
- Information booklets on the EYFS
- 'Welcome Evenings'/informal events for parents where staff explain routines and philosophy
- Home-school reading diaries

- Half-termly curriculum letter
- Photographic displays to show parents what their children have been doing
- Newsletters
- Open door policy – teachers available before and after school
- Parent and child induction programmes
- Open days
- Parents' evenings
- Sharing children's records with parents
- Curriculum workshops for parents
- Parents encouraged to help in the classroom
- Using parents' skills
- Parent Teacher Association (FOSM)
- Interpreter if required or introduction to a parent with the same language

Community links include liaison with previous EYFS settings, EYFS meetings and regular communication with the school nurse, speech and language, occupational therapy services and other relevant outside agencies. Close links to the church are valued highly and provide support to parents, especially for families who qualify for foundation admission places.

Inclusion

We aim to ensure that the EYFS curriculum meets the specific needs of individuals through setting suitable learning challenges and responding to pupils' diverse learning requirements.

Activities in the classroom are differentiated to encourage full and active participation by all children irrespective of ability. They are available to all children regardless of race, class, gender, or disability but may be adapted to make them inclusive. When necessary the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) liaises with staff and other agencies to ensure all children have maximum accessibility to the learning outcomes.

Transition to KS1

Close liaison between the EYFS, Year 1 staff and SENCO ensures that the EYFS profile is understood and used to inform future planning and development for each child. The use of the environment, classroom organisation, teaching styles and resources are closely mirrored in the Autumn Term in Year 1 to ensure smooth and stress free transition for each child into the National Curriculum.

Children, staff and parents have regular opportunities to meet each other prior to the start of Year 1 and children make regular visits to their new environment. Year 1 staff teach their prospective classes in Reception towards the end of the EYFS year ensuring children and adults make positive relationships. Teachers use the opportunity to begin their own observations and assessment of their future pupils in order to improve outcomes for all.

Health and Safety

The school's Health & Safety Policy outlines the safe codes of practice for our school and provides the necessary guidance on the response and the reporting of all incidents.

Children are encouraged to assess hazards and discuss the appropriate precautions. Children are taught the appropriate safe practice when using equipment and they are taught to make decisions safely independently. This will include:

- How to use equipment correctly and in accordance with health and safety guidelines
- Fire safety procedures
- Behaving in a considerate and responsible manner, showing respect for other people and the environment.

All EYFS staff regularly assess equipment, its use and the EYFS environment to ensure the safety of all. Where necessary some reports are forwarded to the PFI facilities/ health and safety departments for their action.

A Risk Assessment will be completed for any educational visit.

ICT

Children use ICT in a wide variety of forms to develop skills and support a wide range of learning. They learn to use: computers, cameras, video cameras, voice recorders and BeeBots during the EYFS. They are made aware of all the safety and appropriate use procedures. The children have weekly timetabled sessions in the Infant ICT suite and they can access the classroom computers during their activity time.

E-Safety

When the computers are used in the EYFS without locked programmes, the children are given instructions and reminders about how to use the internet safely and reference to the infant E safety poster is made. Monitoring and reporting of e-safety incidents with adult support is in line with the Acceptable Use Policy

Leadership and Management

The EYFS co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Understanding the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework and practice guidance;
- Preparing policy documents, curriculum plans, Schemes of Work etc. for the EYFS when appropriate;
- Encouraging staff to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils;
- Helping all colleagues to develop their expertise and understanding of the EYFS;
- Collecting and auditing EYFS resources;
- Ensuring and moderating standards and formats for recording and assessment;
- Liaising with external EYFS practitioners and other key stage staff particularly year 1 teachers;
- Communicating developments in the EYFS, e.g. through staff meetings and distributing information;
- Organising and monitoring continuing professional development in the EYFS.
- Driving an EYFS development plan including costings and priorities which informs the school development plan.

- Liaising with relevant organisations regarding the EYFS, e.g. advisory teachers, inspectors, QCA, libraries.

Equal Opportunities

St Mary's CE School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

The Governing Body recognises that no one should receive less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of the above policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at St Mary's school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

October 2016