

# St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

*Proudly and joyfully, we love, live and learn as God's children.*



## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



**Completed by:** S. Dykes and D. Linley

**Last reviewed on:** 12/12/2024

**Next review due by:** 12/12/2025

## **Mission Statement**

**Proudly and joyfully we Love, Live and Learn as God's Children**

### **Aims**

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

### **Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

### **Structure of the EYFS**

At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, our EYFS is our Reception class. Children come to us from a variety of settings including nurseries, childminders, playgroups and home settings. Our Reception intake is 1 form entry (30 pupils) and all pupils are in one class with a class teacher and teaching assistant. The Reception unit is within the main school. It is open plan and caters for a class of 30 children. There is an outdoor area specifically designed and designated for use by Reception children, including a soft surfaced area directly outside the classroom promoting outdoor role play, a sandpit, water area and a role play area. The Early Years has its own entrance, cloakroom and toilet facilities.

The school day is 8.30am to 3.15pm for all Reception pupils.

### **Intent**

At St Mark's we aim to support all children in developing key life skills, building a firm basis for future learning from individual starting points. We want children to become independent, creative, respectful, confident, curious learners in an environment where they feel safe and secure, making learning fun and encouraging a love to learn, whilst Living, Learning and Loving as God's Children.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

### **Why is the EYFS important?**

Early Years is so important in giving children the foundations they need for their future. It is a time where children make and establish important relationships that will set them off on their educational journey.

Early Years is also the time when key communication and language skills are developed. As well as early literacy and maths skills and the physical and social skills they are going to need throughout their learning journey and life.

In the EYFS, children develop core skills through their interactions with others and their environment. Play in the Early Years is vital in developing these skills and encouraging an enquiring mind and a love of learning.

### **What is the EYFS?**

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum consists of seven main areas of learning. The Prime areas are Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language. The Specific areas are

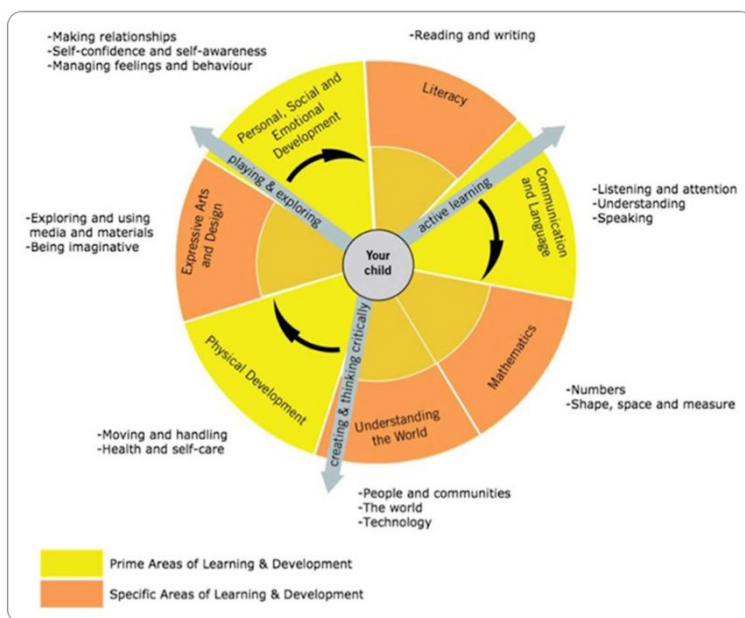
Mathematics, Literacy, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. Each area of learning is made up of sub areas of learning which are as follows;

**Prime areas**

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - Self Regulation
  - Managing Self
  - Building relationships
- Physical Development
  - Gross Motor Skills
  - Fine Motor Skills
- Communication and Language
  - Listening, Attention and Understanding
  - Speaking

**Specific Areas**

- Literacy
  - Comprehension
  - Reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics
  - Numbers
  - 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



Together, these areas of learning make up the skills, knowledge and experiences appropriate for children as they grow, learn and develop. At St Mark’s we strive to ensure that each child’s learning and development occur as an outcome of their individual interests and abilities so our planned learning and opportunities reflects this.

All children will be assessed on entry to Reception using the RBA DFE baseline assessment and a range of teacher assessment, this is completed within the first 6 weeks of school. This enables teachers to gain a knowledge of the skills and knowledge of each child and plan their next steps. Children will be assessed using the EYFS Development Matters age bands throughout the year for all areas of learning, using a range of adult led and child - initiated learning opportunities.

Each child will be assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors in the Summer term. Assessments will be based on observation of daily activities, incidental play-based learning and events, alongside teacher led

activities. For each ELG, the EYFS Team must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year.

### **What does the EYFS look like at St. Mark's?**

In Reception at St Mark's we learn through play. Play is an essential component of children's lives. Through play children learn about themselves, their environment and the world around them. Play helps to develop important skills such as problem solving and turn taking. In addition to this, adults provide well planned activities, including adult led sessions, that are exciting and engaging and that fully take into account the needs and abilities of the children. Reception children have access to a range of different activities that promote and develop basic skills.

In our classroom you will find a happy learning environment where all children are encouraged to be as independent as possible; through making choices about their learning, managing their own personal hygiene and self-care and taking responsibility for looking after equipment and resources. In the classroom you will find children who are engaged and excited about their learning and this can be evidenced through the classroom displays.

Our Catholic Faith is very important to us and we encourage the children to join in and say our prayers together. We ensure children are aware of the importance of prayer and reflection. Children in Reception will take part in Religious Education each week – looking at a range of topics, including the Creation Story. Reception will take part in some whole school worship including assemblies and masses.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim to build positive relationships with parents and to keep them informed of their child's learning. We have workshops for parents where we demonstrate and provide the opportunity for parents to come into school learn with their children. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and get involved with their children's targets through daily reading, homework activities, pupil planners and parent target consultations.

### **Transition to St. Mark's**

In order to ensure that children in the Early Years get off to the best start possible we offer an extended transition programme. Our transition programme consists of:

#### **Summer Term (before a child starts school)**

- Welcome letter and school information sent to parents.
- Welcome meeting and tour in school for parents and children.
- Transition morning for children and families to familiarise themselves with the classroom and the school and meet new friends in preparation for September. This is also an opportunity to speak to your child's class teacher about any concerns or questions you may have. It will help familiarise your child with St. Mark's and it will also help you as parents to know our expectations. Parents also attend a phonics workshop, and hear the importance of building children's spoken language skills. We love reading at St. Mark's and our phonics lessons help give children the key skills needed to become confident and fluent readers.
- The 'Ready Steady Reception' team from Birmingham meets parents. This team supports parents with skills that are needed to be ready for school, with practical opportunities and ideas to give the children the best start to school life.
- The Reception class teacher will visit every child's Early Years setting in July and discussions will be had with the staff in the setting about your child. There are a set of questions that we complete before children begin school and that is to help make the transition process as smooth as possible. This is particularly important for children who may need a little extra support.
- The Reception class teacher may also arrange a home visit for some individual children. If your child is chosen for a home visit, the rationale for this will be explained to you. The purpose of home visits is to further support the transition process to St. Mark's.
- In September, we invite parents and carers into school for a number of parent workshops and meetings. The aim of these workshops is to give parents knowledge of what children are learning about to help provide further support at home.
- A transition timetable is given for all children in the first week. Reception children gradually increase their time in school, allowing them to familiarise themselves with the other children in the classroom and also with the school and staff.

#### **What is discussed at the transition meeting?**

We will explore attendance, behaviour, health and safeguarding, milestone development and external agency support. This allows us to plan additional transitions to and plan for meetings with external agencies in the Summer

term to further support transition if needed. This will also allow further supportive action to be taken such as additional home and school visits, multi-agency support meetings and Early Help support.

### **Transition from Reception to Year 1**

In Reception, we assess children regularly on key skills and knowledge to ensure that children are well prepared for Year 1. Interventions and additional support is put in place swiftly to close gaps for any children who have been identified as requiring further support.

In the Summer term, children prepare to transition to the Year 1 curriculum by having more structured activities. The children will spend a day in their new classroom getting to know their new teachers and they will familiarise themselves in their new learning environment (this usually takes place in July). Your child's class teacher will then meet your child's new class teacher to share assessment information and information about your child that will aid transition.

### **Planning**

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively across all areas of learning, as well as opportunities to develop their cultural capital.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable learning journey for each child. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. They also show ambitious intent for all children and scaffold support to ensure all children make good progress from their starting points.

As children progress through the EYFS, key group work, adult-directed and whole class work will be planned, as appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils.

### **Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for their next stage of education.

### **Assessment**

At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. All practitioners show an understanding of what the pupils know and can do and what their next steps in learning are. They regularly discuss this with leaders to ensure we meet the needs of all pupils within the setting and we adapt timetables, the environment and planning to ensure we continue to be ambitious and supportive for all pupils.

Staff work with the pupils' previous EYFS setting to gather details of their learning journey and assessments so far. This includes a visit to the children in their nursery starting prior to them starting school. Then, within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- ● Meeting expected levels of development
- ● Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

Children achieving expected levels of development in all prime areas, literacy and mathematics are said to have achieved a good level of development (GLD)

### **Partnership with Parents**

We attempt to develop a good relationship with the children's parents, from the beginning of their association with the school and welcome information they give us about their child's development. Parents are invited to contribute their children's home experiences and help school build a more holistic picture of their child's development through daily dialogue either at the end of the school day, at Parents' Evening and communication through the home school diary. Early on in the school year, parents are invited to attend workshops so that they may learn about how their child is taught at school and so that they have the opportunity to work alongside their child.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the EYFS**

At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing inclusive, high-quality early years education that supports every child's unique needs and potential. We recognise the importance of identifying and addressing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at the earliest possible stage to ensure that all children can thrive and achieve positive outcomes.

### **The Importance of Early Intervention**

We firmly believe that early intervention is crucial in addressing SEND to prevent learning gaps from widening. By identifying and supporting children's needs early:

- We enable timely, tailored interventions that promote their development and well-being.
- We ensure that children have access to the resources and strategies they need to overcome barriers to learning.
- We work closely with families to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and inclusion.

Our practitioners are trained to observe and assess children's development regularly, using tools such as the Early Years Development Matters, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), and ongoing formative assessments. Any concerns are addressed promptly through consultation with parents/carers and our SEND Coordinator (SENDCo) **Mrs Dykes**.

### **Transition and Early Identification**

Transitions are critical periods for identifying and addressing SEND. To support this process:

- **Transitions Into Our Setting:** When a child starts at our setting, we collect detailed information from parents/carers, health professionals, and any previous early years providers to build a holistic understanding of the child's needs. We visit all nursery settings to see children in their current Early Years settings and meet with their key workers to gain a knowledge of the child before they join St Mark's.
- **Internal Transitions:** As children move between classes or key stages within our setting, detailed information is shared with new practitioners to ensure continuity of care and support.
- **Transitions to other Primary Schools:** We collaborate with feeder schools to share detailed information about a child's needs, strengths, and strategies used, ensuring a seamless transition to their next stage of education.

Early identification during these transitions allows us to provide appropriate interventions and support to address any concerns without delay.

### **External Agencies and Their Role**

We value the expertise of external agencies in supporting children with SEND. These agencies provide specialised knowledge and resources that complement the work of our setting. Key external agencies we collaborate with include:

- **Educational Psychologists (EPs):** To assess developmental needs and recommend strategies to support learning and behaviour.
- **Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs):** To provide tailored interventions for children with communication difficulties.

- **Health Visitors and GPs:** To address medical concerns or developmental delays that may require further investigation.
- **Occupational Therapists (OTs):** To support children with physical or sensory needs.
- **Specialist Advisory Teachers:** To provide specific advice and training on supporting children with SEND. These include Pupil and School Support, Communication and Autism Team.
- **Local Authority SEND Services:** To guide us in implementing Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and accessing additional funding or resources.

Our SENDCo, Mrs Dykes, works as the main point of contact between our setting, families, and external agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting each child.

### **Working in Partnership with Families**

We believe that parents and carers are central to the success of any intervention. We work collaboratively with families by:

- Regularly sharing observations and progress.
- Seeking their input in creating and reviewing individual plans for their child.
- Providing workshops, resources, or signposting to support services to empower families in understanding and addressing their child's needs