



## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

St Mary's Church of England (A) Primary School keeps children safe by ensuring and promoting the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care: all policies support the most current "Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance" and "Safeguarding Policy", are fully consistent with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, and fully support the principles of equal opportunities for all.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage provision is based within Class 1, which is a mixed age class of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children. The EYFS children benefit from learning alongside older children but are supported within this classroom by a qualified teacher Teaching Assistant.

### **Aim**

At St Mary's we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential, irrespective of starting point.

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Admissions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND policy

We adhere to the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2024)** and the **four guiding principles** that shape practice within Early Years settings. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The four guiding principles are:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children **develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**.

### **Principles into practice**

As part of our practice we:

Provide a rich and balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS Development matters documents, but blending in Year 1 learning themes. Our EYFS pupils are involved in

the **planning of their learning**, and are taught across the **seven areas of learning**, using explorative learning, or 'play' as a primary vehicle for learning.

We:

- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide targeted early intervention for those children who require additional support. This is undertaken with the class teacher or TA and will be specific to the needs of the child.
- Work in partnership with parents
- Plan challenging and explorative learning experiences, based on the unique child and following their interests wherever possible
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult focusses and child led, supported by the adult
- EYFS have a key TA and a qualified teacher to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out where every child is successful, irrespective of any learning need.

### **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

#### **We were part of the Early Adopter EYFS Framework changes for 2020 2021**

We plan a broad, balanced, exciting and challenging curriculum based on the needs and interests of the child and incorporate learning opportunities across all 7 areas of learning, to enable the children to achieve their full potential. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and learning encompasses all seven areas of learning.

Three areas are particularly crucial for **igniting children's curiosity** and **enthusiasm for learning**, and for **building their capacity to learn**, form **effective relationships** and thrive.

These three areas are the known as the Prime Areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific curriculum areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy

- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand explorative experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster **positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, independence, communication and physical development.**

As the reception children learn alongside Year 1 and 2 children their learning themes are linked to their long term plan but we involve the children in the planning of their learning, thereby enabling the children to follow their own interests.

Children have a more structured morning, which focusses on Phonics, Literacy, Language and Communication and Math's. The afternoons follow a more child led learning approach centered on the EYFS areas of learning and enables children to follow their own fascinations and learning interests across the curriculum.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years' practitioners interact to stretch and further challenge children.

The children join the Y1 and Y2 children for P.E. and Science (Knowledge and Understanding of the World) and benefit from year group focused RE learning with the EYFS Higher Level Teaching Assistant or the Class Teacher. This ensures that the reception children have the best of all worlds within a mixed age setting.

### **Learning Environment**

The learning environment includes the inside classroom/outside learning area, Astro turf 'field', the school grounds and the immediate school community and the emotional environment where trust between adults and children enriches everything. The emotional environment is created by all stake holders in the school. We strive to be warm, nurturing and welcoming so children are at their ease and ready to learn.

We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to access both inside and outside learning each day, including during child led learning. At the start of the year, children are instructed how to use the learning equipment safely, how to get it out and tidy it away. This then enables them to access a variety of provision during Child Led Learning. We believe that the quality of the learning environment is crucial. It enables children to:-

- Make sense of the world
- Make decisions

- Promote independence and autonomy
- Progress at their own rate
- Interact with other children and adults

The school values learning outside the classroom and we learn outside at every opportunity, including the school grounds and the Rectory Garden next door to school.

### **Observation and Assessment**

Children are formally baselined when they enter school, within the first six weeks. This is carried out informally, and enables the class teacher the opportunity to work alongside the children on a 1:1 basis. We have been using the **NFER Baseline since 2015**. This enables practitioners to observe and assess the starting point of the children and informs future planning.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways including using IT such as Tapestry. Independent learning, often through Child Led Learning collated in their personal learning journey, which are shared with parents.

In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening. The Autumn term focusses on how the child has settled into school, whilst the Spring Term focusses more on learning progress. Within the final term we provide the parent's with a lengthy report based on their child's development against each of the **Early Learning Goals** and the **Characteristics of Effective learning**. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgments with the class teacher in preparation for Year 1. Yearly, in June, the Early Years Profile is submitted to the Local Authority, which identifies whether the child is emerging (1) or expected (2) against each of the Early Learning Goals. A child is then identified as having a **Good Level of Development (GLD)** if they **achieve** their goals in **Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy and Math's**.

### **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, use tools correctly, make informed choices and assess risks.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when children become ill/accident. All Reception children have **free access to fruit** provided under the governments **Fruit for School scheme** and they also receive **universal free**

**school meals** from September 2014. Children also have **access to milk** until their **5<sup>th</sup> birthday**.

Children learn about healthy eating and developing healthy life styles through discretely taught PHSE lessons. They also learn about relationships through everyday activities and child-initiated play with their peers.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at St Mary's irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and SEND.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider context**

We strive to create and maintain a partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways including weekly home learning where children and parents are encouraged to learn together.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Transitions**

Transitions from nursery into our setting are carefully planned to ensure a smooth transition into our school.

Prior to starting school, parents are invited to an **evening meeting** to meet the class teacher and are given information regarding school readiness and the timetable of learning. Then, the children have **one full day** in class, where they are given the opportunity to meet their new class and participate in fun learning experiences, and whole school activities including Worship. Children are also able to have a cooked school dinner if they wish.

Transition into Y1 is seamless, as the children stay in the same class with the same class teacher.