



St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School

'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'

ST MARY'S INFANT SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Review:

This Policy will be reviewed by the staff every 2 years

Reviewed	March 2019
Next Review	March 2021

At St Mary's Infant School we are committed to providing a high quality early years education which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a life long love of learning.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance" (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014)

The EYFS is based upon four principles

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The EYFS seeks to provide

- Quality and consistency
- A secure foundation
- Partnership working
- Equal opportunity

Christian distinctiveness

As a church school we follow Christian values. The school's mission statement is "Sharing, caring, learning and loving with God". A worship inspection is regularly carried out. A Christian distinctiveness action plan is formulated. The children's spiritual development is covered by the worship program. Children are encouraged to think about and write their own prayers. Grace is said before lunch every day; the children are encouraged to contribute to this. The children attend school assemblies two days a week where they are taught a range of Bible stories, sing Christian songs and say prayers. We have a short time of collective worship in the classroom everyday, including prayer and a chance to reflect and appreciate the Awe and Wonder of God's Wonderful World. Children are taught Christian values and respect for each other. We follow the Herts agreed syllabus for RE teaching.

A Unique Child

At St Mary's Infant School children are encouraged to be imaginative, inquisitive, confident, enthusiastic and independent. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

At St Mary's Infant School we believe that all children matter. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EY we set realistic and 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, and children of different ethnic groups. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities 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;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary;
- when necessary we seek advice and support from other professionals and work in partnership i.e. speech therapist, educational psychologist to support children with additional needs;

We plan PSE lessons, covering topical issues, Christian values and issues that arise in class.

Puppets are used to tell stories and illustrate different scenarios.

Circle Time games are planned to encourage good social skills and a positive attitude to themselves and others.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why these rules exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

"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."

At St Mary's Infant School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

In addition

- all staff are trained in Child Protection procedures and committed to the safeguarding of the children in our care. We endeavour to meet all these requirements.
- Procedure in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time- contacts will be phoned and the child kept by the office supervised until someone is able to collect them.
- Procedure in the event of a child going missing from school- parents will be contacted first and then the police.

Positive Relationships

At St Mary's Infant School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during visits arranged with nursery and parents;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- inviting all parents to attend a meeting with the class teachers outlining the timetable, curriculum and giving parents ideas to support their child's learning;
- operating an open door policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner;
- sending curriculum letters home each half-term outlining the topics that will be covered and ideas for parents to support their child's learning;
- providing a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn and Spring term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents given the opportunity to contribute to their child's Learning Journal. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- parents invited to contribute any 'Moments from Home' to their child's Learning Journal i.e. learning to swim, riding a bike. This can be done verbally or by written message to the EY staff;
- sending home the children's EY Learning Journal of observations and assessments six weeks into the first term of Year 1;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Tea Party, Sports Day, school outings, stay and play, come in to watch the children working etc;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- inviting parents to help in the Reception class;

- finding out from parents the greetings they may use in other languages, and encourage children to use them;
- encouraging parents to hear their child read each night and to comment in the reading records booklet;
- encouraging parents to become involved with their child's learning by providing Home Packs for children
- by sending home regular whole school newsletters
- timetables are discussed and handed out to parents at the parents information meeting in September.
- all policies and risk assessments are available for parents to read.

All staff involved with the EY aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EY teachers act as a 'Key Person' to all children in EY, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

We have good links with Weston Way Nursery. Regular visits are undertaken by the EY Leader and class teachers, who meet with staff to discuss new intake children. Staff also visit other feeder nurseries in the summer term.

Enabling Environments

At St Mary's Infant School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EY follows the Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EY teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. A variety of teacher led activities are carefully planned and resources are provided to encourage child initiated activities to develop the child's learning and encourage them to become independent and imaginative learners.

Continuous assessments of children's learning are made and this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EY takes the form of observation, and this involves the teachers and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual EY Learning Journals. Throughout the year the children are assessed on the Early Years Outcomes. Staff

attend local moderation sessions and also moderate work internally as a team.

At the end of Foundation Stage children are judged against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the EY, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and Characteristics of Learning. We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EY teacher.

The Learning Environment

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces." EYFS 2007

The EY classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. The classroom is an open plan double classroom which can be split, with a separate small teaching/quiet room. Two teachers work in partnership, with the addition of the EY leader as an extra teacher and as a team with the teaching assistants. Each teacher has their own class. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently and are encouraged to tidy away. The EY class has its own enclosed outdoor area which is used throughout the year. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active. Activities are planned and resources are provided for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 6 areas of learning. Where possible the activities in the indoor and outdoor environments are linked so that the children are able to further develop their play.

Learning and Development

At St Mary's Infant School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in EY just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1. It includes whole class teaching, working with small groups or individuals and ongoing observations. Features that relate to EY are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EY;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the setting that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims and success criteria for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate our planning and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within EY using the performance management system to inform this.

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." EYFS 2007

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe

and supported environment. Play underpins the delivery of the EY curriculum. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. The children are involved in both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of resources. Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods." EYFS 2007

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions." EYFS 2007

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three Prime areas of learning

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical development

And four Specific areas of learning

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive arts and design

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. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of EY.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EY teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Head teacher and subject Leaders will carry out monitoring on the EY as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

EY Leader Bev Waldwyn May 2019