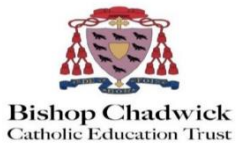




The Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS]

First Steps @ St Mary's Catholic Primary School



2025-2026

EYFS Curriculum Intent

At St Mary's and First Steps, we provide a high-quality EYFS education giving children a secure and confident start to their school life. We are committed to nurturing a lifelong love of learning alongside the aims of the EYFS statutory framework. We strive for high standards, consider the development of the whole child and seek to foster resilience and independence.

We aim to provide the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success and to give children the best possible start to their early education. We provide inviting classroom environments indoors and outdoors to stimulate learners and engage them in developing the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' as set out within the EYFS.

Staffing & Organization

At St Mary's, we have an EYFS Nursery unit, which holds up to 78 children in the 3- 4 year room and 40 children in the 2 year room. The EYFS lead is Mrs. Maria Walker.

2 Year Provision

- Miss Stokoe
- Miss Trotter
- Miss Armstrong
- Mrs Watt

3-4 Year Provision

- Mrs Walker
- Mrs Brown
- Miss Roberts
- Mrs.Douglass

Reception

- Mrs Carson
- Miss Connolly

The EYFS curriculum encompasses our school motto...

Work, Play, Pray together

We carefully plan our EYFS curriculum to meet the following aims:

- Foster a love of learning which inspires curiosity.
- Provide experiences of awe and wonder.
- Ensure all children have access to high quality learning opportunities.
- Provide parents/carers with the opportunity to develop their child's learning at home.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the community and wider world.

Implementation

- Quality first teaching across all areas of the curriculum.
- Stimulating learning environments indoors and outdoors.
- Well planned and organized continuous provision, which allows the children to learn through play.
- A carefully planned balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities.
- We promote a love of learning through real life experiences and opportunities to build on prior learning.
- Close links with local nurseries, which support a smooth and settled transition into school.
- Strong parental partnerships, which empower parents to support their child's learning at home.
- Systematic approaches to teaching reading to ensure all children learn to read. High quality phonics teaching is started as soon as children begin Reception, following the sounds write program.
- Opportunities for children and families to develop a love of reading.
- Planned opportunities for outdoor learning through 'Forest Schools' and in the outdoor classroom.

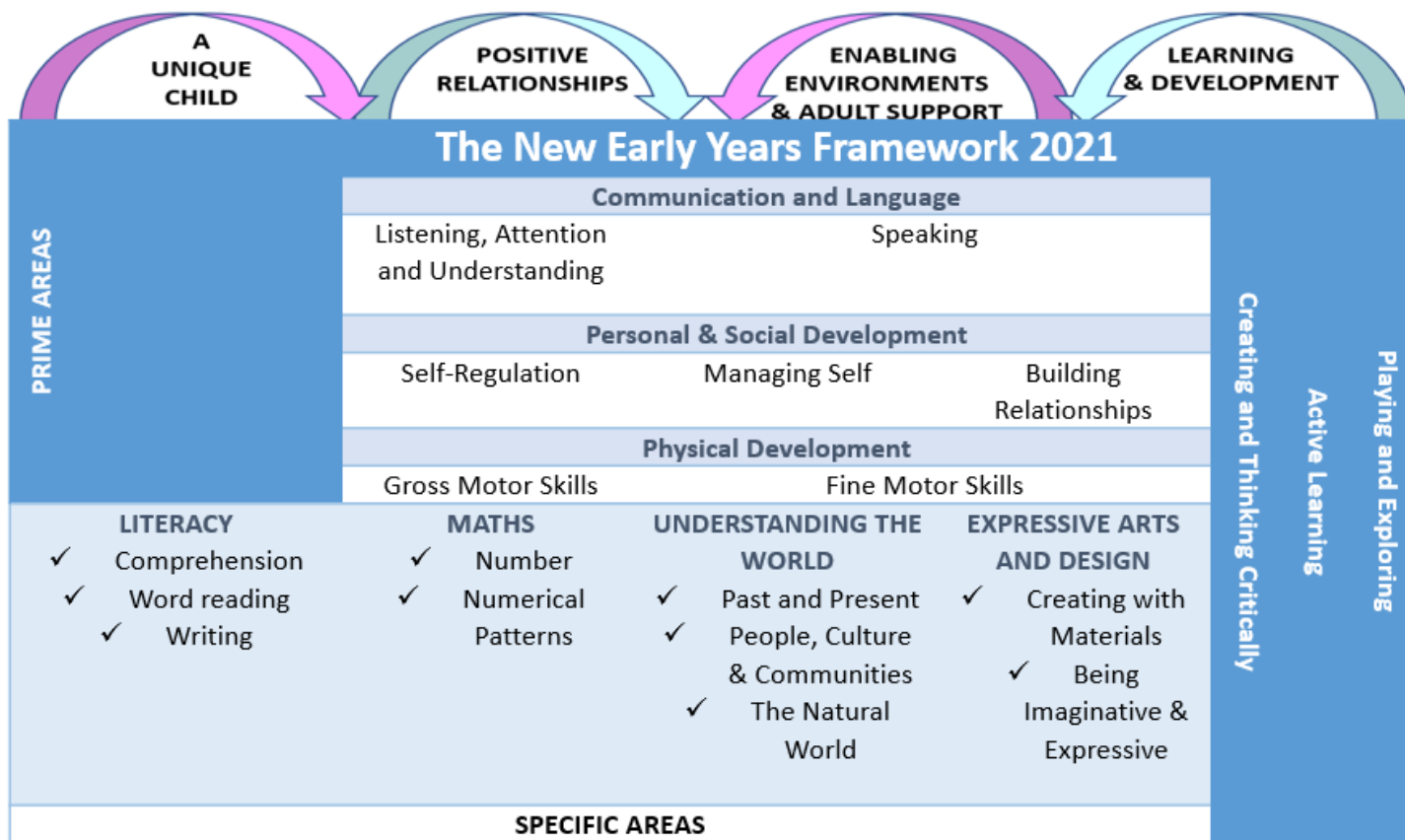
Impact

- ✓ High levels of engagement and motivation demonstrated from children, which supports them to become lifelong learners.
- ✓ Confident and capable readers who demonstrate a love of reading.
- ✓ Evidence of strong links with parents.
- ✓ Children demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- ✓ Children feel happy and safe and enjoy coming to school.
- ✓ All children access a balanced and challenging curriculum regardless of their background, needs or abilities.
- ✓ Children make strong progress from their starting points and are offered a broad curriculum, which meets each child's unique needs.
- ✓ Children are supported by adults that are well trained and passionate about providing the best education for every child.
- ✓ The percentage of children achieving the GLD within the EYFSP is in line with or above the national average.

Learning in the EYFS



We understand and appreciate the importance of the outdoor environment for our children. It is a continuation of our indoor provision and it will be used at every opportunity. At St Mary's, we provide our children with opportunities to develop their gross motor skills, to deepen their imaginations and also their sense of curiosity. We want the children to feel safe and secure at all times and ensure that our safeguarding procedures are rigorous and kept up to date. Communication is important to us and we greatly value the relationship that we develop with parents throughout this vital year."



“Children will have an abundance of opportunities to learn through play. We will ensure that learning will be fun, engaging and we will challenge and support all children where ever their starting point. As an EYFS team and effective role models, we will provide high quality interactions in order to develop and deepen the children’s learning opportunities. We will deliver our curriculum through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities based on the EYFS Framework 25’ & children’s interests.”

St Mary’s, EYFS Team

We understand that children will make progress at different times. There is no right time... they will progress when they are ready.



End of year expectations for Reception children.

Early Learning Goals – for the **end of the year** - Holistic / best fit Judgement!

 Communication and Language	 Personal, social, emotional development	 Physical Development	 Literacy	 Maths	 Understanding the World	 Expressive arts and design
ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to, and during other than one-to-one and small group interactions. Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding. Hold conversations when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers. ELG: Speaking Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary. Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate. Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences, using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses, and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.	ELG: Self Regulation Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly. Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and accept that immediate impulses when appropriate. Show focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several steps or actions. ELG: Managing Self Be confident in trying new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge. Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly. Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices. ELG: Building Relationships Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others. Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers. Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.	ELG: Gross Motor Skills Engage in space and obstacle safety, with consideration for themselves and others. Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing. ELG: Fine Motor Skills Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for first writing – using the tripod grip is almost all year. Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint, brushes and colour. Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.	ELG: Comprehension Demonstrate a understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary. Recognise – where appropriate – key words in stories. Use and understand rapidly increasing vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, poems and poems and during role-play. ELG: Word Reading Recall a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 20 digraphs. Read words consistently with their phonics knowledge to word-blending. Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonics knowledge, including some common sequence words. ELG: Writing Write recognizable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Spot words by identifying patterns in them and remembering those words with a letter or letters. Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.	ELG: Number Have a deep understanding of number to 20, including the composition of each number. Subitize (recognise by sight) without counting up to 5 – automatically recall (without reference to rhythm, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including combinations 1+4) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts. ELG: Numerical Patterns Verbally count beyond 30, recognising the pattern of the counting system – compare numbers up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one number is greater than, less than or the same as the other number. Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 20, including even and odd, double facts and combinations can be described equally.	ELG: Past and Present Talk about the lives of the people around them and their role in society. Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read to class. Understand the past through settings, characters, and events, recounted in books read in class and storytelling. ELG: People, Culture and Communities Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction, video and maps. Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read to class. Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction, video and – when appropriate – maps. ELG: The Natural World Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants. Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read to class. Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.	ELG: Working with Materials Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. Show their creativity, explaining the process they have used – make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories. ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with props and their teacher. Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs. Perform songs, poems, stories and stories with others, and – where appropriate – try to move in time with music.

It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.

Nursery Daily Routine AM

8:45 - 9.00 – WELCOME/GREETING TIME – Welcome parents/carers and children into the nursery to start their day.

9.00 – CIRCLE TIME – This is part of the daily routine when all the children and staff meet together to do action rhymes, sing songs, exchange news and have stories.

9.10 – REGISTER / PLANNING TIME – Register is taken and daily tasks completed. The children make choices about where they would like to work in the nursery and how they are going to do it, encouraged and supported by their key worker.

9.25 – WORK TIME – The children are encouraged to do whatever activities they have planned and at this time are free to work in all areas of the nursery, exploring materials, learning new skills and trying out their ideas. This is all achieved through well-planned play.

10.20 – TIDY UP TIME – The children tidy away materials they have been working with. This is a valuable learning experience for children, it develops their self-help skills and a sense of responsibility for their environment as well as encouraging them to co-operate with and help others.

10.25 – SNACK AND RECALL TIME – The children review what they have been doing by re-joining their own group of children and staff members with whom they planned and telling them about their work time activities. This helps to develop children's communication and language and literacy skills.

10.40 – SMALL GROUP TIME – This is part of the daily routine which includes activities that have been planned for the children by their key workers. The children will work in groups with carefully selected materials which will help them to develop a learning key experience suitable for their age and stage of development.

11.00 – OUTSIDE PLAY – This is a time when all the children go outside and explore and investigate the outdoor learning environment, developing their skills of knowledge and understanding of the world. It also helps to develop the children's physical skills.

11.35 – DISCUSSION AND FIVE FINGERS OF LEARNING – This is a time for the children to review what they have done today and discuss new vocabulary that they have learned. The children go through the five finger of learning.

11.45 – LUNCHTIME

Daily routine PM

12.45 –1:00 WELCOMING TIME/GREETING TIME – Welcome parents/carers and children into the nursery to start their day. Children have a drink / movement activity.

1.00 – CIRCLE TIME – This is part of the daily routine when all the children and staff meet together to do action rhymes, sing songs, exchange news and have stories.

1.10– REGISTER / PLANNING TIME – Register and key task. The children make choices about where they would like to work in the nursery and how they are going to do it, encouraged and supported by the nursery officers.

1.25 - WORK TIME – The children are encouraged to do whatever activities they have planned and at this time are free to work in all areas of the nursery, exploring materials, learning new skills and trying out their ideas. This is all achieved through well-planned play.

2.20 – TIDY UP TIME – The children tidy away materials they have been working with. This is a valuable learning experience for children, it develops their self-help skills and a sense of responsibility for their environment as well as encouraging them to co-operate with and help others.

2.25 – SNACK AND RECALL TIME – The children review what they have been doing by re-joining their own group of children and staff members with whom they planned and telling them about their work time activities. This helps to develop children's communication and language and literacy skills.

2.40– SMALL GROUP TIME – This is part of the daily routine which includes activities that have been planned for the children by nursery officers. The children will work in groups with carefully selected materials which will help them to develop a learning key experience suitable for their age and stage of development.

2.55 – OUTSIDE PLAY – This is a time when all the children go outside and explore and investigate the outdoor learning environment, developing their skills of knowledge and understanding of the world. It also helps to develop the children's physical skills.

3.25 – DISCUSSION AND FIVE FINGERS OF LEARNING - This is a time for the children to review what they have done today and discuss new vocabulary that they have learned. The children go through the five fingers of learning before **3:30 HOME TIME**.

Weekly Review Meeting

Date:						
What has gone well?						
Could be even better if ...						
Playing and exploring -Finding out/exploring - Experiencing things - Being willing to ‘have to go’ - Engaging in their interests?	Child Initiated Learning Outcomes:		Personal, social and emotional development -Building relationships -Self regulation -Managing self			
			Physical development -Gross motor skills -Fine motor skills			
Active Learning -Concentrating -Enjoying achievements -Accepting failure / difficulties and trying again -Showing motivation	What has happened?		Communication and Language -Listening, attention and understanding -Speaking			
	Links to learning:		Literacy -Comprehension -Word reading -Writing			
Creating and thinking critically -Having / developing their ideas -Making links -Explaining -Choosing ways to do things (problem-solving)	Key vocabulary used:		Mathematics -Number -Numerical patterns (-Shape, space and measure)			
	Level of independence?		Understanding the world -Past and present -People, culture and communities -The natural world (-Technology)			
			Expressive arts and design -Creating with materials -Being imaginative and expressive (-Using media)			
Links to oracy: can the child explain that they did / saw? -Explained something -Talked to someone -Decide something / made a choice -Did something by myself -Tested something -Worked something out / solved a problem -Made something -Practised something -Kept going when I could have given up	What will we do next?		Comments			

Date:					
What has gone well?					
Could be even better if ...					
	Playing and exploring -Finding out/exploring - Experiencing things - Being willing to ‘have to go’ - Engaging in their interests?	Child Initiated Learning Outcomes:		Personal, social and emotional development -Building relationships -Self regulation -Managing self	
				Physical development -Gross motor skills -Fine motor skills	
	Active Learning -Concentrating -Enjoying achievements -Accepting failure / difficulties and trying again -Showing motivation	What has happened?		Communication and Language -Listening, attention and understanding -Speaking	
		Links to learning:		Literacy -Comprehension -Word reading -Writing Mathematics -Number -Numerical patterns (-Shape, space and measure)	
	Creating and thinking critically -Having / developing their ideas -Making links -Explaining -Choosing ways to do things (problem-solving)	Key vocabulary used:		Understanding the world -Past and present -People, culture and communities -The natural world (-Technology)	
		Level of independence?		Expressive arts and design -Creating with materials -Being imaginative and expressive (-Using media)	
	Links to oracy: can the child explain that they did / saw? -Explained something -Talked to someone -Decide something / made a choice -Did something by myself -Tested something -Worked something out / solved a problem -Made something -Practised something -Kept going when I could have given up	What will we do next?		Comments	

Seven Key Features of Effective Practice

The best for every child

- At St Mary's children will be given an equal chance of success.
- We ensure that all children have access to high-quality early education. We pay particular attention to those children from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure we can 'narrow the gap'.
- We provide high-quality early education and care which is inclusive for all children. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning.

High-quality care

- Our practitioners ensure the children's experience is the central focus of thinking.
- We ensure our young children are well cared for to enable them to thrive.
- High-quality care is consistent. All practitioners enjoy spending time with young children and this is reflected in their interactions with children.
- Practitioners are responsive to children and ensure they form effective and positive relationships with all children.
- Practitioners support children to develop their independence.

Seven Key Features of Effective Practice

The curriculum

- The curriculum is well planned to ensure we identify 'what we want' the children at to learn.
- We ensure planning helps every child to develop their language skills.
- The curriculum is ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
- Planning is flexible to ensure children's interests are used to drive the children's learning and development.
- We ensure that depth in early learning is achieved through spending time embedding the children's learning.

Pedagogy

- Every child is enabled to make progress in their learning, with the right help.
- We utilize different approaches to learning to ensure all children make progress. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.
- Practitioners carefully organize enabling environments for high-quality play.
- Children in our early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning.
- As the children develop throughout the year they are given more guided learning.
- We have a well-planned learning environment, indoors and outdoors.

Seven Key Features of Effective Practice

Assessment

- Assessments are completed to inform planning and support the practitioners in identifying children who need additional support.
- Assessment is based upon a secure knowledge of child development.
- Practitioners have a clear expectation about what children need to know and how best to support them in developing their learning. Practitioners meet weekly to review and this a weekly review template is completed.
- Tapestry is used to share snap shots and wow moments with parents and for parents to share things from home.
- Good communication between multi agencies is key to ensure to support all children. Staff are confident in using the ranges to identify any areas of support needed.

Self-regulation

As part of our 'Personal, Social, Emotional Development' teaching provision we support each child's ability to:

- ❖ hold information in mind
- ❖ focus their attention
- ❖ think flexibly
- ❖ inhibit impulsive behaviour.

These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:

- ❖ concentrate their thinking
- ❖ plan what to do next
- ❖ monitor what they are doing and adapt
- ❖ regulate strong feelings
- ❖ be patient for what they want
- ❖ bounce back when things get difficult.

Seven Key Features of Effective Practice

Partnership with parents / families

- We ensure that parents/carers have a strong and respectful partnership in the early years, which enables children to thrive.
- We listen regularly to parents and give parents clear information about their children's progress through face-to-face opportunities and electronically via Tapestry / Dojo.
- Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning and development at home as this has a significant impact on their child's learning.
- We take the time to 'get to know' and understand the children and their families enabling us to offer support as needed.
- Parents/carers are invited into school for a welcome evening with their child prior to starting school. This provides parents/carers with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the classroom environment and meet other parents.
- Parents/carers are given the opportunity throughout the year to engage in the wider school community.
- Parents are invited into school for regular parents' evenings / stay and play sessions to provide an update about their child's learning and progress.
- Children with SEND or additional needs have termly SEND meetings
- We are flexible in our approach to communicating with parents/carers and adapt our communication methods to suit different preferences.

EYFS Statutory Framework

Characteristics of Effective Learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn. To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Areas of Learning and Development



Prime areas of development and learning lay vital foundations in the early years. The three prime areas are: CL, PSED and PD. The four specific areas are: L, M, UW, EAD which build on the development gained through the prime areas.

When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.

Development Matters [DfE, 2021]