

Early Years policy



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1. Vision and Values

VISION

For every child to flourish and achieve great things.

Dat Deus Incrementum – with God we grow

VALUES

Community

Pride

Joy

Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children within the Reception Class.

The Reception year must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The Reception year is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life and builds the foundations for their future learning.

2. EYFS principles (Development Matters)

Key principles for the EYFS Curriculum in Development Matters that the school follows.

1. The best for every child
2. High quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

More information about these principles can be found:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

3. Aims and Principles

- Reception practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.

- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners must respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- Involve parents and carers.

4. Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers children in the Reception Class.

The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child- initiated activities.

The long term plan is the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available while children are in the early years.

Medium term planning takes the form of a theme based upon the children's interests. It is evaluated weekly to respond to other emerging interests that the children may have.

Short term plans select activities and learning objectives from medium term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly.

Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them to catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support.

When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow. [Page 6 of Development Matters]

By the end of the Reception year, the maths and English lessons will be in place in preparation for children entering Year 1.

5. Classroom Organisation and Resources

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

The Reception class provides the following areas:

- Small world tray for retelling stories
- Role play area
- Large and small construction
- Sand and water
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books

- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Interactive whiteboard
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative equipment
- Maths games and equipment

Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including a role-play shed, giant sand pit, mud kitchen, bouldering wall, outdoor chalkboard, planting equipment and areas, water trays, outside toys.

The Reception class also has a set of boots and waterproof clothing in order to make full use of the outside classroom, school field, walks to the woods.

6. Use of Whole School Resources

- The Reception class use the hall for dance, drama, physical education and assemblies.
- Use of outside field, playground and adventure playground
- a laptop trolley for use in classrooms.
- Large range of musical instruments.
- Library.
- School guinea pigs in their classroom hutch.

7. Induction

When places at St Mary's have been confirmed, the school sends out an information letter to parents to welcome and introduce key members of staff. The class teachers also start to call nurseries to get some information about the children's interests and areas of development.

In June, the school runs an open evening for new families starting the school. At this event, you can get information on uniform, dinners, nursing team and how the school runs day-to-day. Parents will also be able to sign up for home visits so the class teachers can come and meet children in their home setting before starting school. Parents/carers are given a school prospectus which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.

After the open evening, we will start home visits to new starters and we will also have stay and plays so the children have time in school before September.

As children start in September, we implement a gradual start to a full day at school. This has worked successfully at St Mary's and the children respond well to it. If you require your child to be in full time, this is your right to have this option. Reception children are introduced to the life of the wider school gently as they are ready.

8. Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in June, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.

- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.
- Sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and observations in 'Learning Journeys' which are sent home termly, and to use home observations and 'Wow vouchers' to record any special moments or achievements at home.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits.
- In the Autumn term, there will be an evening meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.

9. Language and Literacy Supporting the Reception Child

Children begin learning phonics early in the first Autumn term. The children begin with learning their initial sounds and books go home later in the Autumn term. The first books that children bring home to share with parents/carers will be picture books and then books with simple repetitive text. The children use read, write inc (programme) to support their sounds along with Fred Talk (Fred the frog helps them to sound out the words). Information about phonics can be found on the school website and our English Lead will inform parents during the information evening.

Each child may also take home a range of reading games or activities that involve matching sounds and pictures; making, reading and writing simple words that can be practised at home.

In the Autumn term, we also assess and work with children who need any speech and language support. We implement speech and language interventions to support pupils that need support and we consult with Speech and Language therapists and school nursing team when needed.

10. Assessment and Recording

This is in line with the school Assessment Policy.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

This is in line with the school self-evaluation policy and associated documents.

12. Roles and Responsibilities beyond the Class Teacher

Teaching Assistant

A TA is assigned to work with the Reception class for some morning sessions each day. It is the TA's role to assist and support the Reception teacher as fully as possible. The TA will work with individuals and groups of children under the direction of the Reception teacher. The TA will be proactive in encouraging development in all areas of learning as well as aiding assessment, administration and enhancing the work space. Input and feedback to the Reception teacher is seen as a vital element in the education of the children.

Head Teacher

The Headteachers role is to support and challenge the class teachers in order to secure the highest quality education to the children.