



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

**EYFS Policy
for
St. Mary's C.E. Primary School**

Agreed by the Governing Body:	November 2023
Date for review:	November 2025

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Purpose

This policy applies to children in Reception at St Mary's. This policy recognises that EYFS forms the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and is an education which endeavours to provide active learning through play.

Links with other policies

Teaching and Learning Policy
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

At St Mary's Church of England primary school, each class has a teacher and teaching assistant. Each classroom has access to a shared outdoor area and their own toilets.

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 before they start in 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;
- Children are met by the class teacher or TA 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, striving for excellence. We believe that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; experience and show compassion 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 we acquire life skills. The EYFS setting with its 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, compassionate, active members of a diverse and constantly changing society. We often refer to this time as 'independent learning time'.

It is through this process that children will work towards their Early Learning Goals, which they are assessed against at the end of Reception. At this point, some children may be still working towards their Early Learning Goals (Emerging), while most will have achieved them (Expected).

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 excellence and 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, show compassion 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;
- 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, 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. We have an integrated day which includes both focused teaching and learning time and lots of opportunities for child initiated, independent learning through play.

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 children to become independent in their learning and we provide appropriate opportunities for them to take responsibility and make decisions which aim for excellence.

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.

Phonics lessons are taught daily from early in the autumn term and details are shared with parents each week. Parents are also reminded to support their child to practise common exception words, reading and writing at home. Main curriculum areas covered at school are shared with parents each half term encouraging integrated learning between home and school.

Our teaching and learning reflects the recommendations made in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

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

Every child is a unique child , who 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 with teaching and support from adults , who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
Importance of learning and development . Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Early Years Foundation Stage also encourages three characteristics of effective learning which underpins the learning and development in all areas and supports the child to remain an effective and motivated learner:

Characteristics of Effective Learning
Playing and Exploring – Engagement Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to ‘have a go’
Active learning – Motivation Being involved and concentrating Keeping trying Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
Creative and Critical – Thinking Having their own ideas Making links Choosing ways to do things

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	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of	Self-Regulation

<p>self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.</p>	Managing self
	Building relationships
<p>Physical Development By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.</p>	Gross motor skills
	Fine motor skills
<p>Communication and Language Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.</p>	Listening, attention and understanding
	Speaking
Specific Areas	
<p>Literacy 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.</p>	Comprehension
	Word reading
	Writing
<p>Mathematics By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, ‘have a go’, talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.</p>	Number
	Numerical patterns
<p>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.</p>	Past and present
	People, Culture and Communities
	The Natural World
<p>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</p>	Creating with Materials

and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.	Being Imaginative and Expressive
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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.

Every child is assessed against the seven areas of learning and development and their progress towards the 17 Early Learning Goals. This assessment is through interactions and may be recorded and tracked using Target Tracker.

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

Assessment opportunities include:

- Videos, photographs and commentary which are recorded on the online assessment programme Tapestry;
- 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 observations, both in the background and whilst participating with children;
- Discussions with children about their interests and their learning;
- Statutory Baseline assessments of key skills and aptitudes on entry to initiate each child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile;
- 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 Leader works with the Year 1 teachers to assist transition and planning for each child;
- Participation in moderation internally, across other schools and with the Local Authority.

Parental Involvement and Community Cohesion

Parents are the child'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 the below:

- 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
- Half-termly curriculum letter
- Photographic displays to show parents what their children have been doing
- Newsletters
- Parents/teacher consultations
- Sharing children's records with parents
- Curriculum workshops for parents
- Parents encouraged to help
- Using parents' skills
- Parent Teacher Association (FOSM)
- Tapestry

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 children's diverse learning requirements.

Activities in the classroom are planned from the child's starting point 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 initially 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.

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.

In line with guidance in the Statutory Framework (2021) at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate will be on the premises and available at all times when children are present. They will also accompany children on trips.

A Risk Assessment will be completed for any educational visit.

ICT

Although technology is no longer a statutory part of the Early Years Framework, at St Mary's we believe that children should have opportunities to use technology to support their learning and prepare them for the computing curriculum in KS1. Reception have regular access to our school iPads where children can explore educational games or use the camera for taking photographs or videos. Children are introduced to computers, including keyboard and mouse skills, during the summer term in preparation for Year 1 computing lessons. Other technology opportunities such as use of the Beebots are explored when appropriate. They are made aware of all the safety and appropriate use procedures.

E-Safety

E-safety measures are introduced in Reception. Children are taught to speak to an adult if there are any problems with the iPads or computers and if they see anything they are unsure about or looks different. Adults are always close to children when they use technology to ensure safe monitoring. Children are taught to ask others for consent if they are using the camera to take photographs. Monitoring and reporting of e-safety incidents with adult support is in line with the Acceptable Use Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Leadership and Management

The EYFS Lead 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 positively celebrates diversity and inclusion is core to its Christian ethos. The Governing Body recognises that no one should receive less favourable unlawful treatment than another on the grounds of gender, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation. It is the Governors' aim that no-one at the School should suffer unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any of these grounds. The Governing Body is committed to embedding fairness and equality at the heart of the school community, and in all aspects of the school's policies, procedures and practices.