

# St Mary Magdalen's Catholic School



*The family of St Mary Magdalen's is  
Centred on Christ to create  
Inquisitive individuals  
Who feel empowered to  
Engage in the world in which they live*



## EYFS POLICY

**Date of Implementation: Autumn 2022**

**Date of Review: Autumn 2024**

## **Purpose**

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Mary Magdalen's Catholic School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply as preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for birth to five years of age. The final year of EYFS is referred to as The Foundation Stage or Reception. All children begin school with a wide range of experiences and previous learning. It is the privilege of the Foundation Stage team to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. Our Foundation Stage Team work effectively with each and in partnership with parents and carers to support children's learning and development.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experience between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. 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. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

*(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021)*

## **Overarching Principles**

There are four main principles upon which the EYFS is based:

- The Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **The Unique Child**

At St Mary Magdalen's Catholic School, we believe that every child is a unique individual who is constantly learning. We strive to create inquisitive individuals who are empowered to engage in the world in which they live.

### **Positive Relationships**

We recognize that children can learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with all children and families.

## **Enabling Environments**

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between parents, carers and practitioners. We ensure that our learning environments are as enabling as possible through rigorous planning and observations of how children use our environment.

## **Learning and Development**

At St Mary Magdalen's we understand that all children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The Early Years Framework covers the education and care of all children in our early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. The early learning goals and the educational programmes are set out in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' document (DFE, 2021).

The seven areas of learning and development are:

### **Prime:**

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

### **Specific:**

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At St Mary Magdalen's we believe that once the children are secure in the prime areas of learning, they will be prepared to access the specific areas. However, all areas are important to ensure the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

## **Staffing and Organisation**

Within our Foundation Unit, there are two reception classes which share an indoor classroom, outdoor classroom, outdoor area and a woodland area. Our team is made up of two experienced Early Years teachers and a teaching assistant. The children in Reception are organized into two classes. The style of teaching and organization of the curriculum changes gradually over the year as the children develop, incorporating more adult-led activities to prepare the children for Year 1. The Foundation Team meets weekly to plan for the whole foundation unit.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage at St Mary Magdalen's are involved in making observations of the children's new learning. The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests and development needs as well as broadening experiences which ensure coverage of all learning strands. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning, however, these may alter in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. Regular assessments are made of children's learning and this information is used to ensure future planning reflects and addresses identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of recorded observations as well as the teacher's professional judgement.

These observations are used to inform the end of Foundation stage assessment against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning (Birth to Five Matters). Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report against the Early Learning Goals to parents. Parents are given the opportunity to meet the Foundation Stage team at various points across the year to discuss children's learning. There are also a number of shared events which parents are warmly invited to. The staff always promote an 'open-door' policy to enable discussions between staff and parents to discuss children's progress. Weekly newsletters are also sent home to share 'what we are learning this week' and 'how you can support your child'. The app 'EvidenceMe' is also used as an effective method of home-school communication and ensures that information can be shared easily.

### **Transition from Nursery to Reception**

Our aim is to establish a smooth and successful transition to our school. We ensure this by:

- Visits to nurseries.
- A 'Stay and Play' session for children and their parents in the summer term prior to starting reception.
- Parents completing a starting school booklet with their child to share information about their child with staff.
- Individual meetings are offered to all parents to discuss their child in the summer term prior to starting school.
- A welcome meeting for all parents in the summer term.

During our induction period in September, children spend the first week doing half days as they familiarise themselves with their new learning environments.

### **Transition from Reception to Year 1**

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to ensure the transition from the Early Year Foundation Stage to Year 1 is as smooth as possible.

At St Mary Magdalen's School:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organizing their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Our Reception teachers plan longer, more structured activities during the summer term in order to encourage more independence in each child.
- Reception children meet our Year 1 teachers during various activities across the year. A transition day also takes place in the second half of the summer term.

### **Safeguarding**

In the EYFS, the welfare and safety of our children is paramount. Safeguarding is given high priority, both in school and within the EYFS, and systems and procedures have been put in place to ensure all of our children thrive in a safe and caring environment.

Regard is given to most recent government documents relating to safeguarding:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2022)*
- *Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Setting (2022)*

### **Early Years marking policy**

At this stage of development all marking will take place alongside the pupil. The majority of feedback will be oral, highlighting positive aspects of the pupil's work and encouraging self-appraisal. All positive, written comments will be supported by the use of easy to understand, symbol-based stamps.