



St Mary's
Catholic Primary School and Nursery

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE STATEMENT

CURRICULUM AIMS

At St Mary's we shape our curriculum so that all pupils are provided with high quality teaching and learning, with Jesus Christ at the centre of all we do. We aim to teach pupils how to grow into positive, responsible citizens, who can work and co-operate with others while developing the knowledge and skills to achieve their true potential.

"The Christian life is a call to a deeper communion with God and with one another, and this finds particular expression in our schools, which are rightly recognised as being families themselves, where no one is a stranger and where everyone, whatever his or her background or academic ability, is welcomed, treasured, supported and helped to become the person whom God calls them to be."

Bishop Malcolm MacMahon.

We aim to provide a Catholic Christian education based on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, in which the values of the Gospel underpin all aspects of school life;

To provide a friendly, nurturing environment in which the dignity of each person as a child of God is recognised and developed; and to promote the full potential of each child through a curriculum which develops spiritual, academic, creative, social and emotional growth;

To provide a curriculum which is enriching and challenging, where pupils experience the opportunity to learn in a wide range of contexts.

INTENT

At St Mary's, we aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment which promotes the highest standard of education for our youngest pupils. Our Early Years team is committed to providing an environment that is rich with possibilities, develops children's independence and puts children right at the centre of their own learning.

The aims of our EYFS curriculum are to develop young pupils who are:

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| • Competent learners (through play) | • Creative |
| • Resilient | • Curious and inquisitive |
| • Capable | • Self-assured |
| • Confident | • Accepting and empathetic |
| • Communicators | • Positive |
| • Independent | • Brave |

IMPLEMENTATION

Our practice is play-based, since we believe that play with all its language, physicality and social interaction is what gives children the right and appropriate grounding for their educational journey. Play is our fundamental principle but alongside this, we also incorporate direct teaching times across each day to introduce and consolidate skills in phonics, language and literacy mathematics and personal and emotional development.



Through our child-centred approach, we aim to plan exciting, enriched activity based on the children's interests. We create a sense of awe and wonder through creative ideas which involve the children and, as much as possible, are based on real life experiences.



We plan exciting and enriching opportunities which ignite learning. These have included a theatre pantomime performance, a visit from Zoo Lab to share their knowledge of unusual animals, a trip to a local Church to celebrate Christmas, and a walk to our local park to learn about our locality and what it has to offer. We invite parents and members of our local community in to talk to us and share their knowledge and experiences. We plan creative days where we bring together all our knowledge and skills and celebrate through fancy dress, baking and singing. Children in Reception classes have the opportunity to join afterschool clubs.



We look to provide opportunity, which aims to foster children's preferred learning styles and demonstrate the various characteristics of effective learning.

We provide children with the opportunity to be explorers, be actively involved in their learning, as well, creative and critical thinkers through the planning of open-ended tasks.



We aim to foster curiosity through carefully planned learning environments enabling children to demonstrate those key characteristics of effective learning. We value the importance of learning outdoors and enjoy using our special early year's outdoor area and garden within our everyday planning.



At St Mary's we ensure that our learning environments provide:

- stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- support for children to take risks and explore



We also know that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education. We look to forge positive relationships with parents to enable us to support learning both at home and school. We share the children's learning through a range of ways including; teacher/parent meetings, sharing Learning Journals or Pupil Books, positive notes/stickers, parent voice, and an open-door policy. We invite families in to join us for a Nursery picnic, Macmillan Coffee Morning, Advent Celebrations, Sing Up, Come and Read, Join our Phonics and Sports Days.

sing up
Love learning, start singing



ASSESSMENT

On entry to Nursery and Reception, practitioners carry out school-based baseline assessments. These assessments are based on observations made of the children during their self-initiated play and some adult initiated activities during their first 6 weeks in school. At St Mary's we use Development Matters as guidance to set the pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages. It helps us to make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next. We do not use Development Matters as a tick list for generating lots of data. We use our professional knowledge to help children make progress without needing to record lots of next steps. Depth in learning matters much more than moving from one band to the next or trying to cover everything.

During the first six weeks of Reception, a child will also take part in the statutory Reception Baseline Assessments.

Professional knowledge forms the basis of our ongoing assessments. This knowledge may not be formally recorded but practitioners may keep notes or annotations as working documents to inform pupil progress meetings. Paper based adult guided activities, when appropriate, are included in pupil books, photographs with annotations in class floor books and learning journals (Nursery) and the 'portfolio' function on class dojo is used to document child-initiated learning and share instantly with parents. Parents contribute at any time to the 'portfolio' by the addition of observations and/or photographs of continued learning experiences at home. This information is used by the class teacher to assess children's attainment against the end points in Nursery and Early Learning Goals in Reception.

Here at St Mary's the well-being of all our pupils is of paramount importance. We ensure our pupils are ready to access learning through the assessment of their level of well-being and involvement. We then provide opportunities for children to develop this, including the notion of belonging, coping, core self and resilience through 'My Happy Mind' activities.

INCLUSION

All children receive Quality First Teaching. Any children with identified SEND or in receipt of pupil premium funding may have work additional to and different from their peers in order to access the curriculum dependent upon their needs. In addition, our school offers a vibrant, demanding and varied curriculum, providing all our pupils with a range of opportunities in order for them to reach their full potential, enjoy and achieve regardless of their starting points.

IMPACT

Our EYFS curriculum provides a sustained high quality, well planned and progressive curriculum for the unique child.

Because of starting points and previous experiences underpin the delivery of our curriculum within the umbrella of the areas of areas of learning, children are able to make a positive start on their educational journey.

We ensure our staff have good knowledge of child development to ensure progress and attainment of our youngest learners.

The positive relationships developed between staff and children ensure that the children are self-confident, with a good degree of self-esteem and resilience. In addition to this the children's level of involvement ensures they are intensely engaged in activities which encourage deep level learning and development. This can be seen through the active learning environment which has a 'buzz' of learning as they 'get busy' playing.

Throughout the EYFS staff regularly review pupil progress through pupil progress meetings, internal staff meetings and moderation of children's profiles (both in school and where possible with other local schools). This ensures that all judgments of attainment are accurate and clear.

All children's progress is tracked and attainment is closely monitored. By the end of the EYFS phase (end of Reception), all children will have had a completed Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) outlining their attainment across the phase, in line with the statutory guidelines. From this it is judged whether children are achieving at age related expectations and have achieved a 'good level of development' (GLD).

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Summative assessment of pupil discussions about their learning.
- Images and videos of the pupil's practical learning.
- Interviewing the pupils about their learning (pupil voice).
- Displays



"I worked hard to get my letters on the line but I got one the wrong way round."

Reception class child reflecting on their learning.

