



St Mary's Hampton

Church of England Primary School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY (EYFS)

This policy sets out the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning within the Early Years Foundation stage. Pupils arrive in our first class, Reception, half way through the EYFS; this class is also known as Foundation stage 2 (FS2).

Reviewed by EYFS Teacher & co-Headteacher; Agreed at LGC meeting: Spring 2025

Review Frequency: Two yearly

Next review: Spring 2027

Executive Summary (Spring 2025 review)

The wording of the sub-categories for the prime and specific areas have been updated to reflect the EYFS curriculum (pages 4 & 5). Reference to Tapestry, the online learning journal utilised by the school's staff and accessible by parents, has been added (page 6). The two potential outcomes of EYFS final assessment have been clarified (page 6).

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AIMS

- To provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced learning environment both inside and out which meets all the individual developmental needs of 'young learners' and underpins all future learning.
- To enable children to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.
- To enable their early development to take place within the caring and nurturing environment of St Mary's School, in line with the ethos and values, which the school upholds and promotes.
- To develop independence and individuality, whilst fostering respect and tolerance for others irrespective of ability, race, creed, gender or background.

PRINCIPLES

To achieve the above objectives, St Mary's school staff and governors will provide a curriculum for the last year of EYFS (Reception) based on the following principles, which will establish the foundations underpinning all future learning:

- At the core, place the development of positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning and foster the development of positive behaviour and social interaction skills;
- Promote and develop personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Encourage the development of self-confidence and positive self-awareness;
- Enable children to develop the skills of attention, concentration and persistence;
- Place speech, language and communication at the heart of learning;
- Lay the foundations for developing reading and writing;
- Develop early mathematical skills and concepts;
- Develop an understanding of the world in which children live;
- Enable children to be creative in their responses to their world and in their development of skills;
- Encourage children to develop their imagination through the exploration of media and materials;
- Promote healthy and safe physical development – both gross and fine motor;
- Encourage independence and ownership of own learning.

THE NEEDS OF YOUNG LEARNERS

All children require:

- Adults who are sensitive to their differing needs, abilities, backgrounds and previous experiences to teach, support, care and offer equal opportunities for them all to develop.
- Adults who will respect them and value their ideas and opinions recognising that every child is an individual.
- A challenging and diverse curriculum offering ample opportunity to practise and develop skills and learning. This includes rich and positive learning experiences with plenty of first-hand experience, varied to include all learning styles and including regular opportunity to explore and learn through practical and play activities.
- Opportunities to make decisions and to take responsibility - both for their learning and behaviour. The curriculum is founded upon offering opportunities for the development of personal qualities, social skills, and positive attitudes towards learning. This includes the chance to make mistakes in a forgiving environment and to realise that making mistakes is a learning experience.

In summary, a well-planned, carefully structured programme of academic and personal development, building on past experiences and achievements - delivered in ways appropriate to their age and stage.

THE CURRICULUM

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a comprehensive statutory framework that sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five. The EYFS extends from birth to the end of Reception and the beginning of Key Stage 1. The curriculum should therefore be seen as part of a continuum of learning, which begins at birth, extends throughout the years of compulsory schooling and establishes the young person as a lifelong learner. At St. Mary's school Christian values underpin all teaching, learning and conduct, providing a context in which children's spiritual, moral and social development (SMSC) may take place. SMSC will be integrated naturally within the planned learning outcomes throughout the Foundation Stage.

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. It is vital to children's wellbeing and development. Play both inside and outside is a fundamental commitment throughout the EYFS. At St Mary's we provide an enabling environment for children to choose their play and take charge of their play. It is essential for children to play to enable them to act out their own experiences, combine new skills and knowledge taught and build confidence.

The EYFS principles guide the work of all practitioners, there are four themes:

- o a unique child
- o positive relationships
- o enabling environments
- o learning and development.

The curriculum consists of seven areas of learning - three "prime" and four "specific". These are inter-related and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. The seven areas consist of a total of seventeen Early Learning Goals:

Prime:

The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS, work together, and move through to support development in all areas.

The **Prime areas** are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

Specific:

The Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical patterns

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word reading
- Writing

Understanding the world

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

Expressive arts and design

- Being imaginative and expressive
- Creating with materials

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Characteristics of Effective Learning is a term that provides an essential structure for practitioners to support children and make sense of how the children in their setting are learning.

The characteristics of effective learning focus on three key elements; engagement, motivation and thinking. There are three Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- Playing and Exploring (engagement)
- Active Learning (motivation)
- Thinking creatively and critically (thinking)

The above also refers to our practice of cross-curricular teaching and learning which encourages children to make links and practise skills in a relevant and interesting way.

St Mary's school staff and Governors believe that all individual learning styles should be recognised and honoured in a creative learning environment. The way in which we learn is as important to progress and success as what we learn.

ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF THE EYFS

In accordance with all schools, within the first six weeks of a child starting in Reception they will complete a baseline assessment.

On-going assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff are involved in daily observations and assessments throughout the Reception Year; they include child-initiated tasks and teacher led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs are recorded in each child's 'learning journal book and their Tapestry online learning journal, which is shared with parents who can add photographs and comments of activities outside of school. Data is entered electronically onto the data-tracking programme online at the end of each term using an Excel spreadsheet. The EYFS Profile will be completed at the end of the Reception year; data will be sent to Achieving for Children (AFC) who will then pass it onto the Department for Education (DfE).

Reporting: Towards the end of the final term of Reception (End of June), we will assess the children against each of the Early Learning Goals. We judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS and assess as 'expected' or not yet reaching this level and assess as 'emerging'. Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) if they have achieved the Early Learning Goals in the EYFS curriculum areas of Personal, Social and Emotional development, Physical development, Communication and Language, Literacy and Mathematics. We will provide feedback to parents on the summary of these assessments. These assessments are used to provide valuable transition information to Year 1 staff and those who are not ready for the National Curriculum will continue to be assessed against the Early Learning Goals.

Progress will be shared with parents and carers after the autumn half term, towards the end of the spring term and at the end of the summer term, in accordance with our Assessment, recording and reporting policy. All attainment data is shared with the Year 1 teacher for continuity at this time of transition.

LEARNING & TEACHING

The fundamental principles of teaching and learning which are detailed within the Teaching and Learning policy are applied within the Foundation Stage. The core purpose at St Mary's school is to teach for enjoyment and progress, ensuring that all children steadily acquire and improve skills, knowledge and understanding. In EYFS children join a community of lifelong learning - children and adults alike. High quality expectations for teaching, learning and conduct is established in EYFS and is consistently and clearly applied throughout the school. The more specific features of good practice which apply to the EYFS are as follows:

- the very close partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to develop a positive self-image of themselves as learners and, therefore, to feel secure and confident at school;
- the understanding that teachers have of early child development and special educational needs and how this relates to teaching and learning;
- a kinaesthetic and visual approach to curriculum delivery, which provides rich and varied opportunities for 'small world' play - using toys and models which replicate real life activities - and for role play (involving areas inside and outside the classroom which simulate real life situations and provide opportunities for imaginative play);
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences; give clear explanations; make appropriate interventions; and establish and develop the children's ability to play, socialise and communicate with others;
- a very strong emphasis on communication - including speech therapy as required - to generate a language for learning; to seek every opportunity to talk with children about their learning, encouraging them to listen and respond productively as appropriate to their level of need;

- the carefully planned and well-resourced curriculum and schemes of work that help children to maximise their potential against the Early Learning Goals (see above). This includes off-site visits and drawing on the resources of the local and wider community;
- the high value placed on Music, Art and the performing arts;
- A safe, high quality-learning environment - both indoors and outdoors, available throughout all seasons and weathers;
- the assessment, through observations, of children's achievement, progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers, and the appropriate resourcing and training of staff to meet the children's needs;
- the good relationships between St. Mary's School, other educational and early years settings and agencies.

ORGANISATION

Their curriculum will be planned, overseen and delivered by the Reception class teacher and an experienced Teaching Assistant. The Headteacher and Early Years Line Manager will support the teaching and learning in Reception, and take part in the teaching and assessment processes.

Volunteers will also be encouraged to support Early Years children, under the direction of the class teacher. All children begin school at the same time in the autumn term.

The school day begins at 8.35am with registration promptly at 8.55am and ends at 3.15 pm. The day revolves around a free- flow system of Continuous and Enhanced provision with specific learning inputs and tasks set by an adult.

Key person: The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

At school the key person is the Early Years class teacher. Their role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. They will of course work in close partnership with the class teaching assistant and both the Headteacher and Early Years Line Manager.

A key person is:

- A named member of staff who has more contact than others with the child;
- Someone to build relationships with the child and parents;
- Someone who helps the child become familiar with the provision;
- Someone who meets children's individual needs and care needs;
- Someone who responds sensitively to children's feelings, ideas and behaviour;
- The person who acts as a point of contact with parents

SAFETY

St Mary's school takes safety of its pupils very seriously and various related safety policies and procedures are available in the school office and published on our website. The headteacher or the Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety will be happy to discuss these in more detail should a parent / carer wish to do so. Specifically, the following procedures must be observed:

- At 8.55am the gate to the EYFS area are locked. Security systems operate throughout the day to enable visitors to enter via one main gate and report to the school office. A visitor can only gain access to the teaching parts of the building via the school office and foyer, requiring a staff member to open security doors. All parents must leave promptly at 8.55am.
- Similarly, the reverse of the above procedure operates from 3.05 pm. to enable prompt collection of children at the end of the day
- No child will be handed over to the care of any adult other than a parent / carer or person nominated by the parent and known to the Reception class staff
- No mobile phones / cameras other than the designated school mobile phone and cameras may be used in EYFS, other than with the Headteacher's permission. Visitors including parents are expected to respect this. Any visitor or volunteer spending time in Reception will be asked to leave mobile phones in a secure place within the school office
- The EYFS learning environment is checked frequently for health and safety and this is recorded in a general log scrutinised regularly by the Headteacher. The Health and safety governor monitors that any repairs and maintenance are undertaken in a timely manner.

INDUCTION AND HOME-SCHOOL LINKS

A Parent information evening is held in June for parents of the prospective Reception group. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to the St. Mary's school family, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasize the vital importance of home-school cooperation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all our children.

Links will be made with the pre-school settings and where practicable the Headteacher / Class teacher will make a visit in July.

Further communication systems include:

- Whole school weekly newsletter – electronically to all parents (Parent may request hard copy if necessary through the school office and via book bag). A weekly newsletter specific to Reception children;
- Daily opportunity for brief updates at the point of dropping off or collecting children. Anything more than a few minutes' conversation will require an appointment to be made through the school office;
- Home/school reading journal;
- email / telephone via the school office;
- Progress meetings will take place in November and March,
- Information meetings and workshops will take place throughout each school year. In EYFS, this will include the teaching of reading and early maths skills.
- Sharing of videos and pictures through our online learning journal, Tapestry.

INCLUSION IN THE EYFS

At St. Mary's School we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child's special educational need(s), disability, gender, creed or ethnicity. Consequently, we aim to be a fully inclusive school - as described in the school's Equality Policy. We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in order to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's learning style, communication needs, disability and range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. This is outlined in the Accessibility Plan, which is a document outlining how the school intends to meet the needs for all children to access learning and is revised annually.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is reported to the local governing committee, which receives regular reports on the EYFS from the co-Headteachers.

The policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary.