

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



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"With Jesus, live life to the full"
cf. John 10:10

Intent

Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.' John 10:10

The principles of Catholic Education are at the core of all that we undertake at St. Mark's. We strive to build a strong foundation, rooted in academic success as well as nurturing and supporting the spiritual, physical, moral and cultural development of the children in our care.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. DfE 2021).

Structure of EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. St. Mark's Catholic Primary is a one form entry school. All children join the school, as one intake, at the beginning of the academic year in which they turn five.

Implementation

This policy outlines how Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is implemented, alongside our Catholic ethos. It is based on the requirements set out in the 2021 Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles, as stated in The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021:

A Unique Child

Every child is unique and capable of being a strong, resilient and proficient learner, with the right guidance.

Positive relationships

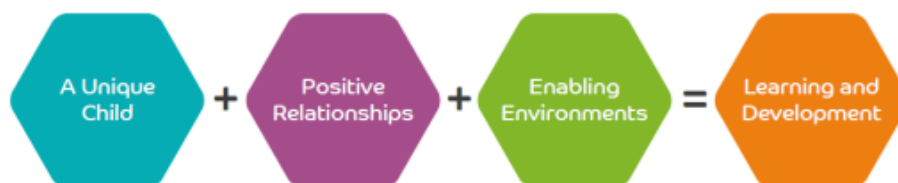
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop to their full potential in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual needs, helping them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.

Learning and Development

All of the children in our care develop and learn at different rates.



(Image taken from Birth to 5 Matters 2021)

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A Unique Child

At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, we believe that human beings were created in the likeness and image of God. We recognise that each one of us is unique and beautiful, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, attainment or gender. We are called to treat every person with respect. All children and their families are valued members of our school community; every individual within the family of St Mark's School matters.

Inclusion

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that are based on children's existing knowledge, experience and interests which help to develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies: whole class, small groups, one to one, adult directed learning and child-initiated time, based on the needs of the individual
- Providing a wide range of opportunities in a well-planned environment to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination
- Monitoring progress; supporting and extending where necessary.

Additional Needs

Our aim is to identify additional needs as early as possible to ensure that the correct support is implemented at the right time in order to meet the individual requirements of the pupils in our care. For further information, please refer to the SEND policy and Early Help Offer. A specialist LSA also works with children who have been identified as needing additional support after carrying out the Infant Language Link Assessment.

Positive Relationships

At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn to thrive as a result of positive relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with all children and their families.

Working with parents and carers

The Catholic Church has long recognised that parents are the first educators of their children; consequently, it is essential that we develop links with families as soon as they join our school. We work in partnership with parents in a variety of ways:

"Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in early years, are big steps for small children." (Development Matters, 2021).

- With this in mind, contact is established with parents/carers about their child in the term prior to joining St. Mark's. Each family is given a welcome pack with a plethora of information which outlines important aspects of school life. We want to build up a picture of the child before they start; continuing to support them throughout their first year at school.
- Parents/carers sign a home school agreement.
- Children and parents/carers are invited to spend time in the provision in the term prior to starting school.
- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term prior to admission.
- In September, with parental agreement, the children have a phased entry; the class are split into two groups and attend for mornings or afternoons with the opportunity to stay for lunch for a few days. Then the children form one group and attend full time.
- Arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between parents/carers and the school such as curriculum meetings, religious events, celebration tea parties and the like.
- Parents/carers have the opportunity to talk to a member of EYFS staff at the start or the end of the school day. They can share information and concerns.
- Providing parents/carers with an online learning journey.
- Parents/carers are actively encouraged to attend consultation meetings to discuss their child's progress.
- Providing parents with regular newsletters, individual support as appropriate in addition to a written end of year report.
- Encouraging families to share books together on a daily basis to foster a love of reading.

Enabling Environments with Teaching and Support from Adults

"Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. DfE 2021).

At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays an important role in supporting and extending the development of the children in our care. The environment is organised to support engagement with learning. Children can explore opportunities for child-initiated learning, where they can develop a wide range of skills and knowledge linked to different areas of the provision. EYFS staff members aim to respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The adults observe the children whilst they are playing and learning; interacting to support and extend, if appropriate. We recognise that communication skills

underpin the foundations for learning, therefore staff model language, question, encourage recall of facts and ideas, offer a narrative for their play and pose challenges.

EYFS has its own enclosed outdoor area. Being outside is important for the wellbeing of the children as well as supporting all areas of learning and providing a context for developing the characteristics of effective learning. The outside environment offers opportunities for learning in a different way and often on a larger scale to inside. It enables the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active.

When they are outside, the children have opportunities to:

- Build larger structures
- Use a digging pit
- Experiment with water and sand
- Explore natural materials
- Engage in role play in the mud kitchen
- Move in different ways
- Cycle and balance on ride on toys
- Develop curiosity about the natural world.

Forest Schools

Forest Schools provides the opportunity to use the forest area as an additional learning environment. It gives children the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence. It provides a context for risk taking, team building activities and participating in play. Practical, hands-on use of a variety of tools builds up physical stamina as well as gross and fine motor skills. The sensory experiences that the children are exposed to promote communication and language development. Forest areas tend to fascinate children; being outside engages their interest in the natural world, thereby developing more respect for the environment. Our Forest Schools programme will take place during the Spring and Summer Terms.

Thrive

At St Mark's Catholic Primary, the Thrive approach has been adopted to develop positive relationships with children to support their wellbeing. Thrive is a therapeutic approach to support children with their social and emotional development.

Learning and Development

At St Mark's Catholic Primary, we recognise that all of the children in our care join us at slightly different starting points and develop at varying rates. We believe, as stated in Development Matters (2021) that "All children deserve to have an equal chance of success." We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are interconnected.

Characteristics of Effective learning (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE 2021).	
Playing and Exploring <i>Engagement</i>	'Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go.'
Active Learning <i>Motivation</i>	'Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.'
Creative and Critical Thinking <i>Thinking</i>	'Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.'

EYFS children are introduced to our whole school learning behaviours: Respect, Resourcefulness, Reasoning, Resilience, Responsibility and Reflection. These learning behaviours support the development of metacognition across the curriculum. This in turn helps us to nurture children who are more curious, more willing to take risks

and have a go, more imaginative and creative, more thoughtful, more ready, willing and able to learn with, and from others, thus developing an adventurous spirit.

Curriculum

At St Mark's Catholic Primary, we follow the curriculum as outlined in the Statutory framework for the EYFS. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, three areas, known as the prime areas are highlighted as, *"particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving."* (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

Prime Areas of learning	
Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding
	Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation
	Managing Self
	Building Relationships
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills
	Fine Motor Skills

Specific Areas of learning	
Literacy	Comprehension
	Word Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Number
	Numerical Patterns
Understanding the World	Past and Present
	People, Culture and Communities
	The Natural World
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials
	Being Imaginative and Expressive

At St Mark's Catholic Primary, our aim is that the curriculum provides children with inspiring experiences, opportunities and direct instruction that will motivate their learning and increase engagement. The seven areas of learning are delivered through a range of approaches, including adult directed teaching, child-initiated activities and continuous provision. Children are given opportunities to learn individually, in small groups and as a whole class. Continuous provision refers to the clearly defined areas, inside and outside, containing resources that have been planned to meet the objectives set out in The EYFS Statutory framework. These areas are in the provision throughout a child's year in Reception; they are enhanced to reflect the interests of the pupils or themes covered. They provide a context for active, hands on experiences; thereby promoting independence and encouraging self-regulation.

Communication and Language

"The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations. Reception class children also benefit from French lessons with a specialist language teacher.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

"Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. Children will learn to manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs.

Physical Development

"Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves opportunities for young children to be active; to develop their fine and gross motor co-ordination, control, and movement. Children will also be supported to understand the importance of physical activity in order to pursue a happy, healthy and active life. Reception class children benefit from P.E. lessons delivered by a specialist teacher

Literacy

"It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves the early teaching of literacy; encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Literacy includes daily teaching of phonics as soon as the class start their Reception year. The class are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, nurse rhymes and other written materials) to ignite their interest and develop a life-long love of reading, as well as developing language comprehension. Children will be taught to write their names, simple sentences and use writing as a way of communicating for a purpose.

Mathematics

"Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, one-to-one correspondence, understanding and using numbers, solving problems using practical equipment and manipulatives as well as becoming familiar with shapes and measures. As a school, we follow the White Rose Maths scheme of work.

Understanding the World

"Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community." (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves supporting pupils to make sense of their physical environment and community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the world.

Expressive Arts and Design

“The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity.”

(Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE 2021).

This educational programme involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design and technology. Reception class children benefit from music lessons delivered by a specialist teacher

Phonics

Discrete, daily phonics sessions are taught, using a systematic and synthetic approach in EYFS. Synthetic phonics is a method of teaching reading that focuses on the link between letters and sounds. This approach is based on decoding and blending letters so that children learn to link sounds with individual letters and phonemes. Our scheme of work, FFT Success for All Phonics ensures there is a structured programme, with an emphasis on progression.

Whole School Theme Weeks

Wherever relevant and possible, our curriculum is enriched by whole school theme weeks such as STEM Week, Healthy Living Week, workshops, visiting speakers, special events and educational trips as well as working closely with the local parish and community, if appropriate. These opportunities aim to develop the cultural capital of the children in addition to their personal and spiritual development.

Assessment

Refer to separate policy.

Transition to Year 1

- EYFS children have the opportunity to meet the adults they will be with in Year 1 during the latter part of the Summer Term.
- The children have the opportunity to visit their new classroom.
- Reports from external agencies such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and the like are shared with the Year 1 teacher.
- EYFS practitioners discuss the needs of individual children with Year 1 staff in order also to ensure a smooth transition. Any concerns that families have highlighted will be shared.
- The outcome of the EYFS Profile is shared with the new class teacher.
- Children are given the opportunity to talk about their worries and concerns and these are shared with Year 1 staff.
- The children participate in more whole-school activities during their final term in EYFS, such as Sports Day, Mass, Collective Worship and the like.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important that all children feel safe. They are given opportunities to explore and discover within a safe, supported environment. Practitioners aim to educate children about boundaries, expectations and rules; supporting them to understand why these exist. Protecting the physical and mental wellbeing of the children is our priority. All members of staff at St Mark’s undertake regular Child Protection Training. Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the whole school child protection and safeguarding policy.

Monitoring arrangements

The EYFS is monitored by the Headteacher, SENDCo and Governors to ensure that the implementation of the Statutory framework meets the legal requirements for children’s learning, development and welfare and that it is in line with the school’s policies. The Governing Body approves this policy and will consider the views of staff when considering policy decisions. This decision making is carried out with regard to the current framework and national initiatives, the standards achieved by children in the EYFS and in response to guidance and evidence in educational standards. The Headteacher and Governors will monitor the quality of teaching and learning to an

agreed protocol and schedule. This policy will be reviewed every two years or when legislation or guidance changes.

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021). The Appendix below lists statutory whole school policies and procedures available for the early years provision at St Mark's Catholic Primary.

Impact

Our ultimate goal is that children leave Early Years Foundation Stage at St Mark's Catholic Primary ready to embrace the challenges of the next stage of their education as happy, confident learners.

Appendix

List of statutory policies and procedures for EYFS

Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See first aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
Procedure for intimate care	See intimate care policy
Special educational needs and disabilities	See SEND policy and SEND information report