St Mary's CE Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2026 - 2027

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Investing in the uniqueness of each individual

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made"
Psalms 139 v 14

Date of Next Review: September 2027

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy 2026-27

Vision Statement
At St Mary's CE Primary School, we believe every child is uniquely created by God and deserves to be known, valued and loved. Guided by our Christian vision of "Investing in the Uniqueness of Each Individual" and inspired by Psalm 139:14, "*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made,*" we are committed to providing every child with the very best start to their education.

Our Early Years provision offers a nurturing, ambitious and inspiring environment where children develop confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning. Through carefully planned experiences, purposeful play and high-quality interactions, children begin their journey to know more, remember more and become more as learners and individuals.

Rooted in our values of Love, Trust and Hope, we encourage children to become curious learners, confident communicators, creative thinkers, independent problem-solvers and kind, respectful members of our school community.

Aims
The aims of our Early Years provision are to:

- Provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment where every child can flourish.
- Develop children's confidence, independence and resilience.
- Foster positive relationships between children, families and staff.
- Ensure all children make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Promote a love of reading, communication and language.
- Provide rich opportunities for exploration, creativity and first-hand experiences.
- Develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Prepare children effectively for the next stage of their education.

Statutory Framework
St Mary's CE Primary School complies with both the learning and development requirements and the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

The four guiding principles underpinning our practice are:

- 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.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Safeguarding and Welfare
At St Mary's CE Primary School, the safety, wellbeing and happiness of every child are our

highest priorities. We are committed to providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment where children feel known, valued and loved and are able to flourish.

We recognise that effective safeguarding underpins all aspects of learning and development. All staff understand their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and receive regular safeguarding training in line with statutory requirements. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to ensure children receive the support they need at the earliest opportunity.

We meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, including requirements relating to:

- Child protection and safeguarding procedures
- Staff suitability and safer recruitment
- Staff qualifications, training and supervision
- Paediatric first aid arrangements
- Health and safety
- Medicines and medical needs
- Risk assessment
- Information sharing and record keeping
- Behaviour management
- Attendance and supervision
- Premises, facilities and security

Children's personal, social and emotional development is central to our provision. Through daily interactions, routines and learning experiences, children are supported to develop confidence, resilience, self-regulation and an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Positive relationships with families are essential in supporting children's welfare and development. We work in partnership with parents and carers to promote children's wellbeing, learning and safety, ensuring that every child feels secure, supported and ready to learn.

As a Church of England school, we believe every child is uniquely created by God and deserves to be treated with dignity, respect and compassion. Our nurturing environment enables children to flourish emotionally, socially, spiritually and academically whilst developing the confidence and independence needed for future success.

Curriculum Intent
Our curriculum is designed around the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and carefully planned to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding across all seven areas of learning.

Our curriculum is ambitious for all children, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. We have high expectations of every child and aim to ensure all children make strong progress from their starting points.

We aim for children to:

- Know more, remember more and become more.
- Develop secure knowledge, skills and vocabulary across all areas of learning.
- Become confident communicators and enthusiastic readers.
- Develop independence, resilience and positive learning behaviours.
- Experience the wider world through meaningful first-hand experiences.
- Grow spiritually through opportunities to reflect on themselves, understand others and act with purpose.
- Successfully transition into Key Stage One.

Knowledge, skills and vocabulary are carefully sequenced from Nursery to Reception, ensuring children build secure foundations for future learning.

Curriculum Design
Our curriculum is built around three overarching enquiry questions:

What is Special?
Children explore themselves, their families, celebrations, school life and their local community.

What's Changed?
Children investigate growth, seasonal change, life cycles and how the world around them changes over time.

What's Next?
Children develop their understanding of journeys, exploration, maps, habitats, communities and the wider world.

A carefully planned two-year rolling programme ensures children experience a broad and ambitious curriculum whilst avoiding unnecessary repetition.

The Seven Areas of Learning
The EYFS Framework identifies seven areas of learning and development.

Prime Areas

Communication and Language
Children develop speaking, listening, understanding and vocabulary through high-quality interactions, purposeful talk, storytelling, singing and rich language experiences across the curriculum.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Children develop confidence, resilience, self-regulation, positive relationships and independence.

Physical Development
Children develop gross and fine motor skills through indoor and outdoor learning opportunities, preparing them for future success in writing and learning. Daily opportunities for movement, outdoor learning and fine motor development help children build strength, coordination and control, supporting their health, wellbeing and readiness for writing.

Specific Areas
Literacy
Children develop a love of reading alongside early reading and writing skills through high-quality texts, Bug Club Phonics and meaningful writing opportunities.

Mathematics
Children develop number sense, reasoning and problem-solving skills through practical exploration and carefully structured teaching.

Understanding the World
Children explore people, places, communities, technology and the natural world through enquiry, exploration and first-hand experiences.

Expressive Arts and Design
Children develop creativity, imagination and self-expression through art, music, storytelling, role play and design.

Reading, Communication and Language
Reading and language development are at the heart of our curriculum.
High-quality texts are carefully chosen to develop:

- Vocabulary
- Oracy
- Comprehension
- Communication skills
- Knowledge of the world
- A lifelong love of reading

Children participate in daily story sessions and opportunities for purposeful talk throughout the day. Phonics is taught through Bug Club Phonics, providing a systematic synthetic phonics approach to support reading and writing development. In Reception, children also participate in Drawing Club, which develops imagination, storytelling, vocabulary, comprehension and early writing skills.

Teaching and Learning
Children learn through a balance of:

- Adult-led learning
- Guided learning
- Child-initiated activities

- Purposeful play
- Continuous provision

Practitioners carefully observe, model, scaffold and extend children's thinking through high-quality interactions. Learning experiences are designed to develop the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

Playing and Exploring
Children investigate, explore and "have a go."

Active Learning
Children concentrate, persevere and enjoy their achievements.

Creating and Thinking Critically
Children develop their own ideas, make links in their learning and solve problems.

Learning Environment
We provide an enabling environment that promotes independence, curiosity and engagement.

Our indoor and outdoor environments offer opportunities for:

- Continuous provision
- Investigation and exploration
- Creative experiences
- Physical development
- Role play
- Construction
- Problem solving
- First-hand experiences

Children are encouraged to make choices, access resources independently and take increasing ownership of their learning.

Spiritual Development
Spiritual development is woven throughout our Early Years curriculum and daily life at St Mary's.

Through our Mirrors, Windows and Doors approach, children are encouraged to:

Mirrors: Reflect on themselves and recognise that they are unique, valued and loved.

Windows: Learn about others and develop empathy, respect and understanding.

Doors: Act with purpose by showing kindness, making positive choices and living out our values of Love, Trust and Hope.

Children are provided with opportunities to learn about different people, cultures, communities and experiences, helping them develop respect, empathy and an understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

Inclusion
We believe that every child matters and deserves equitable opportunities to succeed. We support all learners through:

- Quality first teaching
- Adaptive teaching approaches
- Appropriate scaffolding
- Targeted support where needed
- Strong partnerships with parents and external agencies
- Early identification of additional needs

Children with SEND are fully included within all aspects of Early Years provision. We work closely with families and external professionals to identify needs early and ensure appropriate support is put in place through a graduated approach.

Assessment
Ongoing assessment is primarily used to inform teaching and support children's learning rather than to create unnecessary paperwork or data collection.

Practitioners use:

- Daily observations
- Interactions with children
- Children's work
- Professional judgement
- Parent contributions

Assessment information is used to:

- Identify strengths
- Plan next steps
- Adapt teaching
- Monitor progress

Reception children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of Reception.

At the end of the Reception year, practitioners complete the statutory EYFS Profile against the Early Learning Goals.

Partnership with Parents and Carers
We recognise that parents and carers are children's first educators and play a vital role in their development.

We work closely with families through:

- Open and regular communication
- Daily interactions
- ClassDojo
- Parents' evenings
- Learning celebrations
- Transition meetings
- Curriculum information

Strong partnerships help ensure children feel supported, valued and successful.

Transition
Effective transitions are essential to children's success.

Nursery Entry

- Visits and induction opportunities
- Information sharing with parents
- Settling-in arrangements tailored to children's needs

Reception Entry

- Visits and transition activities
- Close collaboration with previous settings
- Strong communication with families

Transition into Year One

- Shared information between staff
- Gradual development of independent learning
- Opportunities for children to become familiar with Key Stage One expectations
- Ongoing provision that supports a successful transition

Child Voice
Children are active participants in their learning.

Practitioners value children's ideas, interests and fascinations and use these to help shape learning opportunities.

Children are encouraged to:

- Share opinions
- Ask questions
- Reflect on learning
- Make choices

- Lead aspects of their play and exploration

Impact
Children leave Early Years as confident, resilient and enthusiastic learners who are ready for the next stage of their education.

They:

- Communicate effectively.
- Enjoy reading and storytelling.
- Demonstrate independence and resilience.
- Show curiosity about the world around them.
- Apply knowledge and vocabulary across their learning.
- Understand and live out our values of Love, Trust and Hope.
- Continue their journey of knowing more, remembering more and becoming more.