

**Intent in the EYFS at St.Mary’s Catholic Primary School**

**Why do we teach what we teach?**

At St.Mary’s Catholic Primary School we place great value on the development of children as their own unique, individual selves and following our school mission statement, place our children at the heart of all that we do.

Our aim in the EYFS is to build strong foundations rooted in academic success as well as moral and spiritual development, so that ultimately our pupils can be **supported** towards success in later life and go on to be active citizens and curious life-long learners.

Our curriculum is therefore the **cultural capital** we know our pupils need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. We embed this through our **ambitious curriculum and pedagogy,** focusing upon enabling the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking. Our approach is holistic, maximising opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking following children’s interests and ideas.

We enable children to achieve their full potential by recognising the impact that the current **pandemic** may have had. We focus on supporting **communication and language skills, as well as the core area of personal, social and emotional development**. We teach our pupils how to listen, speak and meet the high expectations we have for behaviour by working together and being kind.

We recognise early reading as an area of absolute importance, providing our children with daily phonics, opportunities to read in groups, as well as whole class reading sessions.

As the pupils progress through Reception class, we invest time into helping pupils set and reflect on their own goals within both indoor and outdoor provision by aiming high and developing a love of reading, writing and number.  We concentrate on providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to **prepare** them for Key Stage One and beyond.

**Implementation in the EYFS at St.Mary’s Catholic Primary School**

**How do we teach what we teach?**

**Pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities.** The timetable is carefully structured so that children have rigorous directed teaching in English, Maths and Phonics everyday.

These sessions are followed by group work where children work with a member of staff to develop their individual targets.  This focused group time means the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback in line with our school policy, which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in ‘exploration’ throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms and equal importance is given to learning in both areas. The curriculum is planned in a cross-curricular way to enable all aspects of the children’s development including understanding the world and expressive arts and design, as well as to promote sustained thinking and active learning. Teachers reflect upon planning, in order to question, “What do our focus individuals need to learn or are curious about? What embedded learning have we observed in this area?  What can be changed to exploit the learning and interests of the children/individuals in this area?”  In this way, we ensure that the children have agency over their environment and that the provision leads to depth of learning across the curriculum.

**Reading is at the heart of our curriculum.**  Children are being introduced to the highly successful Read, Write Inc programme, so that they meet good outcomes for reading. In line with the rest of school, Reception class have a big question to answer over the course of the year which is broken down into a question for each half-term unit. The themes are based on foundational ideas coming from the EYFS curriculum. From this, we have chosen multiple high-quality texts to create an integrated approach to learning from which pupils can experience the full curriculum.

We follow the Maths Mastery approach in Reception with an emphasis on studying key skills of number and calculation, so that pupils develop deep understanding and the acquisition of mathematical language.  Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration. These early mathematical experiences are carefully designed to help pupils remember the content they have been taught and to support them with integrating their new knowledge across the breadth of their experiences and into larger concepts.

**Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together** but we have a range of additional intervention and support to enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential or moving on children who are doing very well. This includes, for example, ‘Time To Talk’; our reading group or additional ‘catch-up’ provision in Maths.  Staff also use ‘in the moment’ which is a quick, on the spot intervention focused on sight words, blending and number retention with target individuals. We liaise with the ‘early years inclusion’ team when welcoming children into our setting to ensure a targeted approach is continued. The children are monitored and support by us all and our school SENCO, Mrs Titheridge.

Our regular monitoring of teaching and learning includes ensuring staff have had relevant training on the new early years curriculum. We include suggested foci in our planning to encourage specific observations and monitoring whilst we have moved into our first year of the new curriculum. This supports every member of our team in feeling confident to make accurate judgements about where individual pupils are and speak about their next steps for learning.

**Impact in the EYFS at St.Mary’s Catholic Primary School**

**How do we know what pupils have learnt and how well they have learnt it?**

**Our curriculum needs to meet the needs of our children**, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, so we spend time looking at and evaluating how children are learning.  This is achieved through talking to children, looking at their work, observing their learning experiences and analysing data. Every member of staff uses **ongoing observational assessment** to identify children’s starting points and plan experiences which ensure progress. This information is tracked on tapestry and Insight tracking which enables us to identify where support is needed for those children who are not on track. We use this information on a weekly basis to plan learning experiences so that knowledge and skills are built cumulatively.  Evidence of children’s learning includes observations, photographs, videos and contributions from parents on tapestry. Alongside the new curriculum, we are also adopting the approach of spending more time with our children and providing ‘in the moment’ specific support.

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children make good progress so that we meet the national expectation for GLD at the end of the year.  We believe our high standards are due to the enriched play-based exploration that we plan, monitoring of this and our response to that data.

Ultimately, we see each child as an individual learner and celebrate them as such.