

# SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

*Mr J O'Connor – Head Teacher*



## CURRICULUM POLICY FOR EARLY YEARS

Approved by: Joseph O'Connor Date: May 2023

Last reviewed on: May 2023

Next review due by: To be monitored and updated as required

## **CURRICULUM POLICY FOR EYFS**

### ***Mission Statement***

*“We Value All in the Name of Jesus the Christ”*

### **Introduction**

We acknowledge the statement that ‘the period from birth to five is one of rapid growth and development – physical, emotional, moral and intellectual. At this stage children’s development needs are complex and inter-related’. (Staring with Quality – DES 1990)

We believe it is essential to create an environment of emotional warmth, with consistent praise and encouragement, so that each child feels individually valued, well motivated and confident to meet new challenges and reach our high expectations with a sense of achievement.

We are in agreement with the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda as we want all of our children to be successful learners, to be confident individuals and to become responsible citizens.

We believe the Foundation Stage, which covers the development of children between the ages of two and five years, is important because it is in the foundation years that children develop learning attitudes, skills, social integration and personal organisation. We see play as a central tool for learning as it is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. Foundation Stage 1 (Nursery) refers to the year(s) before children start full time school. Children are eligible to join St. Mary’s Nursery in the term after they turn 3, therefore spending between 3 and 5 terms in our Nursery. Foundation Stage 2 refers to the year in which children are aged 4-5 years.

The Foundation Stage is based on four main principles namely:

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

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The first three are Prime areas of learning and development and the final four are Specific areas of learning and development.

We believe learning is holistic and cannot be compartmentalized. One experience may provide children with opportunities to develop a range of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. Each area of learning works towards a number of relevant Early Learning Goals, which most children are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage.

We as an academy community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

### Intent

- To make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun. Every child is 'Unique' and valued for being so, which ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- To encourage parents to become partners with the academy in the education of their children. Parents are the child's first teachers and are encouraged to continue to support in this process.
- To provide a curriculum firmly based on active learning to meet the needs of the individual child to build on what our children already know and can do.
- To offer a structure for learning, this allows children to work at their own level to match their needs and provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- To foster love of learning, enquiring minds and the ability to discuss, adapt and negotiate.
- To enable children to develop self-control and to respect the feelings, needs, culture and abilities of others.
- To provide positive role models which allow children to make their own choices.
- To promote the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual development of each child.
- To provide a stimulating and safe environment for learning where children can engage in first hand experiences.
- To support and extend children's learning through purposeful observation, evaluation and interaction.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

### Implementation

#### Organisation

The Early Years Co-ordinator is responsible for the management of the Foundation Stage team and the Foundation Stage Area.

The area covers 2 classrooms, a shared wet area, a central role play room used as an intervention and ICT area and a shared outdoor area. It is staffed by 2 teachers (1x part time), and a number of experienced support staff.

Both classrooms and the outside area are divided into different areas which children have access to on a daily basis. This is known as our continuous provision. These areas are:

<b>Nursery</b>	<b>FS2</b>	<b>Outdoor</b>
Books	Books	Performance Area
Mark making	Writing	Painting
Role play	Role play	Writing shed
Painting	Reading	Maths shed
Maths	Construction	Sand pit
Re focus area	Small world	Water tray
Play dough	RE focus area	Reading area
Construction	Small world	Role play hut
Small world	Funky Fingers	Role play boat
	Maths	Loose parts shed
	Creative	Construction area
		Gardening
		Physical Development
		Mud kitchen

Children spend the majority of their time ‘free flowing’ which means choosing where they want to learn. When this is taking place staff will ensure that the outside area is open which means children can choose whether to learn inside or outside. A child will not be prevented from going outside unless there is a genuine medical reason for this.

### **Planning**

There are continuous provision plans that cover the two classrooms (Nursery and FS2) and shared outside space. There are enhancements planned into the provision based around analysis of assessment data, and a mixture of children’s interests and adult led themes. Enhancements are changed at least half termly.

Short term planning outlines the adult supported learning for the half term linked to the topic from Cornerstones and also includes planning for phonics, Maths and RE.

Teachers and support staff collaborate over planning, sharing ideas for activities, resources and special events.

### **Impact**

### **Assessment**

Within each learning area, Early Learning Goals establish expectations for children to work towards during the Foundation Stage.

The Foundation Stage Profile, which focuses on the progress along the Early Learning Goals within the seven areas of learning, is completed on entry and at the end of each term.

## **Role of Parents**

We ask all parents to:

- work in partnership with the school;
- attend the induction process talks/individual meetings which are given to prospective FS2 parents;
- attend informal parent workshops;
- ensure children are appropriately dressed for outside learning and PE sessions
- work with their children at home on relevant learning activities initiated by the school

At Saint Mary's we believe that in order to ensure that each child achieves his or her potential an effective partnership exists between home and school. To establish this partnership 'new parents' meetings are held in June prior to the children's admission in September for FS2. This ensures that parents have the opportunity to meet the Head Teacher and FS2 Teacher and share any relevant information, fears and worries. New children also attend for some sessions during June or July to spend time in the FS2 Class, mixing with current FS2 Children and Staff in order to familiarise themselves with the environment that is the beginning of their school life. New Nursery children are invited for an introductory visit the week before they are due to start and have a home visit a few days prior to their start date.

We ensure that dialogue is welcomed between both Parents and Teachers through face to face verbal communication whenever necessary, notices on classroom windows, in letter form sent home regularly and through text messages and class dojo which ensure that parents are notified of events within school as well as 'good work'. Our 'Open Door' policy allows parents to share in their child's development.

Reporting to parents is in line with our 'Assessment and Reporting Policy'.

## **Links with the Community**

We provide opportunities for visits within the community and/or visitors from the community to visit our Early Years Unit to widen experiences and to make learning meaningful. Breakfast and After School clubs are available for children to participate in if they wish. This provides great opportunities for the Foundation Stage Children to mix with both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children within our Academy Community as well as providing a service for parents.

## **Arrangements for Review**

Policies are regularly updated/reviewed by staff and governors to ensure that all aspects of the EYFS policy aims are being met and the standards of teaching and learning in EYFS are continuing to improve. This policy will be reviewed again by the Leadership team and EYFS coordinator by May 2024

