



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

STATUS:			
RECOMMENDED	✓	STATUTORY	
REVIEW FREQUENCY	Annual		
DATE OF POLICY	5 February 2024		
DATE OF LAST REVIEW	8 May 2026		
REVIEW DUE	7 May 2027		

Introduction

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, our Early Years Foundation Stage provides every child with the strongest possible start to their educational journey within a nurturing, ambitious and faith-filled environment. Rooted in Gospel values, we strive to ensure that every child develops a sense of belonging, dignity and confidence as a unique child of God. Through high expectations, rich vocabulary, excellent early reading, strong foundations in writing and number, and meaningful relationships, we prepare children socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically for lifelong learning. We are committed to developing resilient, curious and compassionate learners who flourish and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Catholic Life & Mission, Liturgy & Prayer and RE

Catholic life at St Mary's is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as the Gospel values permeate all aspects of the curriculum and school life. RE Lessons in Pre-School and Reception are taught as a minimum of 10% of the class timetable, in addition to daily prayer and the celebration of prayer and liturgy throughout the week. Our current teaching of RE is based on the Archdiocese of Birmingham curriculum strategy for Religious Education 'Learning and Growing at the People of God' ('Discerning Disciples' from September 2026). This provides us with framework to ensure that pupils' understanding of the Catholic faith and traditions grow commensurately with other subjects. In the first few weeks of the children entering Reception, they will be assessed on their Religious knowledge.

1. Gospel Virtues

Our rich curriculum and ethos instil the Gospel values in our children, teaching them to be kind, caring, forgiving and respectful young people. Links are made between the teachings of Jesus and how we behave and treat others in our own lives.



2. Our Aims

At St Mary's, we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

In Early Years, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey in education.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence, selfconfidence and a love of learning.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs. The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;

- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;

- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;

- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;

- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents This policy is based on the requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

3. Curriculum

Our Pre-school and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This framework defines what we teach and we use the Development Matters guidance to support our curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four distinct but complementary principles that shape practice in early years. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The **EYFS framework includes seven Areas of Learning** that are equally important and interconnected. Three of these areas are known as the Prime Areas and 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
- Personal, social and emotional development

The **Prime Areas** are strengthened and applied through the four Specific Areas. These four areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The Specific Areas are:

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

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. These are:

- Playing and Exploring-engagement
- Active Learning-motivation
- Creating and Thinking Critically-thinking.

We enrich the Early Years framework with our St Mary's curriculum to enhance the experience and opportunities available to the children. This includes special events and celebrations, memorable experiences and themes selected to drive the curriculum.

At St Mary's, we recognise that strong communication and language skills are fundamental to future success. We prioritise the development of vocabulary, speaking, listening and conversation through high-quality interactions, storytelling, nursery rhymes, role play, questioning and structured talk opportunities. Staff model ambitious language,

encourage full sentences and provide language-rich learning environments to ensure children can communicate confidently, articulate ideas clearly and develop a love of language from the earliest stages.

4. Phonics

Early reading is a central priority within our EYFS curriculum. Children are taught daily through a structured synthetic phonics programme which is delivered with consistency and fidelity to ensure strong early reading foundations. Regular assessment identifies children who may need additional support, enabling timely intervention. Reading books are carefully matched to children's current phonics knowledge to promote confidence, fluency and success. We work closely with parents to develop positive home reading habits and believe that reading for pleasure is essential in fostering a lifelong love of books.

5. Fine Motor, Early Writing and Handwriting

We understand that successful writing begins with strong physical development. Children are provided with regular opportunities to develop gross and fine motor strength through practical activities, outdoor play, malleable materials and targeted provision. Mark making is valued as an essential part of early development, progressing towards secure letter formation, pencil control and writing stamina. We place high importance on correct letter formation and early handwriting habits to ensure children are well prepared for future written communication.

6. Mathematics

Our teaching of mathematics is guided by the White Rose Maths Hub. In Reception, most maths lessons are taught discretely, adapting White Rose Maths resources to meet our children's needs. In addition to this, children's mathematical understanding develops through active learning, play and exploration of a range of activities they can access independently during continuous provision.

7. Behaviour, Relationships and Personal Development

At St Mary's, positive behaviour is built through strong relationships, clear routines and consistently high expectations. Our relational approach ensures children feel safe, valued and understood. We explicitly teach sharing, kindness, resilience, independence and respect through daily interactions, routines and Gospel values. Staff support children in developing self-regulation, managing emotions and making positive choices. We believe that children thrive when they feel secure and experience a strong sense of belonging.

8. Assessment

The FSP (Foundation Stage Profile) is the national requirement for the assessment of children at the end of the Reception year. At the end of the year it is judged as to whether a child has achieved a 'Good Level of Development' across the areas of learning. Evidence for this assessment is based on teacher judgement, observations and evidence of the child's work to date. Assessments are made on an ongoing basis throughout the year and summative assessments are made half-termly using Target Tracker. During the first two weeks in Reception, the teachers carry out the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment, to provide a comprehensive picture of the developmental stages the child has reached on entry. The Reception teacher also evaluates any assessments and reports which may have been sent from Nursery/Pre-School. Assessments inform the planning for teaching and learning during the year. This assessment process allows the children to be grouped by ability to partake in Mathematics and Literacy activities suitable to each child's stage of development.

At the end of the final term, children's profile results are sent to the LEA for analysis. Parents receive an annual report reflecting the results of their child's profile. The report also highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs.

9. Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised in a way to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc., and to learn through each of the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Children have access to both inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

10. Transition

Transition into Reception Class

- In the Summer term, parents are invited to a transition meeting in school with the head teacher and EYFS staff, where they will be provided with all relevant information regarding their child's transition into school.
- All children are invited to a transition day in the summer term prior to starting in the autumn.
- The Reception teacher also evaluates any assessments and reports which may have been sent from other Nursery/Pre-school settings.
- During the summer holidays, parents are encouraged to complete an "All About Me" booklet with their child, which staff will use during the Autumn term to support with transition.

From Reception to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child, giving parents, staff and teachers a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. As part of the transition process, Reception staff meet with the Year 1 teacher to talk in depth about each child, including their achievements, and any areas they may need further support with. This, combined with the EYFS Profile, supports the Year 1 teacher in planning teaching and learning in the Autumn term, to meet the needs of all pupils in the class.

The children will take part in teaching and learning transition sessions with their **current teacher** in their **new classroom environment**, as well as sessions with their **new teacher in their new environment**, to support them in becoming familiar with their new environment and building positive relationships with new staff.

11. Partnership with Parents

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home and endeavour to develop a good, strong relationship with the children's parents, from the beginning of their association with the school. We therefore work very closely to ensure that parents/carers are involved in their child's education, by regularly updating class pages on the school website to allow parents/carers to see what the children have been learning about in school. We ensure that parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through parents' evenings and reports. We offer workshops to provide parents with an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years Curriculum, detailing ways in which they can support their child's learning at home. These sessions also give parents/carers the opportunity to work with their child in the school environment.

12. Inclusion

We are committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of starting point, background or additional need, has full access to our EYFS curriculum. We provide an inclusive environment where all children are supported and challenged appropriately through adaptive teaching, targeted interventions and close partnership with parents, the SENDCo and external professionals where necessary. We recognise and celebrate diversity and strive to remove barriers to learning so that all pupils, including those with SEND, EAL, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, can flourish.

13. Intimate Care

Intimate care may be defined as any activity that is required to meet the personal needs of an individual child on a regular basis, or a one off incident. Such activities include: washing, changing clothes, toileting, first aid and medical assistance, supervision of a child involved in intimate self-care.

Children's dignity will be preserved and a high level of privacy, choice and control will be provided to them. Staff who provide intimate care to children have a high awareness of child protection issues. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at St Mary's School will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Please see our 'Intimate Care Agreement' for further information.

14. Safeguarding

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. 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.

We educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We teach the children how to recognise and manage risks in a supervised learning environment. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children.

Please refer to our School's Safeguarding Policy for further information

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the governors and the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **7 May 2027**.