

'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'
Matthew 7:12

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



"No job is more important than working with children in the early years" (Development matters 2020).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years.

At St Mark's, children are offered a part-time free funded nursery place (up to 15 hours) in the September following their third birthday.

Children who have turned four by the 1st September of that school year can apply for a full-time place in our Reception year group.

Intent

At St Marks we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and parents.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates.

Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning

Implementation

The curriculum:

At St Marks we follow the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five
Published: 31 March 2021 Effective: 1 September 2021.

Teaching and learning in the Early Years The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive, they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

Prime Areas:

Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas.

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

Specific Areas:

Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

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

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment - playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically - underpin learning and development across all areas and are known as the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'.

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The Characteristics of Effective Learning inform Nursery and Reception staff of children's preferred learning styles. We use these to plan effective next step learning opportunities matched to the children's interests and abilities.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and exploring:** Finding out and exploring, Playing with what they know, Being willing to 'have a go'
- **Active learning:** Being involved and concentrating, keeping trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and thinking critically:** Having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways to do things.

Teaching Strategies

A balance between adult-led and child initiated activities is vital, taking into account children's interests and offering suitable challenge for activities and learning.

To provide high quality child-initiated learning we ensure there is:

- Provision for a stimulating learning environment both inside and outside across all areas of learning with engaging and challenging learning outcomes.
- A variety of high quality, stimulating resources for children to experience and interact with.

Observation

Through careful observation staff gather information on children's interests, strengths and areas for further development, which are incorporated into learning intentions and activities accordingly. Observations throughout the year in all areas of learning are used as an assessment tool and inform the annual report to parents, the end of Nursery assessment and the Foundation Stage Profile.

Planning

We have a two-year topic cycle so both Nursery and Reception classes are working together on the same theme. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events.

Through planning, teachers ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. During child initiated activities the adults' role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Such interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning.

Monitoring and Assessment

During the first half term Nursery and Reception children are assessed using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching program for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Home/School Links Continuity between home and school for Foundation Stage children is recognised as being important and is maintained through well maintained home school links. We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in education, the result has a positive impact on the child's development. The success of this strong partnership is based on a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to build a strong partnership between staff parents and carers through:

- Our open door policy
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's class teacher if there are any concerns or queries.
 - At the beginning of the Autumn Term Reception parents are invited to a welcome meeting with the Reception teacher who provides key information on the upcoming school year.
 - Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourages collaboration between school and parents, for example church services, workshop sessions

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do at our school. Parents are welcome to speak to us about their child, which may be through daily conversations, teacher/parent consultations or during one of our many parent workshops

Classroom Organisation Play (structured and self-initiated) and talk are key ways in which young children learn and consolidate their learning. Play and independent self-initiated learning is supported by well-resourced provision. The classroom is organised to give the children space to move about safely and with ease. Classroom provision ensures the seven areas of the EYFS framework are being provided for learning opportunities each day.

Outdoor Provision

Class 1 children have access to outdoor space and the learning environment outside has been designed to support and extend children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.

The role of the Early Years Phase Leader

The role of the Early Years Phase Leader is:

- Monitoring planning, assessment and record-keeping of pupils work and feeding back to staff
- Feedback to headteacher, subject leaders and Governing Body
- Supporting staff with all aspects of the planning, assessment and the effective delivery of the Early Years curriculum.
- Ensuring staff are up to date with current educational ideas and initiatives relating to Early Years

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion.

We provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively, a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued, resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping, challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is identified, we will liaise with the SEND coordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, for example the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Impact

By following the above and providing a diverse learning environment we aim for our EYFS children to leave the foundation stage ready to access and learn within the National Curriculum. We aim to produce well rounded individuals who are ready for their next challenge and to make their mark on the world.

Policy to be reviewed January 2028