

English Martyrs

Catholic Primary School



Early Years Policy 2022

Mission Statement

Through Christ we believe, inspire, achieve

Rationale

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

(Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five March 2021)

English Martyrs School is committed to the highest possible quality of education and childcare in our Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that all children learn and develop at different times. Our duty is to cater for children's individual needs, enabling every child to reach their full potential and to ensure lifelong learning. At English Martyrs we create a safe and happy home from home environment with stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences to enable the children to become confident and independent.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

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Date Agreed:	7th Dec 2022	Next Review:	Oct 2023		

General Purposes

We aim to:

- Create an environment that is irresistible, satisfying and provoking.
- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning.
- Understand every child's personal attributes and attitudes, enabling children to take their own learning further.
- Develop confidence, self-esteem, self-awareness and independence in all children within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Provide a balance of child initiated and adult focused activities.
- Establish a system of planning, assessment and reporting which involves all and informs learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Ensure the quality of Early Years provision is consistent and based on high expectations.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment both indoors and out.
- Provide a close partnership between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2021)

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A Unique Child

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.

Enabling Environments

- 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.

Learning & Development

- Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including special educational needs and disabilities.

The four principles of the EYFS underpin all the guidance in Birth to 5 Matters, which is designed to show how these principles work together for children in the EYFS.

All children develop in different ways and development is not a linear or automatic process. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments that encourage their engagement and recognise their strengths. All children have agency and curiosity to learn, and will interact with other people and the world around them in

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Broad Guidelines

Every member of the Early Years Team should:

- Have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidelines (2021)
- Be competent in their knowledge of Child Development.
- Understand how to observe and plan for individual children, enabling them to reach their full potential.
- Recognise the importance of 'Planned, Purposeful Play.'
- Recognise the importance of a 'Key Person' system and implement this into daily routine.
- Use all forms of assessment to monitor the development of our youngest children.
- Be aware of the importance of Transition, on entry, during and on exit of Foundation Stage.
- Include all children and cater for individual needs and requirements.
- Develop strong links with parents, the extended family, child-minders and other settings.
- Acknowledge the importance of routine to very young children and maintain this on a daily basis.

Reviewed: Oct 2022

Reviewed by: L. Dinsdale (Head) & EYFS staff

Status: Active

Date Agreed: 7th Dec 2022

Next Review: Oct 2023

- Be fully aware of safeguarding procedures, especially with regard to autonomous self-care.
- Respect and value parental knowledge of children, working in partnership to provide opportunities for lifelong learning.
- Be a part of Early Years developments and research and implement into daily routine within Foundation Stage.
- We aim to share our vision with the wider community and foster a love of learning amongst all.

Children’s development and learning is best supported by starting from the child, and then matching interactions and experiences to meet the child’s needs. The observation, assessment and planning (OAP) cycle describes what is frequently called assessment for learning, or formative assessment. On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice.



Foundation Stage Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children’s capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development

Reviewed:	Oct 2022	Reviewed by:	L. Dinsdale (Head) & EYFS staff	Status:	Active
Date Agreed:	7th Dec 2022	Next Review:	Oct 2023		

- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

At English Martyrs we plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children’s needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning.

The **Prime Areas** are:

Communication and Language

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and

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emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

The **Specific Areas** are:

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe (EYFS 2021)

These areas are covered through child-initiated play, adult led activities and within Key Person groups. We recognise the importance of both Prime Areas and Specific Areas. However, at English Martyrs we

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Date Agreed:	7th Dec 2022	Next Review:	Oct 2023		

understand that all areas are equally important and are required to enable children to develop the social, emotional, physical, intellectual and linguistic skills required for lifelong learning.

Characteristics of Early Learning

At English Martyrs we also acknowledge the individual child's learning strategies. We recognise that children all learn in different ways and at different rates. This knowledge gives staff an insight as to how to plan their next steps and enhance the provision even further. At the end of your child's year in Reception a summative statement will be given to the Year 1 staff. This will help inform the child's next teacher about your child and how they learn.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

In the English Martyrs Foundation Stage, we recognise and understand the importance of balancing Child-Initiated learning with Adult-Led activities. Adult-Led activities are particularly important in helping children to learn or develop a specific skill. All children develop at different stages and have varied interests. We are aware that children are influenced by home and family life experiences and we consider these to be a vital part of individual learning. We value our relationships with families and strongly believe in this partnership. Parents and other settings are crucial in helping staff at English Martyrs to develop a wide picture of individual children and all contributions to children's development and learning are greatly valued.

Formal planning is carried out by the class teacher, after extensive discussions with all staff. Parental contributions, seasonal activities and other influences are also taken into account, encompassing all areas of children's experiences.

Each day we follow a planned timetable with set routines in place. (Please see planning and timetables in Nursery and Reception)

Observations & Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess the children's development and learning. Staff continually observe children in a variety of ways including informal and formal observations. We also use Tapestry to record our observations which can be shared with parents throughout the year. All staff are encouraged to contribute and discuss the observations that have taken place both daily and during weekly planning meetings. These observations inform the teacher as to the children's individual interests and next steps. Enhancements can then be provided to extend children's learning. Examples of enhancements can range from adding pirate props and resources into the sand area to inviting a visitor in to talk about their role in the local community.

Reviewed:	Oct 2022	Reviewed by:	L. Dinsdale (Head) & EYFS staff	Status:	Active
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Adult Focused activities are planned to enable staff to teach children skills that they can later incorporate into their play. These activities also provide the opportunities for staff to assess children and to discover aspects of learning which need to be focused upon further. Examples may include making a Christmas decoration to assess scissor control, baking to assess manipulative control, physical development and past experiences.

Assessment

Assessment is crucial to the development of young children in Foundation Stage. At English Martyrs, we understand the need to assess children's achievements, based on the observations of all practitioners working within our Foundation Stage. Staff acknowledge that assessment is a holistic, accurate reflection on what a child can do. Achievements from home are celebrated and valued. Parents are welcome to inform staff of their children's achievements at home. This evidence is a valued part of assessment which is used to inform individualised planning.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer a Reception Baseline Assessment.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Welfare and Safeguarding requirements:

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. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence (EYFS 2021)

At English Martyrs we meet these requirements by:

- Promoting the welfare of children.
- Promoting good health and oral health. For example, by talking to children about the effects of eating too many sweet things. Talking about the importance of brushing their teeth.
- Preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

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- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection policy on school website.
Procedure for responding to illness	See attendance policy, health and safety policy and supporting children with medical conditions all on school website.
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy see school website.
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy and emergency plan policy - on staff area of website.
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection policy on school website.
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection policy on school website.
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy and child protection policy both on website.

Transition

At the start of the school year in Nursery and Reception, the main focus is settling the children whilst supporting them when forming friendships and making relationships. For those children who found the transition more difficult than others, strategies are put in place in partnership with parents and carers. Staff also realise the importance of establishing routines, demonstrating acceptable behaviour and promoting high expectations within the setting. Families, childminders and other settings are involved in the whole process of transition. Transition and 'All About Me' booklets are also given out during the Induction Meetings. The transition booklet includes key information and photographs of the different areas within our setting to share and talk about with your child. Each family is given an "All About Me" booklet to complete with their child before their home visit.

Home Visits are considered an important and valued way of beginning the transition process. Nursery staff visit children in July prior to staggered visits in September, both with and without their parents. Reception Staff meet children who have not attended our Nursery, at home in July. We value the importance of having a staggered intake to ensure the children have time to settle into their new class and routines.

As well as Home Visits and Induction Meetings, staff also welcome visits from parents and children during open afternoons. Staff when requested can also visit children in their existing settings. English Martyrs Foundation Stage prides itself on excellent links with other childcare providers, such as the local Children's Centre, PVI Nurseries and Childminders.

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During the Summer Term in Reception the children will experience more adult directed activities as they prepare for their transition into Year 1. Nursery children are given opportunities to spend time with the Reception Practitioners the term before starting school.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at English Martyrs irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. English Martyrs strives to be an inclusive school, which creates a sense of community and belonging through it's:

- inclusive ethos
- broad and balanced curriculum for all children
- systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation
- high expectations and suitable targets for all.

All children are observed and assessed thoroughly throughout their time in English Martyrs Foundation Stage. Once staff have identified that an individual child may need additional support within the setting, the school SENDCO and/or PSA is informed. Staff will always work alongside parents to ensure that their child is supported in their learning and development.

Partnerships

English Martyrs Foundation Stage is committed to every child. We work extensively with parents, families and other settings. We involve parents and the local community to cater for and to enable every child to reach their full potential. Staff at English Martyrs work closely with other local settings and childminders, ensuring continuity and helpless transition.

Parents as Partners

We respect and understand that parents are children's earliest and lifelong educators. By creating a partnership between staff and parents, we endeavour to fulfil every child's potential. A knowledge of child development and an understanding of parent's knowledge of their own child, creates an environment where children's learning can be nurtured to its full potential enabling achievement and beyond.

Links with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

- New starter packs for Nursery & Reception parents.
- Key Person Coffee Mornings/Afternoons for Nursery parents.
- Phonic/Reading meeting for Reception parents.
- Parent-Teacher Meetings to discuss progress and targets.

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- End of Topic Assemblies for Nursery and Reception Parents.
- Weekly Planning and Timetables displayed in Nursery and Reception.
- Home School Diaries in Nursery and Reception.
- Class blogs on school website.
- School newsletters.
- Report at the end of their time in Nursery and Reception.
- Learning Journeys shared with parents.
- Dojo reward system.
- Sports Day

Changing and Hygiene/Health and Bodily Awareness

All children develop at different times. At English Martyrs we understand that some children need more time to show emerging autonomy in self-care. All children are welcomed to our Nursery, whether they are 'toilet aware' or not. However, we work alongside parents and other carers to encourage children's independence when using the toilet. We are in contact with the school continence nurse for advice and support in this area. Every child in Reception is required to have a change of clothing and underwear in their pump bag, which will remain in School. Should a child need changing, two members of staff will be present at all times.

English Martyrs Foundation Stage complies with School Safeguarding Policy (See Intimate Care Policy).

Admissions

Families who express a preference for their child to attend English Martyrs Reception classes must complete the admission procedure as requested by Sefton Council.

Families expressing a preference for their child to attend English Martyrs Nursery must contact the school office.

Nursery:

In the Spring Term a letter is sent to parents offering their child a place.

In the Summer Term, parents are invited to attend a 'New Nursery Parents' meeting. A letter is also sent to arrange a Home Visit and dates and times for parents and children to visit Nursery. Questionnaires and other correspondence are sent. This information will be collected at your child's Home Visit. Two members of staff will visit the child in their home environment. This enables children to feel comfortable when meeting Nursery staff for the first time.

In September, Children visit Nursery with their parents/carers and then stay for short periods of time, prior to staying by themselves.

Reception:

In the Summer Term, parents/carers receive a letter from the local authority, indicating the school place for their child.

In Summer Term, parents are invited to a 'New Reception Parents Meeting'

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In the Summer term, a letter is sent to arrange a Home Visit for children who have not attended our Nursery. Letters are sent to all parents with dates and times for parents and children to visit Reception. Questionnaires and other correspondence are sent. This information will be collected before the children start Reception.

In September, children start school – dates for visits will have been arranged in the Summer Term.

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