***Early Years Policy***

In the Early Years at St. Mary’s we see the initial stepping stones of our Mission Statement being put into place, where every individual is valued and cherished and enabled to develop and fulfil their potential. Opportunities and experiences foster attitudes of mutual respect and recognition of their own and others’ achievements.

The Early Years focuses on the development of the whole unique child, in line with the seven areas of learning established in the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Prime Areas

* Personal, Social and Emotional Development
* Physical development
* Communication and Language

Specific areas

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

All areas of learning are important and interconnected. The prime areas are crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

This vital, early stage in a child’s life plays an important contribution to their later performance, both academically and socially.

***Aims***

* To build upon the foundations of our Christian faith and respect each other, to come to realise the importance of belonging to a family at home, at school, and in the wider

 global community.

* To encourage home-school relations where parents are recognised as the ‘first

 educators’ of their child.

* To provide a safe and secure environment which enables each child’s individual needs

 to be recognised, and effective learning to take place.

* To foster a culture of learning through both teacher / TA (adult-led) group activities

 and through child initiated play, setting foundations for the discovery of excitement in

 learning.

* To encourage children to be aware of each others’ needs and feelings through the development of spiritual and social skills.
* To develop clear values of friendship, to understand the needs for fairness and

 empathy as outlined in our school Mission Statement.

* To reflect the Foundation Stage Curriculum through a structured programme,

 providing for each child to develop social, emotional, physical, spiritual, creative and intellectual skills.

* To encourage children to move towards greater independence of action, thought and expression in a confident manner.
* To enable the children to reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of

 reception.

***Objectives***

1. To involve parents and keep them informed of their child’s progress, initially through pre-school meetings and visits, and once the child is in school, through parental input into the electronic profile ‘Tapestry’, home/school books, parents evenings, termly synopsis, sharing the expectations for literacy and numeracy and a continuing ‘open door’ policy.
2. To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.
3. To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage document.
4. To provide attractive learning environments – indoor and outdoor - which are

 stimulating and offer opportunities for quiet and active learning.

* To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.

***Teaching and Learning***

1. Early Years education provides the ideal opportunity for a holistic approach to

learning throughout the daily routine, where children experience opportunities to develop across all aspects of the EYFS curriculum.

1. To extend co-ordination skills - physical, gross- and fine-motor.
2. To enable children to have the confidence and ability to use spoken language as a key

 skill for thinking and learning, to express their ideas clearly and with an appropriate

 vocabulary.

1. To listen attentively.
2. Assessment: Ongoing observations are carried out which in turn inform the

Foundation Stage Profile. Baseline assessment is also used to inform planning and

 to aid the tracking of pupil progress.

1. A variety of structured teaching and child initiated activities, accommodating learning

styles ensure children can be actively involved in their learning. These include play and discovery, experimentation, reasoning, problem solving, challenges and recording and reflection upon accomplishments.

1. Staff offer an inclusive approach to all children, and acknowledge when there are

 special needs, in consultation with the SENCO.

1. Teachers liaise closely with Year 1 staff in order to ensure a smooth transition into

 Key Stage 1; building upon the individual needs of each child and the effective use of

 resources.

*Role of the Manager*

It is the role of the Early Years Manager, under the guidance of the Head Teacher: -

* To organise the delivery of Early Years Curriculum and to ensure progression and development.
* To monitor planning and quality of delivery within the curriculum.
* To keep abreast of developments within early Years.
* To monitor and update resources and draw up a budget.
* To liaise with and support Pre-school establishments within the Partnership link.
* To liaise with other local schools though regular EYFS Cluster meetings.

*Equal Opportunities*

All children have an equal entitlement to a good Early Years Curriculum regardless of gender, race, culture, Religion, disability and special or medical needs.

***Resources***

1. Resources are of good quality and wide ranging, appropriate to the age group, and/or child’s needs; they include an individually designed and superior quality

 outdoor learning environment .

1. They stimulate and promote quality learning, reflecting diversity, and allow

 investigative, reasoning, manipulative, creative, physical and social skills to be

 developed.

1. Storage of equipment is in the Reception class or housed in central resource areas.

***Assessment, Recording and Reporting***

1. The children are assessed regularly by Reception class staff, in line with Foundation

 Stage Curriculum requirements.

1. Parents’ evenings and an annual report give further opportunities to discuss children’s work and progress, as emphasised in the ARR policy.
2. As children enter school, NFER Baseline Assessment is carried out to inform

 planning, contribute to the Profile and to help track pupil progress.

1. .Foundation Stage Profile is completed and submitted to County each year.`
2. Foundation Stage Profile is used to inform Year 1 teacher of pupils’ progress and

 achievements and in some cases continues to provide the focus of assessment in Yr 1.

***Conclusion***

Each child’s individual needs are recognised in the Early Years as we begin the process of motivating and nurturing love, confidence, spirituality and learning, which enable every child to take new and more independent steps towards greater skill, understanding and knowledge of their world.

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