



# St. Mary & St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### School Mission Statement

*We are guided by God, who is at the centre of everything we do.*

*We support each other to be the best people we can be, to secure bright futures for everyone.  
With our parishes, families and the community, we work together to create a school that is safe,  
happy, respectful and inspirational.*

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#) for 2023.

Foundation Stage learning is based on the four over-arching principles that:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates and provision should include all children including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

At St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, we recognise and celebrate that every child is unique and made by God. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We want our children to enjoy learning, to be independent and self-motivated learners, encouraging them to think critically, adapt their working strategies, seek challenge and take risks with their learning.

We strive and are committed to ensuring that our EYFS practice offers:

- the best for every child
- high-quality care
- an ambitious and flexible curriculum with the children's needs and interests at its centre
- highly effective pedagogy

- accurate and informative assessment
  - development of children's self-regulation and executive function
  - positive partnerships with parents
- (see EYFS framework 'Seven key features of effective practice')

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within this policy refers to the teaching and learning of children in their Reception Year, currently taught in 'Wrens Class'. Our School can currently admit up to 18 children each year and they are taught either in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class or a single Reception class, depending on numbers on roll each year.

## Curriculum

The Children in the Reception year group follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework document. What the children learn is built around this framework which is based around seven Areas of Learning and Development, within which are three prime areas which focus on the basic which underpin all aspects of learning and support other more specific areas of the curriculum.

The three Prime Areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and Language (CL)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Physical Development (PD)

and four Specific Areas which are;

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Characteristics of Effective Learning concern *how* the child learns; namely:

- Playing and exploring – engagement. Children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – motivation. Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking. Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

The EYFS learning environment should enable learning through play and exploration, active learning, creating and thinking critically, all of which encourage children to 'have a go', be involved and keep trying, explore their own ideas, choosing ways to do things and make links with prior knowledge and experiences.

## EYFS learning environment

At St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, Children in EYFS have access to a learning environment in which provision is made for children to actively engage in resources and activities that promote the seven Areas of Learning and Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage *and* develop Characteristics of Effective Learning. This includes indoor and outdoor provision which centre around the classroom base and adjacent outdoor area.

Our 'enabling environment' has been created in which children can successfully develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning through providing:

- a happy and welcoming space in which all children are treated as individuals and feel safe, secure and valued;
- an exciting and stimulating environment which motivates children, thus increasing their desire to learn and explore;
- engaging activities that build on and extend their interests and skills, enabling them to develop into confident, inquisitive, creative and independent learners;
- a personalised approach to learning, informed by observation and assessment of individual stages of development, ensuring all children are supported at a level and pace that enables them to realise their full potential;
- inclusion for all children and access to the whole curriculum;
- highly effective pedagogy and a variety of different approaches, appropriate to the needs of the children and the skills being taught;
- strong partnerships and positive relationships with parents/carers and feeder settings;
- embedding of fundamental British Values, thus enabling children to develop a positive sense of self and belonging and so become valuable and fully rounded members of society, who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of background.

## **Quality of teaching**

Learning through play, practical activity and exploration is at the heart of our teaching. Staff ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day, providing plentiful opportunities that reflect the children's interests and to inspire them further, whilst also extending and enhancing skills through direct teaching in phonics, maths, literacy etc.

Interaction between children and staff is constant and of high quality, thus building children's confidence and understanding. Staff have a clear and informed understanding of how children learn. They have high expectations of children, based on a sound knowledge of their skills and abilities and work as a team to ensure activities are purposeful and based on their learning requirements. Staff work directly with the children and their play is supported and extended appropriately and sensitively. Space and equipment are well used to provide an enabling environment for successful learning. A flexible timetable allows for spontaneity and creativity, with staff keen to explore and maximise learning opportunities as they occur, inside and outside.

## **Planning**

Planning aims to provide broad, balanced and engaging learning experiences based on the children's interests but with Development Matters as a guide. It ensures children are engaged in meaningful and challenging activities, both self- chosen and adult initiated/directed, inside and outside, which support their journey towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. There is a flexible and fluid approach to planning, with staff focused on meeting the individual needs of all children whilst maximising opportunities for learning as they arise. Staff continually discuss and review how children respond to and learn from different tasks and activities and this information is constantly used to plan for next steps. Activities and planning become more structured as the year progresses in readiness for Year 1.

## **Assessment**

Before children start school, staff have an awareness of their need and interests through contact and transition documentation from pre-school settings and observation and interaction with the children during pre-school sessions. Then, as children enter school in September, EYFS staff take time to really get to know the children in their care and observe their learning and behaviours. A holistic approach to Baseline Assessment is used to identify individual pupil starting points across

all 7 areas of learning and development at EYFS and is used alongside statutory baseline assessments provided by NFER. From then on, regular assessment of the children's learning is carried out to ensure that future planning and our environment supports pupil needs and helps develop their targets. Assessment is mainly carried out via staff observation throughout the day, during focused tasks and in continuous provision, when children are embedding and extending previous learning. More formal assessments of phonic/reading skills and mathematical skills also take place regularly. Assessment data is used to monitor progress towards the Early Learning Goals and informs planning for next steps for learning. Information about the child's 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and examples of their work and development are kept using a Learning Journey. In June, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed, a copy of which is given to parents informing them of their child's attainment, measured against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs), at the end of EYFS. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Pupil progress meetings take place at four points throughout the year; immediately within the first half term at school and then at the end of each term.

EYFS staff regularly attend cluster meetings with other schools and undertake training with LCC Assessment Team, to ensure that assessment is robust and accurate.

## Home/School Links

Here at St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, we pride ourselves on strong relationships with all those in our school family. We recognise the key role as first educators that parents and carers play in their child's education. We actively seek to work in partnership with our families to ensure that the transition to school and the journey through it, is as seamless, supportive and positive as possible. This includes;

- Pre-school family activities e.g. Open Day, Craft sessions, Easter Egg Hunt and Summer Term 'welcome' and induction evening once a school place has been confirmed
- Pre-school visits in school (summer term)
- Staff visits to pre-school settings and/or home visits as appropriate
- 'Meet the teacher' and more specific curriculum information evenings
- Progress reports and follow up parents' evenings
- Curriculum overview and additional, updated information on our school website
- Home/school reading records
- Homework activities (Spring and Summer terms) with information and ideas to support learning at home
- School newsletters
- 'Teachers2parents' text message service
- Regular invitations to parents/carers to visit and be involved in school e.g. themed days, celebrations and assemblies.

Staff are always available at the end of every day to speak to parents. Alternatively, parents can also contact school by telephone/email and make appointments to speak to staff at other mutually convenient times. Parents are informed about their child's progress and attainment via pupil progress reports and Parents Evenings. An End of Year report is also issued in July and parents are invited to discuss this with staff, if they so wish.

## Safeguarding and Children's Welfare

Rigorous and robust safeguarding procedures ensure that everyone in our school community feels safe, supported and valued (See school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). School safeguarding and welfare arrangements reflect DfE statutory guidance as directed in the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. School has clear procedures for reporting any concerns about child safeguarding and welfare which are detailed in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Mrs Roach is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

We know that children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. Central to this is the continuous development of positive relationships, which is at the heart of everything we do here at St Mary & St Andrew's. In society, as well as in school, there is a need for agreed rules and boundaries which help us stay safe whilst promoting respect for and tolerance of the views of others. These are fundamental British values.

Whilst all EYFS staff work collaboratively, under the leadership and direction of class teachers, each child is assigned a Key Worker, as part of safeguarding and welfare requirements. Parents are informed of this as the child starts school.

Staff are fully committed to promoting good health. EYFS children are encouraged to eat healthy snacks, with water, milk and fruit always available. Regular hand washing and sanitising forms part of our daily routine and children are encouraged to manage their own personal hygiene well and with increasing independence. External providers such as School Nurse service, Life Education Bus, local Police etc support us in teaching the children in our care how to keep healthy and safe, as do themed events such as Anti-Bullying Week. Local dentists also support our delivery of oral health aspects of the curriculum.

The Supervision model also forms part of our safeguarding procedures at EYFS. It also enables EYFS staff to share knowledge and expertise, voice concerns and seek support from colleagues thus ensuring that 'best practice' is encouraged and provided. Our EYFS lead teacher completed training (March 2018) in relation to Supervision and EYFS staff currently meet termly for group supervision, with staff able to initiate 1-1 Supervision if required.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by EYFS lead teacher, Mrs H Bisby.

Agreed (Headteacher) Mrs Sarah Roach

Agreed (Chair of Governors) Mrs Audrey Swann

Agreed (EYFS Governor)

Date of issue: September 2023

Date of review: September 2025