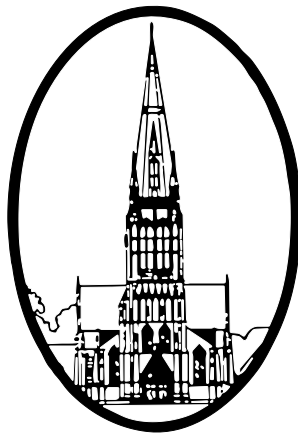


St. Mary's C. of E. Primary School

*'Feeding the mind, body and spirit so we can be the best we
can be.'*



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Revised: July 2023

Review date: July 2025

Mission Statement and Values

'Feeding the mind, body and spirit so we can be the best we can be.'

We foster everyone's potential and hunger for learning by serving up a wonderful diet of generosity, sharing and a sense of belonging. We are here to serve our community and we welcome children from all faiths and none.

Sit around the table at St Mary's and you will discover a warm welcome and a great community!

The Spiritual Values to which we aspire are:

Kindness: in treating others as we would want to be treated ourselves.

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

Courage: to stand up for what is right, overcome our fears and aspire to make a positive change.

Hope: about the future and know that tomorrow can be even better than today.

Love: for ourselves and others, knowing that God loves us.

St Mary's Equalities and Vulnerability Statement

Our school vision and spiritual values promote inclusion and equality and tackle discrimination. We have high expectations for all our pupils irrespective of their age, disability, gender including gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. This is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Our school spiritual values of Kindness, Truth, Courage, Hope and Love underpin all that we do. As a school we understand that the community we serve is a diverse one. Our community can be vulnerable for different reasons and these are not always visible. We as a staff team are aware of the different factors that can impact on our community, families and a child's well-being. These could include living with or having any of the following factors:

- Special educational needs (SEND) or an Educational and Healthcare Plan (EHCP)
- Social worker involvement
- Being a looked after child (LAC)
- Family members with chronic or serious illness
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Being a young carer

However, this is not an exhaustive list and we recognise that everyone needs to be treated as an individual and their personal situations taken into account to ensure that all get equal access to education and opportunities.

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 EYFS curriculum has been planned in conjunction with the Statutory Framework for EYFS July 2020 and Non-Statutory Development Matters 2020.

"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."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage July 2020

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. The Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff work as part of a team and nursery and reception 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 the children.

St. Mary's EYFS ensures a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the younger child. In each class, 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. We are committed to all children securing their prime areas of learning (see below) as we see them as the foundation for all other areas of learning.

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.

As part of our commitment to the children we plan 'Cultural Capital' experiences to ensure that they have access to enriching activities. We see our role is to help the children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning. This takes different forms, e.g. being a classroom monitor, learning a range of nursery rhymes, taking part in local trips or being exposed to quality texts.

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.

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 (EYFS 2020) 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 – self regulation, managing self and building relationships.
2. Physical Development: gross motor skills and fine motor skills.
3. Communication and Language: listening, attention, understanding and speaking.

Specific Areas of Learning:

1. Literacy: Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.
2. Mathematics: Number, Numerical Patterns,
3. Understanding of the World: Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and the Natural World.
4. Expressive Arts and Design: Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive

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.

We recognise the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning. In order to further embed this we have a focus on supporting children with their independence, self-regulation and executive function. This supports their development, capacity to learn as well as them becoming active learners.

Characteristics of Effective Learning form part of EYFS medium and weekly plans. Children also benefit from making links from home to school and vice versa e.g. the special day child brings in their favourite toy in, as homework children and parents are invited to go for an 'Autumn Walk' and bring in what they collected. These links strengthen the child's sense of self and builds on the shared understanding of where children come from and what they can bring to school.

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 both model effective learning and also step inside the child's world, to give them a sense of ownership over their learning and development. 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.

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.

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 communication and language, topic work, maths, English, 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 sent home with a reading book weekly.

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. 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. Every half term staff plan the next topic, and book visits and visitors that will enhance the learning.

Visits and visitors

In order to increase children's 'Cultural Capital' in the EYFS we aim to give children opportunities to broaden their minds and give them experiences that will enrich their development. These form part of the medium term plans for the year. Local trips, experiences and visitors are carefully planned each half term to support this.

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 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. Once the classes are settled and in a routine we open up the space between nursery and reception for designated parts of the day which allows the children to access the whole of the EYFS unit.

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. We also encourage the children to build up their fine and gross motor skills through a range of outside activities e.g. using the balance boards and bikes.

Early Learning Goals

"The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs). The ELGs should not be used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development, from being read to frequently to playing with friends. Instead, the ELGs should support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development, and their readiness for year 1. When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. This is sufficient evidence to assess a child's individual level of development in relation to each of the ELGs. Multiple sources of written or photographic evidence are not required, and teachers should not record unnecessary evidence." Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage July 2020

Assessment and observation

At St Mary's, in line with the EYFS Reforms of 2020 we see assessment as an important way of understanding and recognising children's progress however, we also maximise quality time spent between children and practitioners engaging in meaningful tasks and do not see the benefit of lengthy observations and photographs to prove this.

We use formative assessment (on-going) as it best captures the children's individual progress. Our experienced EYFS team identify children who have gaps in knowledge and may need additional input to make expected progress and this is carefully monitored however, we do not produce excessive paperwork or written observations regarding this, instead focusing on the specific input that an individual child may need. Parents and carers have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at parent consultation evenings and at other times if required.

Nursery: We have 9 Curricular Goals (see appendix 1) for the children to achieve by the end of their time in nursery. These link to the 7 areas of learning and prepare the children to be reception ready. These are worked towards across the school year and can be achieved in any order.

Reception: We do a base line assessment (government led) which will provide a snapshot of where the children are when they start reception which informs the planning and individual needs of the children moving forward. Assessment in reception informs an ongoing dialogue between practitioners about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to key stage 1.

EYFS Profile

At the end of the reception year an EYFS Profile will be completed for each child. The EYFS profile is a statutory assessment of children's attainment at the end of the EYFS (known as a summative assessment) to be completed by the end of June in the summer term of the academic year in which a child reaches age 5 years. This will give parents, carers and year 1 teacher information about the child's understanding, abilities and readiness for year 1. The child's level of development will be assessed against the early learning goals and a judgement will be made as to whether they are working at expected or emerging and this will be shared with parents. A best fit model will be used so that practitioners consider the whole of each Early Learning Goal (ELG) description and decide in their professional development whether each ELG has been met overall or not.

Exceptions and exemptions:

The EYFS profile must be completed unless:

- The Secretary of State for Education has granted an exemption for the profile for the setting or an individual child
- the child is continuing in EYFS provision beyond the year in which they turn 5
- the child has not spent enough time in the setting for an accurate assessment to be made,

The above should be read in conjunction with **Early Years Foundation Stage profile 2021 handbook**.

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 have a staggered entry into Nursery and a slightly 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.

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. As a school we follow the statutory government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> 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 take photographs to capture certain aspects of learning. These photographs are used 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 also have an intimate care policy to follow where children need support with personal needs e.g. if there is a toileting accident. Any queries or concerns should be shared with Anna Joseph the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Health and Safety

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme. All children in Nursery are offered a school lunch which is paid for by parents and reception children receive a free school lunch in line with the universal free school meals offer which extends to the end of year 2. You may bring a healthy packed lunch for your child if required, please see our food policy. We take all accidents seriously and always log and phone home immediately if a child bangs their head.

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' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to also send in a change of clothes for their child in their bag. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets.

All equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. 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. Any concerns will be discussed with parents and 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.

Snack times

Fruit, water and milk are available in each classroom (please advise us if your child has any allergies or dietary restrictions). Nursery has a specific snack time in the morning and afternoon with reception having free access during their learning time.

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.

Appendix I

Curricular Goals at St Mary's Nursery.

At St Mary's we understand that children learn at different paces and develop in their own unique ways. Developmentally children achieve at different rates and the difference in stage for example between a child born in September and one born in August can in the short term mean that there are different expectations and outcomes. We believe that nursery provides the building blocks for preparing children for reception and in order for them to be ready we have devised 9 goals for them to achieve (in any order) by the end of their time in nursery.

By the end of their time in nursery pupils will:

1. Become a confident learner
2. Know a range of nursery rhymes and familiar stories (English)
3. Write their name and the initial sounds of others (English)
4. Participate in a whole school assembly (PSD)
5. Use a balance board effectively (PD)
6. Create a model involving pattern and shape (EAD and Maths)
7. Produce their own family tree (UW)
8. Draw/paint a self portrait (EAD)
9. Follow a recipe and bake bread (UW, English and Maths)

Goal 1: Settle in and become a confident learner

Steps to Success:

- Build relationships with staff and other children in nursery
- Learn key people and pupil names
- Separate confidently from their parent at the start of the day
- Explore the different activities available
- Initiate games and ideas with their peers
- Understand the rhythms and routines of the day

Goal 2: Know a range of nursery rhymes and familiar stories

Steps to Success:

- Engage with the core texts in nursery
- Have opportunities to re-enact these stories
- Join in with different nursery rhymes and learn them
- Select a song they wish to sing and share this with the class
- Join in with repeated words and actions
- Understand the conventions of a book and how to turn the pages as you read
- Re-tell a favourite story to their friends and other adults
- Use appropriate prepositions to describe where a character is e.g. under, over, next to.
- Understand that letters make sounds and link sounds to actions using phase 1 and 2 phonics

Goal 3: Write your whole name and the initial sounds of other significant people in your life e.g. mum

Steps to Success:

- Build up fine and gross motor skills through a range of opportunities in nursery e.g. throwing and catching, pushing and pulling objects, using paint and playdough.
- Explore mark making using different mediums e.g. chalk, sand, crayons, paint
- Engage in phase 1 phonics and understand that there are sounds all around us and that sounds can be represented as letters
- Ascribe meaning to the marks they are making e.g. that's my dad
- Make more controlled marks e.g. line, circle, zig zag.
- Understand the language up, down, round when mark making
- Recognise their printed name and can copy some of the letters.
- Independently write their initial letter and then add to this to write their whole name.

Goal 4: Participate in a whole class assembly

Steps to Success:

- Build relationships within their class

- Develop a speaking and listening voice
- Understand a sequence of events
- Learn songs and rhymes
- Know how to engage with an audience
- Work as a team
- Express feelings using words not actions
- Use appropriate language to resolve conflicts

Goal 5: Use a balance board effectively

Steps to Success:

- Develop balancing skills through using the equipment outside
- Coordinate movements to effectively run, jump, throw, catch
- Cooperate with others when playing
- Map out a route and follow it using the equipment outside
- Use a balance board to effectively travel from one part of the playground to another.
- Work with others to create a moving 'vehicle' e.g. several boards linked together
- Be able to hop, skip and jump
- Add strength to gross and fine motor skills to e.g. hold a pencil comfortably and use scissors accurately

Goal 6: Create models that involve pattern and shape.

Steps to Success:

- Recognise patterns around us
- Recreate these patterns using a range of different mediums and recreate them e.g. an animal picture using zebra stripes or cheetah spots
- Recognise different 2d and 3d objects around them e.g. bus, car
- Understand the different components that a 3d object has e.g. wheels
- Use recycled materials to re-create their chosen object e.g. a cereal box could become a lorry
- Begin to name the shapes they see within 2d objects e.g. square, rectangle, circle
- Produce something they feel proud of

Goal 7: Produce their own family tree

Steps to Success:

- Understand that families are all different
- Recognise important people in their own family
- Share who is in their family with others
- Use different mediums and techniques to draw members of their family by using circles for heads and straight lines for arms and legs
- Display their family trees confidently

Goal 8: Make a self-portrait

Steps to Success:

- Recognise themselves in a mirror
- Name the parts of their face e.g. face, eyes, nose
- Use different mediums to recreate themselves by drawing a circle for their face
- Understand that there are different coloured skin tones, eyes and hair and that we are not all the same.
- Produce a picture that they are proud of and that can be displayed

Goal 9: Follow a recipe and bake bread

Steps to Success:

- Understand that different ingredients can be mixed together to make something new e.g. by making playdough
- Use the outside kitchen to recreate their own recipes e.g. dry pasta, sand, mud
- Know that there are different ways to measure something e.g. spoon, cup
- Follow a pictorial recipe and discuss with an adult what comes next in the sequence
- Count in order the number of cups/scoops that are required
- Take part in small group cooking activities that result in a finished product e.g. bread

