

St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Little Oaks Nursery



"Let your light shine"

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Status	Statutory
Responsible Person	Tracey Gill
Responsible Governor	Mary Clothier
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Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Little Oaks and St. Mary's CEVC Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and as preparation for life.

The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception Year.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

The EYFS is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The EYFS principles, which guide the work of all practitioners, are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- **A Unique Child**- every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being.
- **Positive Relationships** - how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.
- **Enabling Environments** – states that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context –transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.
- **Learning and Development** – recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

Children joining Little Oaks will already have had many experiences, and most children joining St Mary's will have previously learnt a great deal from other settings. St Mary's School is fed by up to 17 feeder nurseries.

What we offer our children is based on the EYFS Principles and seeks to:

- Build on what children already know
- Ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- Offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- Provide a rich and stimulating environment
- Partnership with parents and multi-agencies.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up feeling safe and healthy, with opportunities to enjoy and achieve, make positive contributions and have economic well-being. At Little Oaks and St Mary's we aim to provide a broad, balanced, rich and stimulating curriculum and environment, which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

At Little Oaks and St. Mary's we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through child-led learning, in the moment interactions and planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive.

We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences.

Learning and Development

Our Foundation Stage has a 36-place nursery with large outdoor area, two reception classrooms and a large outdoor area, which is shared between the classrooms. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Areas of Learning

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. Planning supports the children in progressing towards the Early Learning Goals and achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD).

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported in the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

At Little Oaks and St. Mary's, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach with a

balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the Foundation Stage, our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half-termly topic based approach, which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. In doing so, we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child- initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout the EYFS.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and events around them and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have, and develop, their own ideas, make links between different experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

We aim to deliver all the areas through child-led learning, in the moment interactions and planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child- initiated activities. **How we plan can be found in appendix A.**

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experiences that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning, and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that they are able to reach their full potential. Planning takes into consideration gender, special educational needs, children who are more able, different social and cultural backgrounds, different ethnic groups and diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is identified, we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents/ carers about the opportunity to apply for Early Years Pupil Premium. Any additional funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children’s progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas.

Visits and Visitors

Visits and visitors play a very important role in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Little Oaks & St Mary’s, as these are seen as an opportunity to further develop our children’s view of their world or community and widen their experiences. These experiences are carefully planned and tailored to whatever the children are actively learning about.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Little Oaks and St. Mary’s we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child’s development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child’s progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the children, contribute to the assessment process. In the nursery, we also use ‘in the moment’ interactions. We observe carefully, and enhance the learning whenever we spot a ‘teachable moment’.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child’s achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations recorded on class observation sheets, group observations recorded during adult-led activities, assessment on entry and other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents (Via Tapestry or informal/formal chats). Each child within the Nursery has an individual online Tapestry Journal, which practitioners add to.

Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child’s achievements. It summarises children’s progress towards the early learning goals.

Termly: Once a term, staff assess the pupils against ‘On-track’ statements generated in school and Nursery. These statements are based on practitioners’ knowledge of progress in Early Years, progression documents and the Early Learning Goals. Any pupil who is not currently working at the expected level is offered additional interventions to support their progress and development. The school and nursery tracking system, Insight, supports staff in assessing, setting and monitoring targets for each child’s learning. Members of the SLT, including the EYFS Lead, track data, which is then shared with the EYFS Governor. Nursery data is monitored by the Nursery Manager.

Annually: The EYFS profile provides a summary of every child’s development and achievements, including whether they have reached a ‘Good Level of Development’ (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification materials, and their knowledge of the children to make a ‘best fit’ judgement. Teachers attend the local cluster group moderation and LEA events, to ensure that assessment is accurate and in line with other schools.

The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each area of the EYFS curriculum:

- 2 = Expected ELG – meeting the expected level
- 1 = Emerging ELG – not yet meeting the expected level

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements. Parents/carers will be informed of their child’s achievements in a written report at the end of the Summer term.

Assessment on Entry

At Little Oaks, information from parents/carers will inform initial assessments. At St Mary's, the EYFS lead will review the transfer documents sent by the nursery settings and produce data from these documents. The teachers will start using the tracking documents during September and October, and October half term will be used as our 'baseline' assessment so that we have a clearer picture of every child's achievements/attainment. The teachers will also carry out the Government baseline assessments in the first six weeks.

Comparing Data

The Senior leaders will compare the school's data against national, regional, county and cluster. This data will usually be over a three-year period as this ensures a more accurate picture of the school.

**from Ofsted Subsidiary Guidance Sept 2013*

Home/School Link

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and so we aim to work very closely with them. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before nursery/school starts
- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting in the summer term prior to their child starting school. We outline the reception curriculum, to enable parents/carers to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Encouraging parents/carers to complete the home/nursery/school admissions booklet
- Offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and encouraging them to talk to their child's key worker/teacher if there are any concerns.
- Offering a range of activities throughout the year, that encourages collaboration between child, nursery, school and parents/carers
- Holding several parent/carer information evenings each year, for example to outline the phonics programme, reading, writing and maths curriculum in Reception, and to provide an opportunity for questions.
- Encouraging parents/carers to read to their child and also listen to their child read each day. Make comments on reading progress in a home/school reading diary (School only)
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July, summarising their child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales
- In Nursery, giving parents/carers their own personal login to their child's tapestry account which they can access throughout the year and upload their own comments, videos or photos.
- Giving the parents/carers the opportunity to attend at least two parent meetings. This is where adults can discuss their child's assessment and development. They will also have the opportunity to look through their books (Reception).

Parents/carers are always welcome to make an appointment to discuss their children informally at the end of the school/nursery day.

The Learning Environment

At Little Oaks and St. Mary's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins with the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources

independently.

Both the Nursery and Reception classes have their own enclosed outdoor areas and the children have free-flow access to these. Amongst other reasons, being outdoors offers children the opportunity to approach learning in a different way, to use their senses and to be physically active. We plan activities and resources for the children to access indoors and outdoors, that helps them to develop in all areas and encourages a positive attitude to learning. We encourage the children to make their own choices about the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Examples of the activities which take place in the EYFS here at St Mary's

Block Play (Build a bridge to cross the river, Make a home for a pet) Free choice what to build

Vehicles, people figures, small world, animals, trees

Variety of construction kits

Marble run

Explore multi sensory – sand, water, gloop

Mud Kitchens

Train track and trains

Multi sensory mark making

Multi sensory number formation

Word building with letter tiles/magnetic letters

Balance bikes and trikes

Large construction, crates & planks

Nuts and bolts

Creative making station

Various role-play areas. (vets, café, house, school)

Playdough

Tweezers

Tap a shape

Golf tees and hammers

Sorting

Seasonal materials

Cars

Loose part Play

Scissors

Playing cards

Interlocking cubes

Pattern equipment

Dolls

Dolls house

Painting with various media and various brushes

Dice

Books

Puzzles

Games

Malleable play

Sorting

Matching

Mark making

Cooperation

Interaction

Paint Play

Small World play

Role of Staff and Key Workers

Within the nursery, each child will be assigned a key worker and a buddy key worker. In school, the class teacher is the named the Key Worker. The role of each teacher/key worker/buddy key worker is to ensure that each child's care and development is carefully catered for through play and other experiences. Each adult aims to develop a positive relationship with each child in the group, as we believe that a happy and confident child is a child that is ready to learn. We actively seek positive relationships with the parents as well as the children.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2021) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy, which can be found on the website.

We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk. All children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Until Key Stage 2 (Year 3), all children are eligible for universal free school meals. However, if preferred, a healthy packed lunch can be brought in from home.

Each Foundation Stage classroom has access to toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene and hand-washing techniques.

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, all children within the Early Years Foundation Stage at Little Oaks and St. Mary's must be given full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year, and some progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able and are gifted or talented, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Nursery to Reception Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children. We therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child, and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff, and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if required
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to Reception

New class sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend time in their new class.

This means that before they join their new class, the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

September Intake - When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first week, children will attend for the morning session and lunchtime only.
- During the second week, and thereafter, children will attend for the full school day unless Foundation staff and parents/carers agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

The Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At St. Mary's:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception year
- Reception practitioners plan for some more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- Reception children meet Year 1 teachers during whole school activities during the reception year. e.g. lunchtime and assemblies.
- Individual folders are passed on to Year 1 teachers
- The EYFS Profile end of year class summary sheets and assessment records are passed on to Year 1 teachers. Teachers make notes about each child and give to Year 1 teachers.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July. Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and, if required, more visits occur to support individual needs.
- During the Autumn term, elements of the EYFS are maintained for continuity; the children continue to learn through a practical, play based curriculum, but this is also balanced with a more formal approach.
- There are plenty of hands-on tasks and practical activities, as well as the opportunity to use their own outdoor learning area.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The Nursery Manager and EYFS Leader are responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher, SLT and Reception team as appropriate, and any necessary actions are taken. All adults within the Nursery and Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets

Appendix A

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 do.

Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is informed by observations we have made of the children (These observations do not need to be written down), in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. As a whole school we have developed Curriculum Project Based/Themed Learning and curriculum.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six half terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to give a broad and balanced coverage this is school wide.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT.

Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

In the Moment Planning

This is when we do not plan ahead, instead we remain 'in the moment' with the children as they explore and learn. We observe carefully, and enhance the learning whenever we spot a 'teachable moment'.