St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

EYFS Provision Policy (including Curriculum)

This policy is the responsibility of the Head of Early Years

Last review: September 26

Next review: September 27

Introduction

St Mary's School, Cambridge (the School) recognises that all pupils of every age are entitled to a curriculum which is characterised by breadth, balance, coherence, relevance, differentiation, and progression. As a Catholic school which espouses the value that all are created in the image and likeness of God, our ethos and our pastoral care is the structural framework that underpins academic achievement. Through the delivery of consistently good teaching and the implementation of support mechanisms, our pupils become successful, confident young women who will be enabled to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and become economically self-sufficient.

This policy applies to all EYFS pupils in the Preschool and Reception classes.

We aim to:

- provide a strong moral and spiritual framework;
- promote a strong sense of responsibility towards others, both inside and outside the school community;
- promote independent learning in each pupil through encouraging a sense of her own worth and talents;
- provide the highest academic education;
- enrich the pupils' lives with creative, challenging, and enterprising opportunities;
- nurture core values of integrity, justice, and respect for human dignity.

Learning and development framework

St Mary's School has an exemption from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development and assessment requirements.

The School sought and was granted an exemption in 2012 and again in 2021. This means that the School is not required to follow the EYFS learning and development and assessment requirements. However, all applicable EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements continue to be followed.

The School has chosen to retain many of the principles and approaches of the EYFS within its own Early Years learning and development framework. These include the seven areas of learning, developmentally appropriate practice, observation and assessment, and a strong focus on children's individual starting points and needs.

Our curriculum is designed to provide a broad, balanced and coherent programme of learning which reflects the individual needs and interests of our pupils while maintaining the School's distinctive educational ethos.

The education we provide is guided by the following beliefs:

- Each pupil is unique.
  All pupils learn in different ways and at different rates. We quickly establish the pupils needs through assessments and observations and teach the girls from their individual starting point.
- Every pupil has the potential to be a competent learner.
  We support each pupil individually because we get to know them before they start school, through visits to the classroom and from talking to the parents. Our small class size enables us to work on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.
- Positive relationships
  Pupils learn to be strong and independent learners through secure relationships with parents and teachers.
- Enabling environments
  We provide an environment where the pupil's development is supported, and their individual needs are accounted for. We value parents' contribution and support in their pupil's learning. We take our lead from the parents because they know their daughter better than anyone. Parents are welcome to come into school in the mornings for an informal chat with the teacher or to see their daughter's work.
- Learning and Development
  Pupils develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All pupils receiving early years provision, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, have equal access to the curriculum and resources.

Admissions

Pupils usually join the Preschool class in the school year that they turn four, and the Reception class in the school year that they turn five. An informal assessment is carried out by either the Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Juniors.

The EYFS Staff

Head of Early Years, Preschool Teacher and Key Person: Mrs. Eleanor Tagger

Mrs Tagger is responsible for ensuring that every Early Years child's learning is tailored to her needs. She will also guide parents on how to help their child's development at home. Mrs Tagger will be the Key Person for the Reception children. She will lead regular supervision meetings with all staff working within the Early Years.

Preschool Class Teacher and Key Person: Mrs Hannah Laurence

Mrs Hannah Laurence will be the Key Person for the Preschool children and support their learning and development needs.

Early Years Learning Support Assistant: Mrs. Melanie Osmant and Mrs. Cindy O'Connell.

The learning support assistant supports the teachers and works with individuals and small groups, both inside and outside the classroom.

Specialist teachers

We also have a number of specialist teachers who teach the girls part of the curriculum.

- *PE Teacher: Mrs. Cindy O'Connell*
- *Music Teacher: Mrs. Elise Dudley*
- *Computer Science Teacher: Mr. Andrew Severy*
- *Life Skills: Mrs. Jayne Hartwright*
- *Religious Education: Mrs. Vanessa Comyn*

If the Head of Early Years is away, then a supply teacher will be used to cover the teaching and learning aspects of the provision. All other matters should be directed to the SLT of the Junior School.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning, and these are underpinned by our whole school High Performance Learning approach, which supports the development of key learning behaviours and skills.

The seven areas of learning are:

Prime areas:

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

Specific areas:

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

Communication and language allows pupils access to an environment which is rich in language. Pupils will develop the confidence and skills to express themselves and to speak and listen in many different situations.

Physical development provides opportunities to be active and to develop co-ordination, control, and movement skills. Pupils are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices at lunchtime. This is further supported by lessons with a specialist PE teacher.

Personal, social, and emotional development helps pupils to have a positive sense of themselves and others and is largely taught through the EYFS PSHE scheme of work. Pupils will learn to form positive relationships, foster their social skills, learn how to express, and manage their feelings. Pupils are helped to understand appropriate behaviours and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Literacy involves the teaching of reading and writing. Pupils learn to link letters to sounds and they are given access to a wide range of reading materials to stimulate their interest, such as phonic and interactive games, a variety of books and classroom labels and signs. The pupils will also develop early writing skills through play, with a wide range of writing materials always at hand, and through teacher directed activities.

Mathematics provides pupils with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding, and using numbers. Pupils will learn to calculate simple addition and subtraction problems and to recognise and describe shapes and to use appropriate measures in activities.

Expressive arts and design encourage pupils to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Pupils will be given the opportunity and encouraged to share their ideas, thoughts, and feelings through a variety of activities. This is further supported by lessons with a specialist Music teacher.

Understanding the world helps pupils to make sense of their physical world and their community by exploring, observing, and finding out about people, places, technology, and the environment. This is further supported by lessons with a specialist Computer Science teacher.

RE in the curriculum

Religious education is part of Understanding the World but is also taught in discrete lessons throughout the school. It includes development of knowledge of the Catholic faith and other world religions. Each pupil's faith and cultural heritage is respected in line with our ethos and Mary Ward characteristics.

The Fundamental British Values in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Pupils learn the Fundamental British Values through the curriculum: Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance. An understanding of these values encourages pupils to:

- Develop a positive attitude to diversity and equality and to respect different cultures and beliefs.
- Know their views count through democratic action, such as voting to choose themes for the role-play area.
- Understand their own and other's behaviour.
- Distinguish right from wrong.
- Agree and follow simple rules
- Develop a positive sense of self and build self-confidence.
- Reflect on our differences and develop a tolerant outlook.
- Challenge stereotypes, for example through stories that reflect the value of diversity.

Assembly

Reception children will sometimes attend whole school assemblies. These will usually be led by the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Juniors or a visiting speaker. Reception children may also attend Hymn Practice.

Provision

Learning is highly practical and purposeful. Our team of dedicated and caring teachers and LSAs plan a challenging, enjoyable, and high-quality curriculum.

We have an open-door policy where parents are encouraged to come into school and talk about their pupil's learning and development. We develop very good relationships with parents and consider the partnership between parents and teachers to be invaluable.

The small classes enable the teacher to consider the individual needs of the pupils when planning activities so that every pupil can achieve their potential. Small classes ensure the emotional and social needs of every pupil are met so that the pupil's confidence and independence develops.

We identify and help pupils in our care with additional educational needs including more able pupils. We provide a rich variety of academic, social, and moral, artistic, musical, and physical education. We respect the pupil's faith, cultural heritage, and individual needs. These are reflected in the activities planned and in our assemblies.

Specialist teachers help us to provide a rich variety of learning experiences.

We have stimulating and exciting indoor and outdoor areas where resources are clearly labelled and accessible to the pupils. Routines are established early so that pupils quickly gain in confidence and can access activities and equipment independently.

The Mary Ward characteristics play an active role in day-to-day teaching and learning so that the pupils' social and moral understanding develops alongside their academic education.

Pupils are appropriately supervised at all times, both indoors and outdoors, and the School adheres to the applicable EYFS staffing and supervision requirements.

Pupils have access to a wide range of resources and equipment, both inside and outside. These are regularly checked, as a part of our daily risk assessment to ensure they are safe.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to providing equal opportunities and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and resources in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, our Equality Policy and SEND Policy.

Pupils for whom English is an Additional Language

If a pupil's first language is not English, the class teacher will plan a programme to provide opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in the English language.

The teacher will communicate with parents/guardians, using an interpreter if appropriate, so that the learning is understood and supported at home.

It is important that the pupil also develops their home language in School and feels it is valued. To support development of their home language there will be opportunities to explore it, where possible, through books, role play, oral activities and mark making materials.

Transition

Transition opportunities are important to help pupils settle quickly, calmly, and happily.

Parents/ carers have the opportunity to meet with the teacher before their daughter starts school. Information regarding routines and learning will be given by the class teacher and the parents can discuss their pupil's needs, interests, and requirements. The school will also contact the pupil's previous setting, if applicable, to request information about the pupil's needs and development.

Every pupil is invited into school for a taster morning or afternoon. This usually takes place in the summer term before they start school and helps the teachers/ LSAs to get to know the pupil.

Planning and Assessment

In our planning we reflect on the different ways pupils learn. Observation and ongoing formative assessment are the core of our practice.

At the start of the school year, the class teacher will assess each pupil's knowledge and understanding in a baseline assessment to establish an individual starting point for her learning and to inform planning.

Each pupil will be regularly observed and assessed in her daily activities and assessments will be made in all areas so that we can plan the next stage of teaching and learning. Observations of each pupil are matched against expectations with a series of goals. The goals incorporate the knowledge, skills and understanding which

the pupil should acquire by the end of the school year. Each pupil's level of development is recorded against assessment scales, and these give a picture of what the pupil achieves. Achievements will be fed back to parents at parent/teacher consultations and more informally throughout the year.

To keep parents informed about their pupil's experience at school we will record our observations using an online learning profile platform called 'Seesaw'. This allows us to share children's learning with parents on a regular basis. Parents are also able to respond and upload any observations or feedback that they would like to share with the school.

Each pupil will have a learning journey folder. Parents and pupils are welcome to view the folder at any time and, alongside their photographs and observations, this provides evidence of each pupil's writing progression over their year.

The on-going dialogue between the teacher and parents is essential in the learning process. We are keen to keep parents informed daily and we will take the opportunity to talk informally about a particular achievement or to ask for support if a pupil has found something challenging. Parents' evenings and our written reports are based on the progress made against age-related expectations and the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

In Preschool and Reception, parents' evenings take place in the Autumn and Spring Terms. Written reports are sent home in the Autumn and Summer Term.

Pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning: what they like or dislike and what they find difficult. We encourage through praise, and we give them time to show work of which they are particularly proud. Each week a pupil who has exemplified a particular Mary Ward value has hot chocolate with the Head in the winter, and lemonade in the summer.

It is important to identify pupils who find areas of their learning difficult so that early support strategies can be put in place as soon as possible. The teacher will meet with the SENCO to discuss the support needed and staff will work closely with the parents.

Please read the school's SEND Policy for further details.

Learning at Home

We share our observations with parents on an informal, day to day basis as well as at parents' evenings. Reception pupils will receive homework, this begins with daily sound sheets. Each week, different letters are put into the book with help given on how to sound the letter and how to form it. Ideas for extension activities are also given. Any homework will be based on the learning that has taken place that week in the classroom. The class teacher will also discuss any homework with the parents because each pupil will have different needs at this early stage. Advice is always available on how to help pupils at home and the teacher will suggest games, books and simple activities.

We strongly encourage parents to keep up to date with their pupil's progress and development and we encourage them to support learning at home.

The School Day

Before School

The school is open from 8:00am and the pupils settle into their chosen activities. Children are allowed into the classrooms at this time and teachers are readily available in the morning for a quick chat with parents.

Lessons

Both Preschool and Reception children will learn through a combination Child Initiated Learning, by interacting with our stimulating and inspiring learning environment, and Adult Directed Tasks. Adult Directed Tasks will be matched to both age and stage of development. The Preschool class will have several short and interactive sessions across the week, focusing on Early Maths and Early Phonics. The Reception class will have a range of taught sessions in all areas of learning in their classroom, and these will build up to preparing them for a more formal style of learning in Year 1.

Children will have access to our Outdoor Area throughout the day and we value the opportunities that learning in the outdoor environment provides. We will have a weekly Woodland Explorers session, and suitable clothing for these sessions is part of the school uniform.

Morning Snack Time

A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables will be prepared by staff and served alongside other healthy snacks prepared by the catering staff. Fresh water and milk will be provided to drink.

Lunchtime

A hot meal is provided by the catering staff at lunchtime and eaten in the lunch hall. Adults supervise the meal and will help with serving and cutting up food. Children are encouraged to try new foods but are not compelled to finish if they have had enough. We will always let parents and carers know if their child is not eating well. We monitor what the children eat and remind them about healthy eating and balanced diets. We always have high expectations for good table manners.

All food is labelled and whenever possible we cater for pupils with medical or religious dietary needs when possible. Parents should notify the school of any dietary needs. The weekly menus are available on the Parent Portal.

After School

The collection time for preschool pupils is 3.10pm and for Reception children, 3.15pm. We offer a Coach House Club until 4:00pm for children who need to stay after school finishes. Children who stay on after 4pm at Late Stay Club will receive an afternoon snack that will consist of sandwiches, fruit and a drink. Children can then choose from one of the play activities on offer. Late Stay Club finishes at 5.00pm.

We also offer Twilight Club which runs from 5.00pm to 6.00pm for those children who cannot be collected at the end of Late Stay Club. There is a charge for after school care.

Children can be booked in to attend these clubs on a regular basis or can be booked in on the day by phone, email, or a note to the teacher.

Outings and visits

Parents will be informed of any outings or visits we plan to take. The pupils in the EYFS usually go on a variety of trips. Some are local and within a walking distance of the School, for example, the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Botanic Garden. Others may include a short coach journey, for example, to Kettle's Yard and Shepreth Wildlife Park.

When the outing is further afield, a trip letter will be sent out in good time before the visit setting out the details of the trip and any specific requirements and risk associated with it. Parents/carers will be asked to confirm their child's medical information and to sign their consent for the trip.

The teacher will always carry out a risk assessment when taking pupils on a visit, or when visitors come into the classroom, and they will also decide on the safe staff/pupil ratios depending on the destination, type of visit and risk involved. A paediatric first aider will always attend the outing.

The risk assessment will also include the transport method. Pupils may travel by minibus or coach when the outing is further afield, and the risk assessment includes the method of transport. For further details please read our Off-site Visits Policy and Visitors Policy found on the website.

Other useful/related policies:

- *Off-Site/Educational Visits Policy*
- *Whole school Curriculum Policy*
- *SEND Policy*
- *Equality Policy*

For further information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage, please refer to the current EYFS Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education.