



Love, Respect, Belong

ST MARY'S BENTWORTH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS POLICY

<i>Date of implementation:</i> June 2024	<i>Date for review:</i> June 2027
<i>Ownership:</i> Education Committee	<i>Linked to:</i> Teaching and Learning Policy,
<i>Review committee:</i> Education Committee, Head teacher	
<i>Communicated to:</i> Parents, Staff and FGB	
<i>Evaluation:</i> (inc links to evidence)	

At St Mary's we recognise the great importance of early childhood as the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. All children should experience a broad and balanced curriculum, irrespective of their gender, ethnic or social background or special educational needs. This curriculum should be flexible and based on play and first-hand experience, using curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Mary's Primary School 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 and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

All children at St Mary's Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

Welfare

At St Mary's Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024.

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure all adults who work with our children have had appropriate safeguarding checks made
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school at school meetings and during home visits;
- the children have the opportunity to spend a session in Oak Class during the half term before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.

There is a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation Stage.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher and HLTA act as a 'Key Worker' to all children in EYFS. Staff in the Foundation Unit meet with the feeder pre-school settings to share good practice and discuss current issues.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

In The Moment Planning

"When children show high levels of involvement, that is when there is progress and development occurring – when the brain is at its most active. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment supported by skilled staff."

Taken from 'Reception Year in Action' by Anna Ephgrave

The adults goes to the child, the child is not called to come to the adult. This ensures the child is learning through their own choice of activity, with the adult taking the next steps in their learning to them. Children become deeply engaged in activities if they are playing and selecting activities for themselves. A cycle of observation, assessment, planning (teaching next steps 'in the moment'), observation. This cycle harnesses moments of curiosity, puzzlement, interest and effort – a 'teachable' moment for practitioners to seize and make a difference. The role of the adult is to observe and wait for the moment that will make a difference. The skilled practitioner uses that moment to teach the next step, as appropriate for the child. The role of the adult is vital. Adults are there to facilitate learning through observations and interactions. They will enhance, support and extend learning at an appropriate level for the individual. The adults will highlight on the learning journey when they have supported by 'modelling, instructing, modelling language, showing, explaining,

demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, pondering, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating, setting challenges, suggesting.' We have 3 focus children each week. During the Autumn and Spring Terms, parents will be sent a letter the week before their child is a focus child to ask about any birthdays, trips or family events, which will help individualise their learning. Parents will also have the opportunity to raise any concerns or development points with their child's learning which may become a focus. We will have an enabling environment – a variety of open-ended resources will be available for the children to select independently in order to support their learning. While there will be some focus children each week, other children will be supported in their child-initiated learning by another adult and this will be recorded with observations.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. The parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher.

The Learning Environment

Oak Class is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up so children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Oak Class has its own limited, enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically **active**. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to **develop** in all the areas of learning.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;

- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their **play** children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fear or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

- Three prime areas
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Communication and Language
 - Physical Development
- Four specific areas

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Early Years teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Education Committee have the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and subject managers carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Baseline

In September 2021, the Reception Baseline Assessment became statutory. This is 'an age-appropriate assessment of early mathematics and literacy, communication and language. It is delivered in English and is administered within the first six weeks of a pupil starting reception. The assessment has two components, each consisting of practical tasks using physical resources. There is an online scoring system for the practitioner to use as the pupil engages with the tasks. The RBA will be used to create school-level progress measures for primary schools which show the progress pupils make from reception until the end of key stage 2.'

At St Mary's, the RBA will be delivered by the class teacher.

Schools are not given the results of the RBA, they are instead given a narrative report for pupils who have completed both components of the assessment.