



'Love one another as Jesus loved us' (John 13 v 34-35)

EYFS at St Mary's CE Primary School

Early Years Curriculum Rationale

At St Mary's we want our youngest children to love school and their educational experiences. We want them to be excited to learn, explore and discover! We want our children to aim high, be ambitious and encourage them to grow up wanting to be whatever they choose to be. Our vision at St Mary's CE Primary School is to encourage and nurture the growth of every individual and their uniqueness, so that all flourish and become all that they can be and all that God made them to be. The principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage guide are to develop the unique child, providing care and support in a safe environment so that every child's full potential is reached. Positive relationships ensure that children feel secure, whilst a rich and varied learning environment allows children to discover the world around them and provides opportunities for challenge whilst remaining safe.

Children are provided with opportunities to develop independence and self-confidence in an environment where they feel valued, respected and cared for. Clear rules help each child feel safe, whilst high but realistic expectations encourage each child to strive to be all they can be. Well-planned experiences in all areas of learning and development enable learners to develop in different ways, with purposeful play underpinning the delivery of the Early Years education.

A high-quality Early Years education lays the foundations for children, with a focus on developing the whole child and ensuring 'school readiness'. The EYFS provides children with a broad range of learning opportunities with the aim to embed firm foundations in the knowledge and skills needed for future progress. We aim to develop children's cultural capital so that they are able to engage with society and understand the importance of being a good UK and global citizen. A major priority of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn to read fluently at an age-appropriate level.

Curriculum Intent

The Early Years curriculum is ambitious and allows our children to become independent and resilient – and develop an excitement and curiosity for learning. We want to equip our pupils with all the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and also prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in the next stage of their education and beyond. For example, our reception children on beginning school are linked with a Year 6 buddy. This relationship allows pupils to have a role model within school to guide and support them through their first year. Pupils and their families are welcomed into school with a celebratory worship in the first half term which is led by the year 6 buddies and each pupil receives a prayer book from the clergy team. We want our children to learn from other cultures, respect diversity, co-operate with one another and appreciate what they have. We achieve this by providing a strong SMSC curriculum, with British Values and our core values placed at the heart of everything we do.

For example, in the autumn term the whole-school celebrate 'Remembrance' as a theme and as part of this, pupils remember and honour those who sacrificed themselves to secure and protect our freedom.

The children explored why remembrance is part of modern British life, culture and heritage. They impeccably observed a two-minute silence and explored how the poppy is a symbol of remembrance.

In the Early Years curriculum we enrich their time in our school with memorable, unforgettable experiences and provide opportunities to engage and intrigue our pupils and bring learning to life. For example, in the revised curriculum we have incorporated into the role play areas real objects. Real flowers in the flower shop, builders' yard using real tools and raw materials. We have enhanced learning with visits from people in their roles eg nurse , paramedic, clergy , site manager. In addition, visits and visitors have been incorporated into plans (Church visits, farm visits, minibeasts in school). Our pupils are inspired by these opportunities and provide pupils with real life experiences. We firmly believe that it is not just about what happens in the classroom, it is about the opportunities we offer to really inspire our children.

Curriculum Implementation

Our EYFS follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework. We use the latest Development Matters to guide us alongside our Curriculum Planning and enrichment opportunities. The EYFS framework is made up of four overriding principles which our early years education is based on: A unique child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development.

The EYFS curriculum has been carefully structured to ensure there is a clear progression of knowledge and vocabulary, embedding key aspects of learning as they are revisited. The medium-term plans ensure that the Development Matters guidance clearly supports the progression and sequence of learning within any given topic. The assessment points reflect the key learning required in each half term.

As a school we seek to develop a love of books and engage our children with reading and the pleasure books bring. In planning and guiding the children's activities, staff plan for the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- 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
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We have developed year-group-specific long-term curriculum maps, which identify when the different areas and topics will be taught across the academic year. Staff make meaningful links across the different aspects where appropriate. They link prior knowledge to new learning to deepen children's understanding. For example, in Reception when the children explore 'melting' as part of the science aspect of understanding the world –they also read and discuss non-fiction texts and fiction texts to engage pupils – The Runaway Iceberg. They explore the materials in their science learning and listen to the music of William Blake from The Snowman. Staff teach discrete Mathematics, Literacy and RE with the knowledge and skills from these applied throughout their topic work, which is led by Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design. The three prime areas are woven throughout the day with thought and purpose. We use the Little Wandle programme to teach daily phonic sessions and reading for fluency. Children take part in Forest School-style activities to support teamwork, language, problem solving and a love of the environment. We believe that by creating our curriculum this way, we improve the potential for our children to retain what they have been taught and to grow as confident, resilient and engaged learners.

Curriculum Impact

We use both formative and summative assessment information in each lesson. The Reception staff use this information to inform their short-term planning and keep -up and catch-up interventions. This helps us provide the best possible support for all of our pupils. The assessment points for each half term are carefully mapped out. This means that knowledge and skills are progressive and then feed into the National Curriculum for Year One.

Assessment information is collected three times a year and analysed as part of our monitoring cycle. (Phonics assessments half-termly) This process provides an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education across the early years. A comprehensive monitoring cycle is developed at the beginning of each academic year. This identifies when monitoring is undertaken. Monitoring in early years includes: book scrutinies, lesson observations and/or learning walks, pupil/parent voice. All of this information is gathered and reviewed. It is used to inform further curriculum developments and provision is adapted accordingly.