

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



St. Mary's RC Primary School

Mission Statement

- We will always open our doors wide in welcome.
- We will always love and care for each other as Jesus taught us.
- We will always place the Word of God at the heart of our School.
- We will always worship God our Father.
- We will always be witnesses to Jesus Christ by following in his footsteps.

Written by: Bernie Layfield

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Policy will be reviewed: September 2026

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

“Early Years Foundation Stage Profile”

Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **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 and 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 and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and development.** The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Mary’s we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done by ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

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. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At St Mary’s, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.

- 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.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

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

Additionally, there are four specific areas of learning:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring.
- Active learning.
- Creating and thinking critically.

These three areas are referred to as Characteristics of Learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process and meet regularly to discuss future planning.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

The parents and guardians are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage Team in the Autumn and Spring term and at the end of the Summer term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's early learning goals to parents and guardians.

Learning Through Play

At St Mary's, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Learning Journeys identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The school's SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.