

St Mark's CE Primary School

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EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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St Mark's CEP School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five. We implemented the renewed curriculum in September 2012. It sets out the standards for learning development and care of children in registered settings and schools.

Starting School

- All children join St Marks School in the September at the beginning of the school year in which they turn 5. Initially children come part time, from 8.45 – 11.30. This is for a period of 2 weeks after which all children attend full-time.
- Towards the end of October we hold an open morning for prospective parents of children due to start school the following September.
- In June, parents with children confirmed to start school that September are invited to a new parent's meeting. This is attended by office staff, the Head Teacher, Assistant Head/Early Years Leader and representatives from the PTA and breakfast club. Parents are given information and advice relating to their children starting school.
- Prior to this meeting the Early Years teachers visit as many children as possible at their nurseries. This may not be possible for all children, for example when there is only one child in attendance at a particular nursery. In this instance the nursery is telephoned and the child is discussed. If the nursery feel it is vital for the Child's well being for them to meet their new teacher in the safe and familiar environment of a nursery then a visit may be arranged.
- In July the new children are invited to spend time in the reception class. These open mornings are spread over several days, so that there are rarely more than 10 children each morning. They will also be invited to join us for several story sessions. During this time a photograph is taken of each child for their peg in September.

Home Visits

- Home visits are undertaken for all children in the afternoons of the first 2 weeks of term (when children are part time)
- Parents are asked to sign up for a date/time for their home visit at the June parents evening. This meeting can happen at home or in school, it is the parent's choice.
- The objective of the visit/meeting is to give parents the opportunity to talk openly about their concerns and ask questions in a private and non pressured environment. It also allows for children to show practitioners their bedroom or special toys and tends to make children feel more at ease and helps to form a bond between children and teachers.
- As the objective of this is to make both parents and children feel at ease, if parents are very uncomfortable about the idea of a home visit and cannot be reassured, this can be arranged as an in school meeting.

Class Selection

- After our visits to the nurseries we allocate children to a class. Classes are split so that as far as possible each class has an equal amount of boys and girls.
- From our experience twins do better in different classes and so as a school we prefer to split twins. However we are happy to discuss each individual case separately before the children start school.
- Children will be taught in their own classrooms with each area of learning provided in each room to give children a sense of identity and belonging.

Key Person

When children first start school they will be assigned a key person, either the class teacher or teaching assistant, however, at meetings and parents evenings it is the Class Teacher who will meet with parents. The role of the key person at St Mark's is:

- To provide if necessary a familiar point of contact for that child/parent and to help support any separation anxieties in the morning.
- To focus on their key children in the first few weeks in order to ensure that all children are building good relationships with each other as well as with a familiar adult that they can go to for support.

The Class Teacher still retains all responsibility for planning, teaching and assessment for all of the children.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage is vital as it lays the foundations for the rest of school life, in particular for Key Stage 1 and the National Curriculum. Development Matters, sets out what is expected of children at each stage of their development and Early Learning Goals provide an expected standard for the end of the Reception Year. The EYFS profile will provide a nationally reported, summative assessment in the summer term. The majority of children join us from a variety of local preschool setting and bring with them a wide range of knowledge and experiences.

The education that we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on children's previous learning and experiences via a planned child led approach within a rich and stimulating environment.
- It recognises that each child is different and ensures that all children have equal opportunity to succeed.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a variety of starting points, content and activities that allow for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It is grounded in the school's Christian ethos and policy.
- It recognises that parents and teachers need to work together to make a positive impact on children's education and wellbeing.
- It promotes the characteristics of effective learning as outlined in the revised framework – playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

Curriculum

The EYFS curriculum underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's learning through seven areas, three 'prime' areas and four 'specific' areas.

Prime

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and Language Development
- Physical development
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Specific

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

Careful planning ensures a cross curricular approach, teaching all seven areas of learning through an overarching theme or 'topic' that is then led by the interests of the children in the class. The specific areas of learning are given equal weighting and learning in the prime areas underpins all that we do and supports development in all other areas. In all Early Years planning and organisation care is taken to ensure that the characteristics of effective learning; playing & exploring, creativity & thinking critically and active learning are all catered for throughout teacher directed and child initiated learning. Children are able to access all aspects of the curriculum indoors and outdoors.

Phonics

- Discreet phonics is taught daily for 15 minutes following *Sounds Write* programme. It is expected that phases 2-4 will be completed during the reception year.
- Children are exposed to a variety of scripts throughout the year as well as a variety of types of print. They are taught to write as soon as they start school – as a school we use add lead outs to our letters but not lead ins.
- The 'scaffolding writing' approach is used to teach early writing. In brief; Children are asked to say their sentence and an adult then draws a line, of an appropriate length for each word. Children then rehearse the sentence several more times before beginning to write each word. Children who need further support can be given the 1st letter of each word, those who are ready to move in start to think about drawing their own lines.

Numbers and Patterns

- Children are taught 15 minutes discreet daily number work. Each number is looked at in terms of the varying representations of that number including where possible o clock.
- Children are taught to add and subtract within this number including in the context of money.

Child initiated learning in the Foundation Stage

Child initiated learning (learning through play) is an integral part of the children's learning in the Foundation Stage. In some respects all learning in the Foundation stage at St Mark's is child

initiated, as the overarching themes mentioned in the curriculum section above are ever changing and are borne of the interests of the children in the class. In accordance with the EYFS curriculum guidance children at St Mark's have 2 hours a day of dedicated child initiated learning time. Through a range of carefully planned opportunities, resources and activities indoors and outside the children at St Mark's develop their knowledge and skills, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of the world around them. Through collaborative play children begin to understand their role in the school community as they learn to resolve conflict and adhere to the class and school rules. They have opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own and to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. During dedicated child initiated learning sessions, the adults in the Early Years environment work with and alongside the children, scaffolding their learning and unobtrusively encouraging the acquisition and embedding of skills and knowledge.

Routine

- In Reception children are gradually introduced to a school routine.
- Initially children come part time, from 8.45 – 11.30. This is for a period of 2 weeks after which all children attend full-time.
- In the first term Reception children are able to come in between 8.45 and 9.00, allowing time for their parents and carers to settle them, assist them with changing reading books and self registering. From term 2 we ask parents to help their child develop greater independence and say their goodbyes at the door/gate entrance.
- Children in reception do not attend whole school assembly initially, from term 3 they attend Clergy Assembly on a Wednesday and Celebration assembly on a Friday. From term 5 The Early Years Children join in with the full collective worship programme with the rest of the school.
- Early Years children have access to milk and a fruit/veg based snack throughout the morning. Lunch is from 11.55 – 12.55, with the KS1 children.

Safeguarding

The whole school safeguarding policy applies to the reception classes.

We take the following line on the use of cameras and mobile phones:

- Only school cameras are used to take photographs of the children, these cameras do not leave the site (excluding school trips) and the photographs are downloaded on to the shared area of the classroom computer.
- Mobile Phones are not permitted in the classroom.

Parents and students who support children in the reception classroom are all DBS checked.

Homework

- Children in reception are not given formal homework. However, we do expect the children to share books nightly with parents for 10 minutes and **record this in the reading record**. Initially this may be parents reading to the child but once they are starting to read independently we do expect the children to read regularly throughout the week (The ideal goal is 5 nights out of 7).
- Each week the class teacher will stick a sticker in each Childs book giving parents information about what they will be doing at school e.g. the sounds they have been learning, to enabling them to follow this up at home.

- At the end of each phonics phase the sounds learnt and the 'key' and 'tricky' words are sent home.

Assessment

- On starting school children who have attended a pre-school bring a record of transfer with them. This provides an initial picture about the children for staff. A 'Baseline' assessment is completed on their arrival at St Mark's; by the end of term 1, to ensure that we provide appropriate learning opportunities to meet the needs of all children.
- From this initial assessment teachers meet with members of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss potential progress for the children by the end of Reception. This discussion feeds directly into the teacher's Performance Management targets and is discussed regularly during Pupil Progress Meetings throughout the year.
- Throughout the academic year the class teacher and teaching assistant make regular assessments and use this information to ensure future planning reflects the identified needs.
- This assessment takes the form of observations through written notes, photographs and annotated samples, compiled to create a 'learning journey' documenting the children's learning and development during their reception year. Early Years staff use Tapestry to help them gather assessments, complete gap analysis and plot children's progress.
- At the end of the year the children will be assessed against the EYFS profile. A set of 17 Early Learning Goals against which children must be judged to be either emerging, expected or exceeding. A child who has achieved the 'expected' level in each of the ELG's for the prime areas of learning, literacy and maths is considered to have reached the expected end of year benchmark.
- In accordance with the statutory guidance parents are provided with information about their child's achievement against each of the early learning goals.

Inclusion

All children are special and everyone unique, we strive to give all of our children every opportunity to achieve their best. Throughout the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging goals for the children, looking ahead to the next steps in their learning whilst ensuring that we celebrate their most current successes. We take into account the differing needs of boys and girls, children who may be gifted or talented, children with special needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Staff in the Early Years work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and other agencies from outside of school, e.g. speech therapists, to provide the appropriate curriculum and any necessary interventions for every child. For more information on this please consult SEN coordinator.

Staffing

There are a maximum of 30 children within each Reception class they have a class teacher and teaching assistant at all times. All members of the Early Years team have the role of a key person.

The role of parents

We believe that parents have a valuable role to play in the education of their children. We recognise the role that parents have played and have yet to play in educating their children. We

communicate with parents and actively encourage their involvement in a variety of ways which have mostly already been outlined above, these include;

- Home visits in the first few weeks of their child starting school
- Inviting parents to an open evening before they start and a coffee morning during the first few weeks, allowing them the opportunity to meet other parents.
- Offering parents the opportunity to contribute to the profile through home-school sharing books and regular opportunities to add to their child's journal on a termly basis.
- Encouraging parents to share information about their child with teachers through sharing books and the allocation of a key person.
- Holding regular parent's evenings throughout the school year. (Term 2 and Term 4)
- Arranging stay and play sessions throughout the year that encourage parents, children and school to work together.
- Sending home termly newsletters to inform parents about topics and the kind of activities undertaken within the class

Transition

- Staff in Reception work very closely with staff in Year One to ensure a smooth transition between classes. Children in the EYFS see the Year 1 staff regularly during the year and have a taster morning within the Year One classroom in July.
- Staff from Year One and the Foundation Stage meet more formally in the summer term to ensure that staff in Year One have a clear idea about the children's needs and abilities both socially and academically.
- The EYFS profile is used by staff in Year One at the beginning of the year to inform their planning and where relevant the EYFS curriculum continues to be delivered. The classroom environment and routine in Year One are set up in a similar way to the Reception class until the children are ready to move from the EYFS curriculum to the national curriculum, providing the children with a seamless transition from one curriculum to the other. Where appropriate we aim to make the transition for all children by the beginning of their second term in Year One.