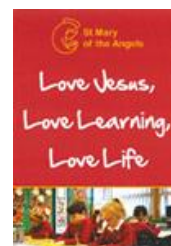


St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Person responsible: Miss K. Thwaite

Updated: July 2024

To be reviewed: July 2025

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. Children join St Mary of the Angels reception class in the year that they turn five years old. Working with parents and carers we aim to provide the highest quality care and education to give them a strong foundation for their future learning, providing the support they need to achieve their full potential.

“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 five have a major impact on their future life chances.” EYFS Framework 2021

Children build their lives on the foundation of early childhood and at St Mary of the Angels we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for children’s future learning and development as well as preparing them for life in the wider world and community.

We adhere to the EYFS Statutory Framework and the four guiding principles upon which it is based:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- 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. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. See ‘characteristics of effective teaching and learning’. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Overarching Principles

At St Mary of the Angels, we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We aim to provide a fun, engaging, broad and balanced curriculum which will enable children to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to reach their full potential.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, stimulating, exciting and challenging programme of learning for children as they begin their journey through school, taking into account and building on their interests and ideas when planning our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Provide a broad, balanced and creative curriculum through explicit direct teaching and opportunities for consolidating application through challenging continuous provision, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning and development, that will provide a firm foundation for learning and development in Key Stage One and beyond whilst developing children's independence and self-confidence.
- Take account of, value and build on the skills of each child, assessing their individual needs through skilled and careful observation and helping them to progress to their full potential.
- Develop excellent partnerships and relationships with parents and carers in order to ensure that children are fully supported.
- Respect and value cultural and physical diversity and provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which supports the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs, ensuring that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.

A Unique Child

At St Mary of the Angels, we recognise that every child is a competent learner with the potential to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured, and that they develop at varying rates and in individual ways. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others and at St Mary of the Angels we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to develop self-confidence and self-esteem whilst also nurturing a positive attitude towards learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at St Mary of the Angels are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities, and all families are valued within our school.

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives in order to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. This is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are discussed with parents and carers and advice and appropriate steps are taken in accordance with Mrs I Finch, the school's SENCO.

Planning

Children in our care are provided with a range of opportunities to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs and requirements of all abilities and groups, taking account of interests, life experiences, achievements and ideas.

At St Mary of the Angels, we meet the needs of our children through:

- Planning and delivering learning opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge, experiences and interests whilst developing their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The delivery of a progressive EYFS curriculum that provides the building blocks for future success through the use of a systematic, synthetic phonics programme (Twinkl Phonics), Literacy company activities to promote a love of reading, and a maths curriculum that builds on prior knowledge and paves the way for future learning. (White Rose).
- Planning provides opportunities for a balance of child-initiated and adult led activities. Play is an integral part of planned activities and planning is also informed by observation.
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs and requirements of all children in the setting.
- Employing a variety of teaching strategies based on the learning needs of the children.
- Providing a range of exciting and stimulating opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment where the contributions of all children are valued.
- Using a range of resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Recording and monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide additional support when necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met to enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At St Mary of the Angels we recognise the importance of secure relationships in allowing children to become strong, confident and independent learners. We therefore aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families. Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make through:

- Meeting and talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our new parents meeting in June and at the start of the year, in September, during a 'meet the teacher' meeting.
- Ensuring all parents know who their child's teacher and teaching assistant are.
- Offering each child an induction afternoon prior to starting school and visiting feeder nurseries to support the transition from nursery to reception and providing an afternoon in year one and information booklets to support reception to year one transition.
- Providing an information pack about St Mary of the Angels and outlining the school's expectations in our home-school agreement.
- Providing coffee afternoons and stay and play sessions where parents and carers can spend time with their child in the setting as well as speak to members of staff and access their child's learning journey.
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to their child's teacher if they have any concerns. Conversely, if EYFS staff have concerns about a child or their progress they will approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through 'Reading records' and 'Home school diaries', contributions from which will be added to learning journeys to provide further anecdotal evidence. Parents and carers are also asked to complete an 'All about me' sheet about their child prior to them starting school.
- Inviting parents and carers to attend workshops relating to how to support their child in various areas of the curriculum such as reading and mathematics.
- Offering two parent/teacher meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed and they are able to look through their child's books and learning journey.
- Sending home a written report on their child's progress, attainment and characteristics of effective learning at the end of their time in Reception and offering the opportunity to discuss this with the teacher if they wish. Parents will also receive a copy of their child's completed learning journey.

- Asking parents and carers to sign permission forms for educational visits, food tasting and photographs, etc.
- Providing photographs in the school newsletter and on the school's Twitter page which parents are able to access.
- Invitations to events during the year such as coffee mornings, Nativity play, prayer trails, Lent and Christmas fairs, music festival, sports day, etc.
- Providing the opportunity to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with their child's learning through activities such as leading a story time, helping with forest school sessions and assisting with educational visits, etc.

Enabling Environments

At St Mary of the Angels we recognise that the learning environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending children's development, and we aim to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment to enable children to feel confident, secure and challenged. Children have access to continuous provision within the bright and engaging indoor and outdoor learning environments that are set up to incorporate the seven areas of learning as well as to build on the interests of the children themselves. Play based learning is vital as this is the primary way in which children learn and they are provided with a balance of opportunities to direct their own learning as well as to participate in adult led activities. Staff will enhance play and extend opportunities as they arise in order to develop individual learning.

The EYFS learning environments contain a range of accessible and clearly labelled materials and equipment that children are able to access independently in order to develop their ideas and activities, fostering a positive attitude towards learning whilst also reflecting their interests and abilities, and resources and spaces are checked regularly in order to ensure that they are safe to use. The outdoor area has a canopy, allowing activities to take place in a variety of weather conditions, and provides space and opportunities to be physically active and to explore and use the senses.

Learning and Development

Planning, Observation and Assessment

Planning

Our Foundation Stage curriculum at St Mary of the Angels reflects the seven areas of interconnected learning and development and they are divided into

'prime' and 'specific' areas. The prime areas are particularly crucial in igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning as well as enabling them to form relationships with others and to thrive, developing self-confidence and self-esteem.

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The learning experiences of the children enable them to develop skills and competency across a number of learning areas and a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities are required in order for the majority of children to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the EYFS.

Long term and medium-term planning is based around half termly themes and these are used to inform weekly planning. However, planning may be adjusted to take into account the ideas, achievements and interests of the children and to build on these further. The Twinkl scheme is used to deliver phonics and White Rose to deliver mathematics, along with The Way, The Truth and The Life RE programme, A Journey in Love PSHE, Pathways to Write, Complete PE, and Developing Experts for Science in line with the rest of the school.

Observations

Children's development levels are assessed through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents. Observations take place throughout the day and identify children's achievements, interests and next steps for learning. They are recorded in individual learning journeys and are also used to inform future planning. When a child's progress gives cause for concern staff will discuss this with parents, consulting the SENCO to access further support if required. Children's development levels are assessed through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process and staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement,

interests and learning styles and use these to inform future planning. Observations are also shared by parents/carers in the children's home/school diaries.

The abilities of each child entering St Mary of the Angels is assessed by staff during the baseline period at the beginning of the autumn term through a balance of observations and adult led activities. These assessments enable staff to adjust the teaching programme for individual and groups of children accordingly, as well as providing information for planning next steps in learning.

Within the first six weeks that a child begins reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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

- Meeting expected levels of development (Expected)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (Emerging)

The EYFSP reflects ongoing observations and contains information shared by parents/carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/carers in their child's end of year report.

The EYFSP is moderated internally and in partnership with local schools during evidence trialling meetings to ensure consistent judgements. EYFSP data is submitted to the local authority.

Each child has their own online learning journey (Tapestry), containing formal and informal observations, photographs, video clips, children's reflections and ideas and parental contributions. Assessments are completed regularly by all members of staff and the collection of data in the EYFSP is a statutory requirement. Learning Journeys and other examples of children's work provide a range of evidence in the collection of EYFSP data.

Parents receive an annual report in July containing their child's EYFSP data and comments on progress, strengths and development according to each area of learning. They are given the opportunity to discuss the report if they wish.

Teaching and Learning Styles

St Mary of the Angels curriculum policy on teaching and learning define the features of effective teaching and learning throughout our school and these features are equally as applicable to the EYFS as they are to Key Stages One and Two. The features of good practise relating to the EYFS are:

- Excellent partnerships between EYFS staff and parents and carers that enable children to feel secure whilst developing a sense of well –being and achievement.
- The knowledge and understanding the staff have of children’s needs and how they develop and learn, and how this should be incorporated within their teaching.
- The variety of approaches used to provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and develop, challenge and extend play, talk and communication.
- The engaging and well-planned curriculum that helps children to work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals at the end of the EYFS.
- The provision for children to participate in activities that take account of and extend their interests whilst building their intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.
- The encouragement provided for children to talk about and share their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
- The provision of appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space and equipment in supporting and developing children’s learning.
- The identification of children’s progress, achievements and next steps through observations.
- The identification of CPD for staff working within the EYFS.
- The good relationship between St Mary of the Angels, Little Angels and staff that enables a smooth transition between FS1 and FS2.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS curriculum and learning environments at St Mary of the Angels are planned to incorporate the three characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and exploring

Children investigate, experience things and ‘have a go’.

Active Learning

Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(From the statutory framework for the EYFS 2021)

Transition

Transition at St Mary of the Angels is carefully planned to ensure that it is as smooth as possible for each child, allowing them to settle into their new class happily and quickly.

EYFS 2 (Reception) to Year One

- Children become familiar with the year one class and teacher during the year through play times throughout the day.
- EYFS and Year one staff hold a transition meeting towards the end of the summer term where EYFSP assessment and information is shared and the needs of individual children are discussed.
- A 'meet the teacher' meeting is provided for parents in September.
- Children participate in a transition afternoon where they spend time with their new teacher and familiarise themselves with their new learning environment.
- A transition booklet is provided to give children and parents information about year one and contains photographs of staff, the learning environment and a map to show them how to get to their new classroom.

Nursery (EYFS 1) to Reception (EYFS 2)

- Parents and carers of children beginning EYFS 2 in September are invited to a new parents meeting in the summer term. This comprises a talk given by the Head Teacher, a tour of the school, an opportunity to visit the EYFS class to meet staff and to order items of uniform. A 'meet the teacher' meeting is also provided in September.
- Each child is offered an induction afternoon, ensuring that the EYFS environment and staff are already a familiar place to them before they join their new class in September.
- Children are provided with a welcome booklet at the end of their induction afternoon containing information, photos of the class teacher, teaching assistant and other members of school staff, and photographs of the setting.
- Transition meetings and visits to feeder settings take place in June/July. Children from Little Angels are invited to participate in activities with St Mary of the Angels during the year, such as attending Nativities.
- September Intake: During the first week of the autumn term children will attend school part time, for a morning or afternoon session. After this period all children then attend school full time.

Safeguarding and 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.” Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

At St Mary of the Angels we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- To promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating, where children can grow in confidence whilst engaging in enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences which meet their needs.
- To promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- To manage behaviour effectively in an appropriate manner for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access are suitable to do so.
- To ensure that the premises, setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose.
- To maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Health and Safety

At St Mary of the Angels it is vital that all children are ‘safe’, and there are clear procedures for keeping children safe during outings and aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. Children are educated on the boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. They are encouraged to take risks, and staff highlight the importance of children keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Detailed information and procedures to ensure the safety of the children are available in risk assessments, staff handbook, safeguarding and child protection policies

Good Health

- Children are provided with a healthy free school meal each day; fruit is provided at play times and free milk is provided in the afternoon until children turn 5.
- Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day.
- A whole school medicines policy ensures that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- A first aid bag is accessible at all times and injuries and accidents are recorded. EYFS teacher is paediatric first aid trained.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure that many children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on the age of the child and their stage of development they may need some support, e.g. dressing and changing underwear following an accident.

At St Mary of the Angels we believe that every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents and carers to provide the appropriate support to an individual child. See intimate care policy.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. St Mary of the Angels has a named governor, Mrs Joanne Lyness, with the responsibility for the EYFS. The Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team, Foundation Stage Leader and Subject Leaders will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.