EYFS Policy

St. Mary's RC Primary School

Mission Statement

We live learn and grow together with Jesus through:

- Showing love to all
- Encouraging friendship to include everybody
- Acting with honesty through prayer
- Being thankful for all God's gifts
- Remaining respectful through our actions
- Forgiving someone when they are sorry
- Displaying patience by being calm and caring
- Demonstrating compassion to everyone in God's family
- Leading in service by supporting our school community

Written by: Pam McGarry
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Policy will be reviewed: Annually

Introduction

At St. Mary's RC Primary School, we recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides the foundation for children's learning, development, wellbeing and future success. We offer a secure, inclusive and language-rich environment where every child is known, valued and supported to thrive.

Our EYFS practice reflects the statutory framework for group and school-based providers and the school's Catholic mission. We work in partnership with parents and carers and build on each child's experiences, strengths and needs.

Intent

We intend for every child to develop the knowledge, skills, vocabulary, confidence and dispositions they need to become successful, independent learners. Our curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and carefully sequenced, while remaining responsive to children's interests and individual starting points.

• Develop strong communication and language, with a particular focus on listening, understanding, vocabulary and meaningful talk.

• Build secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics alongside physical, personal, social and emotional development.

• Develop children's curiosity, creativity, independence, resilience and ability to think and solve problems.

• Provide rich experiences that develop children spiritually, morally, socially, emotionally and physically within the Catholic life of St. Mary's.

• Ensure all children, including those with SEND or who may face barriers to learning, can participate and achieve.

Learning and Development

The curriculum is organised across seven areas of learning. The three prime areas are Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. These are strengthened through Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design.

The curriculum is delivered through purposeful play, adult-guided teaching, modelling, conversation, exploration and carefully chosen experiences. We place particular emphasis on developing vocabulary and communication across the curriculum. The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – are woven through our practice.

Implementation

Staff know the children well and use starting points, observation, professional knowledge and assessment to identify what children know, understand and can do, and what they need to learn next. Teaching is adapted in the moment and through planning so that children revisit, practise and deepen important knowledge and skills.

Our environment is carefully organised to promote independence, curiosity and sustained shared thinking. Children have access to purposeful indoor and outdoor learning, with a balance of child-initiated and adult-guided experiences. Resources, interactions and experiences are adapted to meet individual needs. Screen use is purposeful, appropriate and balanced with active, social and hands-on learning.

Adults model positive relationships, language and behaviour. They use questioning, explanation, demonstration and conversation to extend children's thinking and vocabulary. Planning is flexible and responsive rather than driven by paperwork, ensuring that teaching remains focused on children's learning.

Impact and Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching. Through everyday observation and professional discussion, staff identify children's strengths, gaps and next steps. We use this information to adjust teaching and provide appropriate support or challenge. We avoid unnecessary recording and do not use assessment to limit children's experiences.

We evaluate impact through children's learning, development and growing independence, including their progress towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception. Parents and carers are kept informed and involved throughout the year. Statutory assessments, including the Reception Baseline Assessment and EYFS Profile, are completed where applicable.

Learning Through Play

Play is central to our EYFS curriculum. We provide time and space for children to explore, practise, imagine and apply what they know, while adults intervene purposefully when this will deepen learning. We value both child-initiated play and high-quality adult-guided learning.

Inclusion, SEND and Equality

Every child is entitled to full participation in the EYFS. We make reasonable adjustments, adapt teaching and work with the school's SENDCo, parents and relevant professionals to identify and respond to additional needs. We promote equality, belonging and respect and challenge stereotypes. No child is disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, disability, gender or ability.

Safeguarding, Welfare and Partnership

Children's safety, welfare and wellbeing underpin all aspects of our EYFS practice. All staff follow the school's safeguarding procedures and the statutory EYFS welfare requirements, including arrangements for supervision, health, hygiene, safer eating, first aid, medicines, risk assessment, attendance, information sharing and appropriate use of technology. We maintain a safe environment and respond promptly to concerns about children's welfare.

Parents and carers are valued as partners. We share information about children's learning and development, listen to families' knowledge and support a consistent approach between home and school. We work with families and other professionals to secure positive outcomes for every child.

Transition and Review

We support children as they join St. Mary's and move to the next stage of their education. Relevant information is shared appropriately so that transitions are positive and well supported.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory requirements or school practice change.