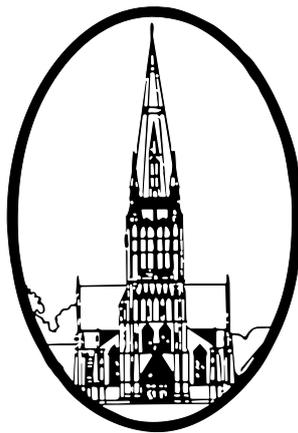


St. Mary's C. of E. Primary School

'Through God's love, we strive to be the best we can be.'



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Revised: January 2017
Review date: January 2019

Mission Statement and Values

“Through God’s love, we strive to be the best we can be.”

St Mary’s is an inspiring and creative school which fosters a love of learning as well as developing skills for life. We strive to enhance every child’s moral, spiritual, intellectual, social and physical well-being and celebrate every child’s gifts.

As a faith school we hold **love** at the centre of all we do. This and the following values reflect the ethos of our school.

Respect – ourselves, each other and our environment

Courage – to stand up for what is right, overcome our fears and embrace new challenges

Truth – in the choices we make and our dealings with family, friends, school and community

Hope – that inspires us to look forward in confidence to a better life for all

St Mary’s is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. We all work for our school to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected and all children enjoy their educational journey. At St Mary’s we ‘strive to be the best that we can be’.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in St. Mary’s applies to children from age 3 to the end of the Reception year when they are age 5.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of 1 full time Nursery class and 1 Reception class.

At times the Foundation Stage will have visiting student teachers and Nursery Nurse Students working in the setting alongside the staff. Other professionals may also work within the setting throughout the year. All parties will have an appropriate DBS certificate.

The Foundation Stage staff work as part of a team and we work as a unit, children from the classes have opportunities to work together during free flow times, accessing shared continuous provision. EYFS staff plan and work together to ensure continuity and progression, providing age and stage related activities to suit all our children. Children are also taught within their own class groups, they are taught in a variety of ways; in whole class groups, small group work, pairs and individually. We are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and education to those children in our care.

Staff are fully qualified, have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating children. The Staff are committed to professional development and attend up to date training courses and have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development.

St. Mary's EYFS has a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the younger child. In all classes, children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through planned play and talking, young children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop personal, social and emotional skills and develop confidence.

In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises. Our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. We make the children feel valued and give them the confidence to become active learners. Our activities provide first hand experiences through play and discussion, children are encouraged to interact with others, to move about and explore a wide variety of learning situations. There are well-planned areas of provision in the wide range of activities, resources and materials available. Opportunities are provided for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen activities. It is important to us that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

EYFS Areas of Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate the learning opportunities on the seven areas of learning (3 Prime and 4 Specific) which are;

Prime Areas of Learning:

1. Personal Social and Emotional Development – making relationships, managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and self-awareness.
2. Physical Development: Moving and handling and Health and Self-care

3. Communication and Language: Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking

Specific Areas of Learning:

1. Literacy: Reading and Writing
2. Mathematics: Numbers and Shape, Space and Measure
3. Understanding of the World: People and Communities, Understanding the World, Technology
4. Expressive Arts and Design: Exploring and Using Media & Materials and Being Imaginative,

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Characteristics of effective learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to speak and listen, sitting still etc.

Reading and stories play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag and has a designated day when they will have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult (although it is fine for others to listen too!) or, in Reception, a group reading session.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. We have a two year topic cycle so both classes are working together on the same theme; topics are usually based on the following areas of learning, 'Personal, Social and Emotional', 'Understanding the World', 'Literacy' and 'Communication and Language'; and range from a topic on All About Me to Animals or Transport. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events e.g. the Olympics. Every half term (and occasionally termly) staff plan the next topic, and book visits and visitors that will enhance the learning. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Weekly plans are available for parents in the

classroom or on the parents notice board. Although class teachers are responsible for writing plans, the EYFS plan as a team, with Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Support Staff all attending planning meetings and giving an input whenever possible.

Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at St. Mary's is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. We aim to build up to three visits in the Summer Term; these can range from a visit to the local City Farm to travelling all the way to the seaside. We actively seek parental support on trips, aiming for a ratio of one adult for two children in Nursery and a minimum of 1:3 in Reception. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along on school trips. Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bath a baby, painting mehndi patterns on hands or playing guitar.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is. Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom and tray in the classroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely in one place!

The outdoor area is an important part of the children's' learning experience with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. Our aim is to ensure that the outdoor space is utilised and reflects the indoor learning space in that it includes activities that cover all 7 of the EYFS curriculum areas e.g. setting up quiet spaces for reading, a writing area, having spaces for maths games, construction, creative activities, sand and water etc.

Assessment, observation and profile books

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual portfolio. We are very proud of our profile books: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead. Staff have an iPad or class camera which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. Parents have access to the portfolios which

are stored in the classroom. They are encouraged to contribute through the use of our WOW cards. WOW cards are where significant events that happen at home can be recorded, they are available in each cloakroom and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff. The portfolio is given to parents when their child is in Year 1 or leaves our setting. On entry to Nursery and Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Head Teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in both Nursery and Reception.

Role of staff and key workers

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a Meet the Teacher session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and other sessions for parents. When a child gains a place at St. Mary's we ask them to attend a session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents. We give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer and this document is the first piece in their profile book. Over the first few days at the school we encourage parents and carers to stay for as long as they wish in the classroom to ensure the transition to the school goes smoothly. We have a slow staggered entry into Nursery and a slightly quicker staggered entry into Reception. Early in the first term parents are invited to a parents' meeting so the settling in can be reviewed. Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting each term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

Health & safety and safeguarding

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 follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014_with_clarification_note.pdf

and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the EYFS. It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This is in line with Hackney and St. Mary's Safeguarding Policy. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads and class cameras to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme. Our staff model good eating habits by eating alongside the children. All children in Nursery eat a school lunch but are given the opportunity to have a packed lunch from Reception, although the vast majority continue to eat a school lunch (free since September 2014). We have a kitchen in the Nursery which no child is allowed to enter and is secured with a safety door. We take all accidents seriously and always log and phone home immediately if a child bangs their head. We have cold compresses stored in the Nursery freezer.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves!) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets. All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Anna Barker, Assistant head teacher for Inclusion, is the named Child Protection Officer and all concerns are discussed with her. We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits. All permanent members of staff have Paediatric First Aid Qualifications as required in the statutory guidance. This is reviewed when a new, permanent member of staff joins the team or every three years when the qualifications need to be renewed..

Equalities & disabilities

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. Both Gifted, talented and able children and those with Special Educational Needs are considered and the curriculum adapted to suit all levels of ability. We have a full Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy available at school.

Special education needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Nursery age onwards. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have links with various agencies and when necessary their involvement may be required to support certain children. Parents/Carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. We have a full Special Educational Needs (S.E.N) and Gifted and Talented policy available at school.

Health and safety

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Foundation Stage staff have had paediatric first aid training. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before after school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. A full Health and Safety Policy is available in School.

Snack times

We have a snack area based in both EYFS classrooms shared by all children. We see snack time as a social event, a time where the children enjoy a drink of milk, piece of fruit and/or a light snack together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation with their peers as they sit together. It also develops independence as the children are encouraged to serve themselves and wash up their own cups. The cost of snack and other resources we may need is £1 per week and is paid on a Monday. A member of EYFS staff keeps records of monies paid and spent on snack. It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to purchase the snack.

Allergies

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept in the kitchen area and all adults involved are informed.