



Early Years Policy

The National Strategy 'Learning, Playing and Interacting', states that "Young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week ... They actively drive their own learning and development, by the choices they make, the interests they develop, the questions they ask, the knowledge they seek, and their motivation to act more competently. Children's choices and interests are the driving force for building knowledge, skills and understanding.... High-quality provision helps children to develop positive dispositions which lay the foundations for becoming lifelong successful learners."

At St. Mary's we promote the ethos of 'Learning in the moment,' and provide a rich environment and skilled practitioners which enable the children to acquire knowledge and develop skills in the Early Years Foundation stage.

Our objectives are:

- to provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children
- to promote the importance of play for developing all aspects of the EYs curriculum
- to develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults
- to provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage
- to encourage active learning through first hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication
- to encourage children to become confident, self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline
- to value cultural diversity
- to foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

The key person is the class teacher with a team of practitioners contributing towards the care and learning for the children and their parents.

Early Years and Foundation Stage in this document refers to the reception year. The content of the curriculum within the Foundation Stage is set out within the EYFS document. The curriculum is based on the Early Learning Goals, which set out what most children will be expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage; the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the scales of Engagement and Motivation as stipulated in the Leuven scales.

Organisation and the learning environment

At St. Mary's we believe that the learning environment should stimulate, excite and extend the children whilst providing familiarity and security. The Foundation classroom is organised carefully to support continuous provision and to enhance the development of the children's individual interests, key skills, knowledge and concepts.

It enables a combination of child-led, adult-led and adult-directed activities to take place.

Role of adults

Teamwork is extremely important within the Foundation Stage in order to support and extend the children fully in their learning. The Foundation Stage team consists of a Teacher, teaching Assistant and from time to time, a number of students and volunteers. The team will:

- interact with the children to develop their play, learning and next steps
- provide stimulating learning activities for all children
- focus on child involvement and interest
- provide focussed support and teaching for small groups and individual children
- monitor the progress of individual children and groups of children and develop next steps
- carry out observations of children and their use of resources to monitor and develop learning
- work with parents /carers in order to promote productive relationships.
- celebrate success

Equal Opportunities

All children have an equal entitlement to a good Early Years Curriculum regardless of gender, race, culture, religion, special educational needs, including disability and /or medical needs.

Health and safety

All activities and practices are carefully selected to ensure the health and safety of all children and adults working in the Foundation area. Risk assessments are undertaken as appropriate.

Assessment, recording and reporting to parents

A variety of methods are used to ensure that the progress of children is carefully monitored. These include:

- observations during transition visits and home visits
- age- related baseline assessment within the first 6 weeks of starting school
- on-going assessment which is logged onto the online 'Early Excellence' Tracker
- Observations / photos and work and next steps are uploaded onto the Early Excellence Learning Journals and paper learning journals
- In-depth focus on 2 children per week
- Meeting with parents/carers to inform and discuss progress and development and promote parental involvement in contributing to the next steps and the online Learning Journal.

Partnerships with Parents

We believe that a strong partnership with parents/carers is crucial. We believe that parents/carers working together have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Therefore we seek to develop an effective partnership with them through:

- Delivering a parents' information evening in summer prior to starting school
- Visiting each child in its home before starting school
- Transition mornings with children and parents
- Inviting parents to spend time with their child in school each morning
- Keeping parents informed through regular newsletters

Behaviour

In the Foundation Stage, we maintain a positive approach towards behaviour and have high expectations of the children. We follow St. Mary's behaviour policy.

Transition from Pre -school to full time Education

Our aim is to establish a smooth and successful transition to school. This is facilitated by:

- visits to partnership pre-school establishments
- Discussions with pre-school to understand individual interests, needs and development
- sessions in the school in the final six weeks of the summer term before entry into school
- liaison with outside agencies where needed
- considering the needs of pupils as they enter full-time education by using a staggered start approach .

Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure continuous, quality provision:

- the Early years' foundation stage will have a subject leader
- the Head teacher will observe and evaluate the opportunities and experiences provided for the children
- the Head teacher will monitor assessment and report to Governors
- the EYFS profile will be updated throughout the year
- the EYFSP will be moderated with the Early Years team

This policy has been reviewed and adopted by the full Governing Body at the meeting on:
20/03/2018

Signed and dated by:

The Headteacher

Kathryn Jackson



20/03/2018

and

The Chair of Governors

Anne Cottingham



20/03/2018