



St Mary's  
Catholic Primary School and Nursery

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St Mary’s Catholic Primary School this comprises of a nursery and three reception classes.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### A Unique Child

At St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, 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 celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children at St Mary’s Catholic Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all

social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

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.

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. (Safeguarding Policy)

### **Welfare**

“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 Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare 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 safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent and form 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:

- home visits for children starting our Nursery;
- 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 'Come and Join in' and transition sessions;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- providing a curriculum overview on the website at the beginning of each term, outlining the themes, areas of learning, diary dates, any trips, visits and creative days for that term;
- encouraging parents to contribute to their child's Learning Journey on Tapestry in both Nursery and Reception;
- inviting parents to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning during shared reading sessions and 'stay and play' sessions, where teachers will model how knowledge and skills are taught at school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress, access to the children's Learning Journey on Tapestry and encouraging 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 with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers and teaching assistants act as a 'Key Person' to specific groups of children.

The EYFS teachers based in both nursery and reception meet regularly to discuss new intake children. Nursery children have the opportunity to visit the main school prior to starting school in September.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, stage of development and preferred ways of learning, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences.

### **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 are always informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development stage and learning needs. All staff who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage are involved in this process.

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 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 observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded on Tapestry. Tapestry also contains information and observations provided by parents.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we use Tapestry Learning Journals to record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from development matters and the ELG's.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

### **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can explore, be quiet and rest. Both EYFS areas have their own enclosed outdoor area with a covered and shuttered outdoor extension to the indoor learning environment. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant, whilst applying and embedding the key skills they have learnt. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

### **Learning and Development**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

## Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 & 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

## Playing and Exploring

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which in turn help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

## Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

## **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

## **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional development

Additionally, there are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is completed by promoting the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring (engagement)
- Active learning (motivation)
- Creating and thinking critically (thinking)

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a broad and balanced combination of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

## **Intimate Care**

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some pupils are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs. Examples include care associated with continence as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing.

In EYFS, there are occasions where children may have accidents and may soil or wet themselves. On these occasions, it would usually be the child's keyworker who would support the child with cleaning and changing into fresh clothes.

For any children who required regular assistance with intimate care perhaps because of a special educational need or disability, an intimate care plan would be agreed. Please refer to Intimate Care policy for further information.

Where an intimate care plan is **not** in place, parents/carers will be informed the same day if their child has needed help with meeting intimate care needs (e.g. has had an 'accident' and wet or soiled themselves).

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a link Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and subject leaders will carry out monitoring within the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.