



St Mary & St Thomas Church of England Primary School



EYFS Policy

Author: Headteacher

Owner: CEO/Directors

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We are a rights respecting school. All our policies and procedures are written and reviewed to ensure that children's rights, as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are respected and promoted and this policy ensures:

Article 29 Goals of education: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

For more information on the convention and the rights of each child visit: <http://www.unicef.org.uk/>

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five.

At St. Mary and St. Thomas CE Primary School, children are offered 15hr or 30hr sessions in the Nursery, according to eligibility, beginning the term after their third birthday.

The Nursery provides 52 part time/26 full time places, 26 sessions in the morning and 26 in the afternoon with a minimum adult ratio of 1:13.

Children transfer from Nursery to Reception in the Autumn Term following their fourth birthday. The Reception class at St. Mary and St. Thomas CE Primary School caters for 30 children with a minimum adult ratio of 1:13.

The Nursery and Reception classes both follow the Revised 2021 Statutory Framework for the EYFS, working towards the Early Learning Goals, which young children should achieve by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 5.

Statement of school aims for Early Years Foundation Stage

These aims embrace the principles for early years education, which are set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services, they want to know that provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The EYFS is the framework that provides that assurance.
- The Seven Features of Effective Practice as outlined in the 2021 Development Matters are:
 1. The best for every child
 2. High-quality care
 3. The Curriculum: what we want children to learn
 4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
 5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
 6. Self-regulation and executive function
 7. Partnership with parents

The Overarching principles of EYFS:

- **Unique Child:** Every child is unique and has the potential to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children flourish with warm, strong & positive partnerships between all staff and parents/carers. This promotes independence across the EYFS curriculum.
- **Enabling environments:** Children learn and develop well in safe and secure environments where routines are established and where adults respond to their individual needs and passions and help them to build upon their learning over time.
- **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn at different rates. We must be aware of children who need greater support than others.

Admissions

The school maintains the LA admissions policy for admissions to nursery and reception.

Nursery

Children are eligible to be considered for a nursery place the term following their third birthday. The availability of the place will continue until the autumn term following the child's fourth birthday, when they will transfer to a reception class.

In the event of a child having special needs, the LA may agree to an early place where the application is supported by other health or educational professionals or social care.

Placements within St Helens nurseries are for St. Helens residents only in the first instance, i.e. the child's home must be within the borough at the time of closing date for receipt of forms. Children whose home address is not within the borough of St. Helens (extra district) will only be considered once all St. Helens children have had the opportunity to secure a place. Anyone moving into the borough after the closing date will only be considered for a place as a late applicant.

Parents/guardians seeking to secure a place for their child in nursery should complete an admissions form prior to their child's third birthday. Forms can be obtained from the LA admissions section. Completed forms should be returned to the LA.

If the demand for places exceeds the number of places available, priority is given to:-

Children whom, having been assessed by the LA, have needs as defined in part III of the Children Act 1989 (section 17(10)). For the purposes of this part, a child shall be taken to be in need if:-

S/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a LA under this part.

Her/his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services.

S/he is disabled or suffers from a mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity.

Children within St Helens Borough boundaries, whose family home is nearest the nursery, the measurement being taken from the family home via the shortest route along public highways to the nursery as determined and measured by the LA.

Children not resident in the Borough of St Helens whose family home is nearest the nursery, the measurement being taken from the family home via the shortest route along public highways to the nursery as determined and measured by the LA.

With regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, there are no special admission arrangements for pupils with disabilities, other than those outlined above, since, in the event of over-subscription, the published criteria for determining places is applied.

Staffing

Early Years Leader – Miss Natalie Wright

Reception - Class teacher, 1x Senior Learning Assistant, 1x Learning Assistant

Nursery - Class teacher, 1x Senior Learning Assistant, 1x Learning Assistant

Reception

Children are admitted to the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents of children attending St. Mary and St. Thomas Nursery still need to apply for a place in reception using LA admissions procedures.

Induction

Nursery

Staffing – Class teacher, 1x Senior Learning Assistant, 1x Learning Assistant

Parents/carers are invited to attend a meeting in the Summer Term where they will have the opportunity to meet staff and learn more about the school and induction process.

Families are offered a home-school meeting in nursery prior to their child's start date. A nursery prospectus is given to each child/family.

Parents must complete all documentation and provide their child's birth certificate prior to their child starting nursery.

Drop-in taster sessions are offered to children and parents in the term prior to starting nursery.

Children are admitted to nursery through a graduated intake over a two-week period.

Reception

During the Summer Term, prior to entry to reception, parents are invited to an intake meeting to meet staff and find out about the routines, curriculum and organisation. Within the summer term, reception staff will have the opportunity to meet and work with the nursery children, in both their nursery and the reception settings, to support a positive transition. Children will visit and become familiar with the staff, reception classroom and outdoor learning environment.

Children who have not attended St Mary and St Thomas Nursery will be invited to participate in transition week in the summer term.

Families are offered a home-school meeting in reception prior to their child's start date in September. A school prospectus is given to each child/family.

Reception children are admitted on a part time basis for their first week, building up to full days in school. From the second week children attend full time.

Organisation of the day

Nursery

(15-hour session)

Morning session 9am – 12noon

Afternoon session 12.00 – 3.00pm

(30hr session)

9am – 3pm

Reception

8.45am – 12 noon

Lunch 12noon – 1pm

1pm – 3.15pm

The timetable is flexible. A carefully planned programme of continuous provision, as well as focused activities, ensures a balanced curriculum of child-initiated and adult-led activities.

Promoting equality of access and opportunity

Equal opportunities are provided for all children and adults in the school. The children are encouraged to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and to understand, value and respect all other cultures and beliefs as well as differences in race, gender, class, religion, ability and disability of those in the immediate and wider environment.

Our school promotes Fundamental British Values and, as a Rights Respecting School, we support children's developing understanding of equality and diversity.

Safeguarding

To help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, each child is assigned a key worker. The key worker helps the child become familiar with the setting, develops a bond with the child through small group and focused activities, and offers a settled relationship. Key worker groups are rotated termly to allow opportunity for all adults and children to work closely together throughout the year. Key workers report any concerns they may have to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Rigorous risk assessments ensure that the learning environment is welcoming, safe and secure.

Mobile phones and cameras

School mobile phones are used by staff during school trips and during wraparound care. School cameras, iPads and video cameras are used by staff and children for the purposes of teaching, learning and assessment. Only school owned mobile phones and cameras are permitted to be used during school hours by staff. These devices are not removed from the school premises.

All staff have received guidance on appropriate use of the internet and e-mail, including social networking sites and media.

Intimate care

At St Mary and St Thomas, we follow Local Authority guidance on admittance to Nursery. This means that occasionally children may not be toilet trained for medical or developmental reasons. The nursery has private changing facilities where privacy and dignity can be maintained. Two members of staff are present during changing.

Children with Special Educational Needs

At St Mary and St Thomas CEP School, practitioners plan for each child's individual needs and requirements, including those who need additional support or have particular needs or disabilities.

The focus is on supporting children to overcome barriers to learning, for children where these already exist, and on preventing learning difficulties from developing.

Staff liaise with the school SENDCO to identify needs early and ensure sufficient support is in place to meet the needs of individuals.

Parents as Partners

At St Mary and St Thomas CEP School, we recognise parents as children's first and most influential educators. We aim to work in partnership with parents to enhance children's development and learning throughout the foundation stage.

This successful partnership will require a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise, and we ask for parents support in attaining this.

Regular sessions are organised where parents are invited to work alongside their child in school or nursery e.g. Pupil Progress Meetings, Stay & Play Sessions and Family Learning

Food and Drink

School provides a healthy daily snack for all children in Nursery and Reception through the 'Fruit for Schools' initiative. All children are also entitled to subsidised daily milk, and fresh, filtered water is always available.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment is the physical space where children spend their time. It includes the classrooms, quiet rooms, corridors, washrooms, entrance area, cloakrooms, shared areas, displays and outdoor areas.

The classroom learning environment is organised into areas which encourage and support play, interaction and learning. The resources are organised so that children can access and put them away independently. In addition, there are a variety of spaces where children can be physically active or quiet, for example looking at books or dancing. There are also areas with materials to investigate and to build; places where sand, water, playdough or other tactile materials are available and places where children can share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through imaginative and role play activities.

The areas and their organisation are flexible and may be changed to reflect the focus of the curriculum, children's needs or interests.

Areas of Learning and Early Learning Goals

The EYFS is organised into seven areas of learning and development that provide the framework for the EYFS curriculum. Three areas are particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn and to thrive. These three areas, known as the *prime areas*, are:

- **Communication and language:** Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships
- **Physical development:** Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills

Children are also supported in four further *specific areas* of learning and development, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy:** Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics:** Number and Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the world:** Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

None of these areas of learning are delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on one another to support a holistic approach to child development. All areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities.

The seven areas of learning are underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These characteristics determine *how* children learn and promote children's different learning styles.

The early learning goals are the knowledge skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the time they reach the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They provide the basis for the curriculum throughout the EYFS, laying secure foundations for future learning.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing.)

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Give children an insight into new musical worlds. Invite musicians in to play music to children and talk about it. Encourage children to listen attentively to music. Discuss changes and patterns as a piece of music develops.

Planning the curriculum

Early years objectives are used to promote children's progress towards (and where appropriate beyond) the early learning goals. The curriculum planning framework provides a model for delivering these early learning objectives through well planned, high quality, appropriately play-based provision.

Long term planning provides an overview of learning objectives, highlighting those regularly promoted through continuous provision, and also those which are not regularly promoted and need to be a focus for medium term planning. We have different themes each half-term and these are usually based on the children's interests and planned carefully with high quality texts to promote a love of books and reading and to ensure that the children's own experiences are built upon and next steps in their learning are identified and planned for. Plans have been jointly written by all EYFS practitioners in order to provide continuity and progression between Nursery and Reception.

Medium term planning and Knowledge Organisers focus on what we want the children to experience and learn over a half term. Plans consider the needs and interests of the children as well as their next steps in learning. They also include provision area plans that identify learning objectives and opportunities in each provision area. These also include details of resources, organisation, role of the adult and examples of spontaneous play likely to be observed.

Medium term plans include additional resources which will be introduced and enhanced into provision areas during the half term to promote learning objectives and enhance learning experiences.

Teaching and learning are regularly evaluated so that objectives can be revisited if necessary.

Short term planning covers a period of one week and outlines activities on a daily basis. Learning objectives are taken from long and medium term plans, and the focus for weekly planning is informed by observation and assessment of the children and by evaluation of the previous week's experiences.

This planning system provides opportunities to revisit reinforce and consolidate learning objectives in lots of different ways in response to children's interests and needs.

Weekly plans outline in detail the activities and experiences which adults will initiate to focus on specific learning objectives, as well as observation and assessment foci and opportunities.

Short term planning is flexible and adapted according to immediate outcomes. Provision is evaluated by all practitioners and next steps identified.

'In-the-moment' planning is spontaneous and allows adults to follow children's interests, explore their ideas and develop their learning through play.

Observation and Assessment

At St Mary and St Thomas, we recognise the value of observation and assessment to:

- Identify children's unique characteristics of effective learning
- Provide insight into children's interests, achievements and challenges in learning
- Effectively plan for the next steps in learning and teaching
- Group children for particular interests, activities and experiences
- Plan a curriculum that meets the needs of all the children
- Plan for continuity and progression

To help us understand children's learning we need to know:

- What they have learned so far
- What they know, understand and can do
- What attitudes and opinions they have
- What likes and interests they have
- The ways in which they learn best
- The context in which they learn best
- Where they are in the learning process

We can observe by:

- Watching children
- Listening to what they say
- Interacting with them
- Questioning them
- Posing problems for them to consider
- Collecting photographing and annotating their work

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we use:

- Informal observations
Tapestry, photographs, annotated work
- Planned observations
Focusing on a particular child, learning objective or area of provision
- Analysis of observations
Through discussion, next steps noted on observation sheets, completion of assessment profiles including the EYFS profile
- Information from parents and carers
At the intake meeting and pupil progress meetings
Through comments made in the child's home learning book
Through Parentshare
Through the EYFS Twitter Page