

St Mary's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Updated: January 2021

Date to be reviewed: January 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, the growth and development of the whole child is considered paramount, as human life is a blend of the spiritual, the physical and the intellectual.

We believe prayer, worship and liturgy should be valued experiences which are an integral part of the daily life of the school.

The school would not function in isolation and will endeavour to forge strong links with homes, parishes and the wider community.

It aims to provide a curriculum which meets the educational needs and enhances the growth of the child within its full Christian development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy children join the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe."

We aim to support children in their learning through

"teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child** - developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- **Positive relationships** - supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- **Enabling environments** - where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- **Learning and developing** - An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique Child

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 reward assemblies and golden points to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Concerns are discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools SENCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's inclusion policy for SEN.

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.

Every Child Matters

In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning style, lessons will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various activities will cater for all pupils in the spirit of inclusion. There will also be a consideration of how to record lesson outcomes so that the pupil is offered a variety of methods and is not inhibited by any specific difficulty.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be

allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Policy)

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Encourage parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year;
- Arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- Provide parents with the opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development in and out of school by frequently asking them to contribute to the Learning Project folders;
- Ensure all parents know that their child's teacher and Nursery Nurse are their key workers and that there is a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns.

Positive Relationships

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transfer sessions;
- support children through the transition from Nursery to Reception with the children attending part time during the first two weeks. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the first half term of the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics;

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure that we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning projects and skills books.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend it as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are

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

The specific areas are

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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives

cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is used as an essential part of children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others.

Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgment to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2012)

Religious Education, following the 'Come and See' school policy, is also taught in the Reception Class as part of our core curriculum.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Health and Safety

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2012, at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer." (Statutory framework for EYFS 2012)
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times, a record of accidents and injuries is kept and parents are informed. Members of staff are paediatric first aid trained.
- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment is in place.
- There is a fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- There is a safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting.

Transition

From Nursery /Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they meet staff, know about school procedures and have an opportunity to ask about anything they are unsure of.
- The children are invited to two separate visits to their reception class. The first is a stay-and-play session with only a few new children and the second is a whole class session.
- During the summer term the class teacher visits the children in their feeder settings to meet the child, share their learning journey and speak to the setting staff.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, are exceeding expected levels or are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs, and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Parents are invited to a meeting with the Year 1 teacher in the Year 1 classroom towards the end of the summer term.

