

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Nurturing Hearts and Minds

Jesus let your light shine through, in all we think and say and do.

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St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our EYFS unit, Reception class and Mighty Mini's.

Intent

At St. Mary Magdalen'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. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this EYFS policy: Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equality Policy; Behaviour Policy.

In our Early Years Foundation stage, it is our intent to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that addresses the children's social, emotional, physical, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Learning is fun and we strongly believe in play, first-hand learning and valuing the importance of the outdoor environment to develop and support children's thinking and problem-solving skills. We provide children with a safe and stimulating environment where children flourish.

We know the importance of practical learning experiences and we strive to equip children with a love of learning and a natural curiosity.

Every child is unique and should be treated so allowing them the opportunity to develop and learn in a safe and nurturing environment where play and learning is combined. We pride ourselves on listening to children and those who care for them, using this information to personalise each child's learning. Developing positive partnerships with parents and/or carers and other practitioners linked to supporting children in our Early Years.

We are committed to giving our children the best possible start to their school life, teaching skills that ensure their well-being now and success in the future. We plan transition activities so children transfer both into our setting and between year groups smoothly and confidently. Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Our school values *Respect, Aspiration and Resilience* and thread these values through our practice alongside our Characteristics of Learning characters to support and encourage internal motivation and independence.

Implementation

To implement our EYFS curriculum we begin each new year by looking at the individual needs of our children and take into account their different starting points to develop our flexible curriculum which enables them to follow the path of their learning journey, at a point, that is suitable for their unique needs and stage of development. We follow the EYFS statutory framework 2021 and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2022. Alongside this we use the supporting documents from Development Matters / Birth to Five and Early Years Outcomes and the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas 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 4 specific areas:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Interlinked with these subject areas are the children's characteristics of learning which we support and help develop by providing children with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities so that they can develop the learning characteristics which are assessed by the EYFS profile. The following characteristics also support lifelong learning:

Children;

- Are willing to have a go
- Are involved and concentrating
- Have their own ideas
- Choose ways to do things
- Find new ways of doing things / problem solving
- Enjoy achieving what they set out to do

The EYFS team plan a broad range of activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. The curriculum is delivered with a balance of small and large group teaching sessions and a “play” based approach. 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 to develop knowledge and skills. During children’s play, Early Years’ practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

Children have whole group and small group sessions which increase as they progress through the EYFS. We pride ourselves on listening to children and those who care for them, using this information to personalise each child’s learning. Developing positive partnerships with parents and/or carers and other practitioners linked to supporting children in our Early Years.

Staff also takes into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, we discuss needs with our School SENDCo and, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. Staff follows guidance that has been offered to support a child / children. We also provide intervention where appropriate, for example speech and language programmes.

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child’s progress and development to provide a well-rounded picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities. In the EYFS unit the key worker for each child will be the class teacher supported by the other members of the EYFS team.

Impact

Observation, assessment and evaluation are planned for and used throughout the year to inform planning that will allow the children to succeed in their next steps of learning and ensure that each child's differing needs are met. Assessment focuses on the understanding and knowledge of where each child lies around the 17 areas of learning. It is through this great understanding of each child that planned activities work towards achieving The Early Learning Goal; the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS.

Assessment opportunities include:

- Information is gathered from the previous setting initially where possible and at the end of the Reception year each child's progress is discussed with the receiving teacher;
- Reception Baseline & WellComm assessments;
- Information from parents and discussions with the teacher;
- Careful observation carried out whilst children are engaged in child initiated activity/play, in order to gain an insight into children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts;
- Careful observations carried out during focused group work/whole class teaching in order to assess children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts;
- Informal observation both in the background and whilst participating with children;
- All observations, assessments and recording are an integral part of teaching, as they inform future planning for children's needs and development;
- Discussions with staff and children about their interests and their learning;
- Exchange of information with parents at parent teacher meetings providing a two-way process where teachers and parents share their understanding of a child;
- Ongoing recording of progress in the EYFS through tracking;

- Participation in moderation with collaborative groups such as the WRIST Cluster.
- The Reception teacher works with other leaders and the Year 1 teacher to assist transition and planning for each child;

The teacher keeps progress records following the Autumn baseline assessment. These provide a summary for each child as to their progress towards meeting the ELGS. This feeds into the School EYFS assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level using the "met or not met" terms.

It is through these processes that children will work towards achieving expected; the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS.

The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers comments on each child's progress in the areas of learning.

Principles into Practice

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning that we consider for each child are as follows:

- * 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; and
- * Creating and Thinking Critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

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, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. Please see our separate policies.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Mary Magdalen'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 our children achieve their own potential. 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 regarding SEN.

Parents as Partners and the Wider context

We strive to create and maintain 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.

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.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

Children attend introductory sessions regarding both Nursery and Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

In the final term of Mini's, the Reception teacher will meet with the Nursery Early Years staff and discuss each child's development. Alongside this the Reception teacher will visit the children that will continue into St Mary Magdalen's Reception class ensuring a smooth transition to the Reception class. This helps the teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

For Nursery children that move to another setting during the year a four week notice period will be required. The notice period must be given in writing in an email sent to the office. If the child is funded for place a minimum of four weeks prior to the last day of term must be given for the funding to transfer to the new setting. If this time scale is not adhered to then the funding may not be able to be transferred.