



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2022-2023

**‘Together we live and learn, we play and
pray’**

Field Lane, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 4AY

Our vision is to create a community based on Catholic faith and values where every child is empowered to be the best he or she can be, nurtured by outstanding teachers, staff and governors

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to the end of their Reception year. At St Martha's Catholic Primary School children are admitted into the EYFS from the age of four and remain until the age of five when they finish their Reception year. At St Martha's there are 60 Reception year places. 30 in Reception Yellow, and 30 in Reception Blue.

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS

setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults, as well as an understanding of the importance and value of the EYFS principles amongst other school staff.

The Foundation Stage effects a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the child. In Reception, children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through play and a rich talking environment, children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop Personal, Social and Emotional skills whilst developing their confidence. In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises.

Aims of our EYFS setting

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually, to their full potential.

At St Martha's Catholic Primary School we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond, and enable choice and decision

making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The EYFS is based upon four principles for High Quality Provision

• A unique child

At St Martha's Catholic Primary School we give each child the opportunity to be the best they can be. We have realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children, using next steps that are individualised. 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 and 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 and develop a positive attitude to learning.

• Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Each child has a 'Key Person' that monitors their

progress and learning dispositions, this person is responsible for ensuring that the child feels safe and cared for, in order to develop a positive sense of well-being and achievement. If this person is not the class teacher, the adult communicates the observed needs of their key children to the class teacher.

· Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. The Reception unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas that the children can be active, and also be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. These may be enhanced or rethought as observations are made.

· Learning and development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning, Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Additionally there are four specific areas of learning, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive Arts 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. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. The Early Years practitioners plan broad and varied learning experiences and activities to meet the

children's learning and developmental needs. At St Martha's the starting point for curriculum development is Reception. Subject leaders are supported in understanding where the children have come from in Reception, and in which way the skills that the children have developed in their Reception year relate to the wider school and curriculum.

At St Martha's Catholic Primary School we support children in developing the three Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are;

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

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2012)

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Martha's Catholic Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, 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 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.

Behaviour

At St Martha's we set an example to the children by showing respect and kindness towards each other and to them. We encourage good behaviour by:

- Praising desirable behaviour and achievement. We recognise and reward positive behaviour
- We have high expectations of every child and we are positive and encouraging when talking with them about their work or behaviour
- Using Circle Time to remind children of the school rules and why we have them and to develop children's feelings of ownership, pride and 'belonging' to the school through group and individual discussions
- Organising and differentiating teaching and learning activities. Children with specific behavioural difficulties are given support by the adult, and through special needs provision if appropriate
- Dealing promptly and sensitively with unacceptable behaviour. We give children clear boundaries for their behaviour with clear explanations.
- Giving children time to reflect on their actions through the use of 'calm time'
- Children are encouraged to apply the PATHs calm down strategy of 'Turtle' in order to take time to think about their actions and feelings
- Giving parents regular feedback relating to their child's achievements and behaviour
- Respecting children in the way in which we communicate with them. Children are reminded of the expectations in a fair way, we discourage shouting when working closely with a child and only to indicate danger in order to keep all children safe.

Play

At St Martha's Primary School we recognise that play underpins all learning and development for young children. We do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through play, both planned and spontaneous. Staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities, with staff asked to consider whether they 'interacting or interfering'. Most children play spontaneously although some may need adult support. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own.

Keeping Safe - 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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. All staff in the Foundation Stage are responsible for ensuring the safety of the children, whether this is through discussion, reminding of risks, or reporting onto CPOMS.

Early Years Curriculum

We plan a curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development

across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGS). All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

3 Prime Areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal Social and Emotional Development

4 Specific Areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Children are provided with a range of meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Record Keeping Systems for Observations and Assessment in Reception

All children are 'baselined' within the first 6 weeks of school, this takes place once we identify that they are settled and gaining in confidence, although it must be completed within the first 6 weeks of the child starting school. The statutory baseline that we must carry out does not provide results for Reception teachers to base future learning on. Therefore, alongside the statutory baseline assessment, the class teachers will carry out their own observational assessments.

Through baseline assessments, we capture a picture of where each child is within their development and where they will need to be supported. Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the Reception setting at St Martha's Catholic Primary School. Regular assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs.

Observations are sometimes the result of planned or adult directed activities. Practitioners make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations. Each child has a 'next step foot' that has an individualised target relative to their learning and development needs. The 'next step foot' is updated once the child has shown that they can meet their target confidently and consistently (five times).

Children in Reception are made aware of their 'next steps'. We use 'Purple Books' to monitor the children's writing, samples of the children's writing is collected every half term. At the end of the year the learning journey provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

At the end of the academic year practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile. This information is explained to the Year 1 teachers as part of transition. We use 'Phonics Tracker' to record the children's progress within phonics. We record them from Phase 2 of their development within phonics.

Outdoor Area

Our Reception classroom has an outdoor area, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The outside area is an extension of the classroom and there are a variety of resources to

facilitate learning. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able 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.

Parents and Carers 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 their child.

We do this through:

- An information session for parents in June/July where they receive the Reception Information booklet and the School Prospectus which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the parents of the school's vision and aims
- An opportunity to talk to the Reception team during a Reception Parents information evening
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns
- Inviting parents into the Reception setting to see how their child has settled and how the classroom runs
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transfer sessions/ preschool visits
- Parents are invited in for various sessions with their child throughout the year

- Meetings for parents throughout the year, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Parents can also contact the school by telephone or make appointments to see staff at a mutually convenient time-staff are always available at the start and the end of the day
- Online newsletters (via Dojo) keep parents/carers informed regarding School events/activities and learning
- The half-termly class newsletter informs them of the current focus of learning in all areas of the curriculum
- We also send a weekly (Friday) update on the teaching and learning that has taken place over the course of that week.
- Parents receive a report during the school year.
- We regularly use the 'Class Dojo' app to send messages and photos to parents, we encourage this as a two way correspondence

Induction and Transition to School

(provided government guidelines permit)

Before the child starts in Reception at St Martha's:

- The class teachers will visit them in their nursery setting and meet with their key person to discuss the child's transition into school and their progress so far (home visits will be done for children that are not at preschool)
- They will attend a few taster sessions in Reception to meet their new class teachers and

learning support assistants through 'stay and play' sessions

- Parents are given a Welcome Pack to introduce them to the routines, expectations of school and what they can expect when their child starts in Reception
- Parents information meeting is held and run by the Reception teachers in the Summer term

Transition to Year 1 from the EYFS

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals (ELGs). The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key Characteristics of Effective Learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. At St Martha's Catholic Primary School we have a 'transition document' that we follow to ensure a smooth transition between Reception and Year 1. Parents are sent an information letter detailing their child's transition plan and their child's new teacher. In the Summer term the Reception children get to know

their new Year 1 teacher. Their Year 1 teacher visits the children in their Reception classroom and a programme of sessions is worked through over the Summer term. This includes a visit to their new classroom with their teacher. There are 'get to know you' activities that are to be completed throughout this term too. These sessions are a chance for the children to get to know their new teacher and environment.

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)

We strongly believe that early identification of individual needs is crucial in enabling staff to meet the needs of each child. Concerns are discussed with parents at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner. The school SEND leader will offer support and advice, seeking outside agency partnerships as appropriate. Further information is found in our SEND Policy. A learning support plan (LSP) may be created, in partnership with parents.