



St Mary's RC Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Policy updated – June 2026

To be reviewed – June 2027

MISSION STATEMENT

"With Jesus in our hearts, we welcome, we learn, we laugh, we flourish."

Rationale and Aims

This policy outlines the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Mary's R C Primary School. Throughout this policy, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to the Reception children in Class 1 (a mixed Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class) at St Mary's RC Primary School.

At St Mary's R C Primary School, we aim to provide every child with a safe and stimulating environment in which they can learn and develop. Each and every child's welfare is considered individually and learning experiences are intended to be challenging and stimulating across the curriculum. We value the individual child and work alongside parents, carers and the wider community in order to meet their needs and to help every child to reach their full potential. We share our learning across social media platforms so that we can include parents, carers and the wider community in our exciting learning journey.

Our Philosophy

At St Mary's R C Primary School, our Early Years Foundation Stage focuses on meeting the unique needs of every child. We aim to create a vibrant, engaging, and challenging learning environment that sparks curiosity and wonder. Fun and laughter are central to our approach, helping to ensure that learning experiences are both meaningful and memorable. Play is at the heart of our curriculum, bridging the gap between children's imagination and the real world. To support this, we offer open-ended resources and thoughtfully designed spaces that encourage children to take the lead in their own learning, allowing the environment itself to act as an inspiring "third teacher."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

We adhere to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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 and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. We plan the curriculum around the seven areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is designed for children to learn from a mix of focused adult-led tasks, guided activities and child-initiated learning within provision that is weaved throughout the day. Sequenced curriculum objectives are aligned to the Early Learning Goals and we repeat key themes and stories throughout the EYFS to ensure children can build on their knowledge and have opportunities to develop and apply skills from the prime areas of learning and development. The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin the curriculum. As children move through Reception, the curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced and progressive to prepare them for Year 1. Due to the mixed age nature of Class 1 at St Mary's, the transition into KS1 is seamless.

The Prime Areas:

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

The Specific Areas:

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

No area of learning stands alone; each is equally important and connected to the others. Every child is unique, and we aim to meet their individual needs through a broad and balanced range of experiences. We take every opportunity, in the moment, to guide, encourage, model, and support learning. By doing this thoughtfully, meaningful teaching and high-quality learning naturally happens.

Oracy, Phonics and Early Reading and Writing

At St Mary's RC Primary School, high-quality interactions and opportunities to develop the children's speaking and listening skills are embedded within our Early Years Curriculum. From modelling conversations, joining in with songs and rhymes and through exploring language in our carefully chosen core texts, the foundations of all future learning are formed. All staff are trained in the ShREC approach and understand how crucial high-quality interactions are. From EYFS to Year 6, we aim to build a culture and love of reading that permeates every classroom alongside teaching the essential skills of reading. In the EYFS, quality texts stimulate all forms of literacy and all children leave reception with a strong cultural knowledge of well-known fairy tales, nursery rhymes and stories. The journey of a reader in the EYFS is well mapped out. By developing a phonetical awareness, engaging in conversations about books and characters and through systematic daily phonics instruction, children leave the EYFS being able to successfully access the next stage of their learning in Year 1 and beyond. As well as encouraging reading, we also recognise the importance of transcription and

composition as the route to foundational communication and language development. As a school, we follow the systematic synthetic phonics programme, Monster Phonics, which also supports handwriting progression.

Inclusion

In keeping with our intent of seeing every child as a unique individual with the capacity to thrive and be successful, the EYFS curriculum provides challenge for all children. This is through a range of differentiated approaches but centred on the need for Quality First Teaching. Additional in-class support, targeted questioning and interventions are also used. At St Mary's RC Primary School, no child is excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability. With support from the school SENCO, teachers in EYFS plan for children with special educational needs, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Staff are highly qualified and undertake regular CPD to ensure that every child's needs can be met. If a child with identified SEND enters the Early Years, a meeting will be held and a plan devised to support the child and parents in their transition into school.

Staff

All staff involved in the education of our children will develop good, healthy relationships and provide a secure environment in which children feel able to make mistakes, as well as build confidence and celebrate their successes. We have a trained ELSA who supports the children at St Mary's with emotional needs. The Early Years team works with the school nurse, Speech and Language therapists, Specialist Teachers, SEND support staff, health workers and other family support practitioners to provide a multi-agency network which supports the needs of individual children as and when this is necessary. At times, the Foundation Stage welcomes visiting student teaching assistants and school students who work alongside our staff. We also have volunteers who come in to support children's reading. Other professionals may work within the setting throughout the year. All visitors and helpers hold an appropriate DBS certificate, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Outdoor Learning Area

Our Foundation Stage benefits from a thoughtfully designed outdoor learning space, which children can access every day. With all-weather clothing, children can explore freely without any barriers to learning. The outdoor area is a natural extension of the classroom, offering a wide variety of resources to support curiosity, creativity, and skill development. EYFS staff plan engaging activities, while also allowing children the freedom to make their own choices, fostering independence and a love of learning in the fresh air.

Snack

We see snack time as a social event, a time where the children enjoy a drink of milk and a piece of fruit together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation with their peers as they sit together. It also develops independence as the children are encouraged to serve themselves.

Assessment, Reporting & Recording

Assessment is an ongoing part of the Foundation Stage, primarily through formative methods and detailed observations of each child. These observations help inform judgements against the termly Checkpoints across all seven areas of learning. The checkpoints are progressive, building towards the Early Learning Goals. Regular Pupil Progress Meetings are held with all teachers to celebrate achievements, track progress, and identify areas where additional support may be needed. The children's individual learning journeys are recorded through photographs and observations which are collated into Sways and shared with parents and carers.

In EYFS, a Reception year tracker is used as a key assessment tool, updated and analysed each term. During their first half-term, children also complete the mandatory Reception Baseline Assessment, carried out by class teachers. Together with school's own baseline assessments, this information helps identify next steps and informs future planning.

Reporting

At St Mary's RC Primary School, we share a mid-year progress report with parents, followed by a report outlining children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year. This comes in the form of a detailed end-of-year report written by the class teacher, providing a full picture of each child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected standards and their readiness for Year 1.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are recognised as children's first and most enduring educators. An induction meeting allows parents to meet EYFS staff and share information about their child. Transition Days provide opportunities for children to become familiar with classrooms and outdoor areas. Our open-door policy ensures that an adult from each class is available at the start and end of each day for brief discussions. Parents are also encouraged to attend celebration assemblies and church services to celebrate successes. Communication is maintained through weekly newsletters, topic sways and workshops, including phonics and Incredible Years parenting sessions. Parents' Evenings are held twice a year and mid-year and end-of-year reports provide a detailed summary of each child's progress. Volunteer readers visit to share stories and support children's love of reading.

EYFS Profile

In the final term of the Reception year, an EYFS Profile is completed for each child. This provides a reliable, valid, and accurate assessment of a child's development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The profile assesses each child's outcomes against the 17 Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors. Further details can be found in the *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2023*. It also indicates whether a child has achieved a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed by the class teacher using professional knowledge and judgement to make a "best fit" decision. Each area of the EYFS curriculum is graded as:

- **1 = Emerging ELG** (not yet meeting expected levels)
- **2 = Expected ELG** (meeting expected levels of development)

A copy of the EYFS Profile report is shared with all staff to facilitate dialogue, supporting the planning of learning for the next academic year. As the Reception children remain in Class 1 with the same staff, the transition into Year 1 is seamless and the next steps for each child can be identified and actioned swiftly.

The profile data is statutory and submitted to the Local Authority, where it is used to benchmark performance and identify areas for school improvement.

Safeguarding in the EYFS

Please read the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for comprehensive information regarding the safeguarding and protection of all children in our care.

Written by Sophie Nowell 15/6/26

This EYFS Policy has been updated in 2026 to reflect current best practice and new national guidance, including The Strong Foundations in the Early Years and The Best Start in Life: A Research Review for Early Years. These documents emphasise the importance of early learning, emotional wellbeing, and the role of strong adult-child relationships in supporting children's holistic development. Where relevant, sections of this policy draw directly on principles and recommendations from these publications.

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