

St Marie's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Policy



'The Love of Christ, nurture, guide and inspire us.'

Approving Body	Full Governors Committee Head/Leadership team	Review Term: 1yr/2yr/3yr Autumn Spring Summer
Signature:	Chair of the relevant body	December 23
Review Date:	March 24	Version: (applicable if changed within the review period, if no changes this would remain as version 1)

MISSION STATEMENT



'The Love of Christ, nurture, guide and inspire us.'

To do this we will:

- Be a Christian community that lives the Gospel values; 'Love of Christ' (Christ centred)
- Provide opportunities for all to grow and achieve by igniting a desire for learning; 'Guide and inspire' (Education)
- Be a haven of peace and love that enables all to thrive; 'Nurture' (Community)

Objectives: Christ Centred

- Provide high quality collective worship and enriching liturgical celebrations
- Enable our children to acquire an excellent religious education and develop their relationship with God
- Share faith, love and hope in the likeness of Mary, Mother of God
- Provide a safe harbour where all can succeed

Objectives: Education

- Have high expectations of ourselves and others in all that we do
- Value our pupils and staff, appreciating their uniqueness and individual talents, enabling them to achieve well
- Provide a curriculum that opens the world, in all its awe and wonder, to our pupils

Objectives: Community

- Create a peaceful, happy school where all feel welcomed and valued
- Nurture and grow our pupils and community in the Gospel values
- Celebrate each person as a beautiful work of art, created on God's image

St Marie's Key Objectives and Priorities 2023/2024

Key Objectives and Priorities	Success Criteria
<p><i>Christ at the Centre</i></p> <p>1. Priority: Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Ensure that staff and pupils are clear on whole school expectations, routines and behaviours ✚ Pedagogy, policies and procedures are shared and implemented with fidelity ✚ Relationships across the school community become strong ✚ Staff seek every opportunity to promote learning within and beyond the school day ✚ Pupils and staff have the tools needed to ensure resilience in their learning and wider lives
<p>2. Priority: Aspiration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ School has unapologetically high aspiration for our children through a fully understood, common pedagogy ✚ All children can access a low floor-high ceiling, fully resourced, holistic curriculum that meets our high aspirations which staff are equipped to deliver ✚ Percentage of children at greater depth standards is rapidly closing the gap with national
<p>3. Priority: Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The staff structure, skills and knowledge meet the needs of the school ✚ 'The curriculum' is fully resourced and meets the needs of our children with effective schemes of work, curriculum knowledge and skills progression maps ✚ All staff receive high quality assured CPD that improves learning for all pupils
<p>4. Priority: Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Parents are well equipped to support children learning in school and at home ✚ Families are well supported to meet our aspirations for our children, i.e. through uniform and attendance ✚ Our community is well involved in school life, e.g. Parent Council, FAF group etc
<p>5. Priority: Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The school building and grounds are a safe place to work and play ✚ The buildings and classrooms promote our high aspirations

At St Marie's we believe children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. With children learning and developing at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. We provide high-quality early learning through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning. To enable our children to become 'school ready' we ensure quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind. This is done through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.

Vision:

We aim to inspire and nurture every child to become independent, confident lifelong learners within a safe and happy environment.

Overview

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St. Marie's the children join us once they have turned three in our Nursery, and at the beginning of the school year in which they are five in Reception.

We have two-part time Nursery classes and two Reception classes in our Early Years Foundation Stage. We also offer 30 hours Nursery places for up to 8 children. Our team includes 3 teachers and 2 learning support assistants.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

A Unique Child

At St. Marie's, we recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We aim to develop a positive attitude to learning by providing challenging and stimulating activities and experiences.

All children at St. Marie's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. Every child matters and all of the children and families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to succeed and achieve their best. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children.

Children's progress is monitored regularly and action is taken to support this progress as necessary. It is important to us that all of the children at St. Marie's are safe. We provide a stimulating environment where children are allowed to take risks but are taught to recognise and avoid hazards.

We take the necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and the full Safeguarding Policy is available in school for parents to read.

Positive Relationships

At St. Marie's we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

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

We do this through:

- Informal meetings with parents before their child starts school.
- Giving children and their families opportunities to visit their new classroom and meet the teachers prior to starting school.
- Offering parents, the opportunities to discuss their child's progress.
- Arranging activities throughout the year to involve parents (weekly story time, cookery sessions, gardening sessions, parent workshops, stay and play sessions).

In our Nursery children are assigned a key person – either the Nursery teacher or the Learning Support Assistants. In our Reception class the teacher acts as key person, supported by the Learning Support Assistant.

All of the EYFS team members are valued and a culture of mutual support is fostered through discussions and respect for individual contributions.

Enabling Environments

At St. Marie's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. The staff observe the children and assess their interests, development and learning, before planning the next steps for the children – offering challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

We provide a stimulating and safe environment both indoors and outdoors. Children are encouraged to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Learning and Development

At St. Marie's we recognise that all children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

Our curriculum is coherently planned to help children to work towards the Early Learning Goals and to prepare their readiness for Year One and beyond.

Children explore and develop their learning experiences through play. We aim to provide structured play experiences through which children can:

- **Play and explore** (finding out about the world, playing with what they know, be willing to have a go).
- Be **active learners** (be motivated, persistent and enjoy their achievements).
- Be **creative and critical thinkers** (have their own ideas, make predictions and plan and review their ideas).

These characteristics of effective learning underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

We recognise the important role all the adults within our setting play. We provide all staff with ongoing professional development to support them with this role. Our aim is that all staff ensure that every opportunity is a learning opportunity; making every interaction with children count.

In planning and guiding what children learn, staff develop and adjust their practice guided by the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creative and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Staff are also trained to make the best use of research into cognitive science, in relation to how children learn and to connect this research to its practical implications for teaching and learning.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

The Prime areas:

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

These areas are closely linked and are central to all other areas of learning and development.

The Specific areas:

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

In each area of learning and development there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Planning includes opportunities for child led, adult directed and adult led activities.

The Read Write Inc. scheme and the Talk for Writing scheme are introduced in Nursery and Reception to support reading and writing and build the foundations for Key Stage One. We also use 'Talk through stories' as our core reading texts, which is designed to extend and deepen children's vocabulary.

Children have access to the online RWI books and we send home a book that is matched to the child's phonic ability. Children also take home a library book of their choice each week.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Assessment

During the children's first term in the Foundation Stage, the staff assess the children through formal and informal assessments and a baseline assessment is carried out during a child's first six weeks in school. Photographs, observations and links to the Early Years framework are collected for each child over the year using the Evidence for Learning and the 2Simple electronic assessment tools. These observations help to build up a picture of each child's learning and form an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child. 'Development Matters' is used to assess children's progress throughout the Early Years.

EYFS Profile

The EYFS profile is a statutory assessment of children's development at the end of the academic year in which children turn 5. Each child's learning and development is assessed against 17 early learning goals (ELGs) across all 7 areas of learning in the EYFS. For each ELG, teachers must assess whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFs, or if they are not yet reaching this level and should be assessed as 'emerging'. The profile is intended to provide a reliable and accurate summative assessment of each child's development at the end of the EYFs in order to support children's successful transition to year 1.

Teachers use their professional judgement of the children to make EYFS Profile assessments, using their knowledge and understanding of what a child knows, understands and can do.

Teachers use day-to day informal checking of what children have learnt to inform teaching and learning. This also helps teachers to identify gaps in learning and put support in place to prevent children from falling behind.

We are well aware that all children need the support of parents and teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child by keeping them informed about the way in which the children are being taught and how well each child is progressing.

Roles within the Early Years Foundation Stage

The role of the Early Years Lead is to:

- Provide a strategic lead and direction for the EYFS.
- Monitor and evaluate the EYFS and report to the head teacher and the governing body.
- Monitor and review pupil progress across the EYFS.
- Support colleagues with planning and teaching, ensuring an efficient and cohesive team.
- Keep up to date with recent developments and informing other team members of these developments.
- Purchasing and organisation of resources and the learning spaces.
- Lead regular EYFS team meetings.
- Act as a point of contact for parents and carers- providing close home school links.

The role of the class teachers with support from L.S.A's is to:

- Monitor and review progress of the pupils in their class.
- Be responsible for their methods of teaching and learning.
- Plan and evaluate the EYFS curriculum.
- Be responsible for their teaching space, including displays and resources.
- Facilitate communication with parents.

Monitoring and Review

The Early Years Lead prepares a detailed report, reviewing the EYFS, for the governing body and head teacher who are responsible for the overall monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Governors review the EYFS in accordance with the policy review timetable and meet with the Early Years Lead to discuss the findings of the review.

30 Hours Funded Childcare

We offer up the additional 15 hours' free early education a week for all eligible nursery children. Eligibility criteria for the new entitlement has been set out by HMRC and includes the following:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), earn more than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week. That means that over the next three months, you expect to earn at least £1,976- the National Living Wage if you are 23 or over.
- Both parents are employed or one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on paternal, maternity or paternity leave, adoptive leave or receiving statutory sick pay, or
- One parent is employed and the other parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring, or one parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits.
- You and your partner must both live in England and neither parent must have an income of more than £100,000 per year.

Applying for 30 hours' free childcare

You can apply for 30 hours free childcare in a single online childcare service application at www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk

We will offer:

Children will only be able to access the 30 hours based on a school term time schedule. Children who access a place will be able to have either a packed lunch or pay for a hot school dinner. They will be supervised to eat dinner in the Nursery and will receive a bespoke curriculum in the afternoon ensuring that their individual needs are met.