

# Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School



Catholic  
Primary School  
Congleton  
A Voluntary Academy

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Schedule	Date	Signed
Approved by the Governing Body:	17.06.2025	Headteacher: Amy Butterfield Chair of Governors: Val Bridge
To be reviewed:	June 2028	

## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in preparing children not only for further schooling but also for life. The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. At Saint Mary's, our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision includes a nursery and a Reception classroom based in the main school building. This policy outlines the EYFS provision for all children in Reception and Nursery.

## Aim

As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024),

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Therefore, at Saint Mary's, we provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning and future lives. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

This policy demonstrates the school's commitment to providing the best possible start to children in our care; it should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Early Years Curriculum Statement

We adhere to the EYFS Statutory Framework and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings, which are as follows:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

## Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the three prime and four specific areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult;
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

## EYFS Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum incorporates the statutory requirements of the EYFS framework with a strong emphasis on learning through play. Learning opportunities are challenging and fun and encompass the seven main areas of learning;

- Personal, Social and Emotional
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These seven areas are used to plan children's learning and activities. During each week children engage in a combination of adult led and child-initiated activities which will promote independence, creativity, inquiry and problem solving. Children learn through activities linked to their interests and ideas, as well as teacher directed tasks.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach, as outlined by the EYFS:

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.'

Children's learning is led through a balance of discrete, adult-led sessions and carefully planned continuous provision where children have the opportunity to explore and apply their learning using our motivating indoor and outdoor environments. Children have freedom to explore their interests to enable them to make sense of the world around them.

Pupils work towards the Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the majority of children move onto the National Curriculum programmes of study at the beginning of year one. Children are prepared for transition into Key Stage One through a robust transition plan including visits to their new class.

Children develop their phonic knowledge through the Monster Phonics programme and build reading fluency through the school's approach to daily reading. We take pride in offering a highly inclusive environment, where learners of all abilities enjoy their education and make good progress across most areas of learning. Children at all levels are supported and encouraged to achieve their potential.

## Observation and Assessment

Observation and assessment are integral to our daily practice. We assess children's development and learning to inform future planning. Observations are recorded in the child's online profile, which is regularly shared with parents.

Each child's progress is reviewed regularly and discussed during parent meetings. A written report based on the EYFS profile is provided in the summer term.

Within the first six weeks of starting Reception, staff administer the Reception Baseline Assessment. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child, assessing them against the 17 Early Learning Goals as either:

- **On Track** – meeting expected levels of development
- **Not On Track** – not yet reaching expected levels

Profiles are based on ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

## Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- For children **aged 3 and over**:
  - Where there is a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, an instructor or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher:
    - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children
    - For all other classes, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
  - Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children

We always have at least one member of staff with a current **Paediatric First Aid (PFA)** certificate present. Certificates are renewed every three years.

We promote good health through the provision of nutritious food, and by following procedures for accidents, rest, and toileting. All staff have basic first aid training; most Early Years staff hold PFA certification.

## Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Saint Mary's, irrespective of their religion, heritage, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and many exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

## **Parents as Partners and the wider context**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers, as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways. For example, parents can share their own observations of their child's learning within the home environment through the online profile. Working with other services and organisations is also integral to our practice to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. Additionally, we draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

## **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. In the summer term, those children transitioning to the main school will spend time with the reception class teacher in the reception classroom.

In the final term of Reception, the Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss each child's needs and analyse assessment data to inform planning. Children also spend time with the Year 1 teacher as part of whole-school transition activities.