

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Person Responsible: Miss H Shawcross

Date: Autumn 2024

Review: Autumn 2025



Mission Statement ***“Welcome to our happy school, where everyone is valued and given the opportunity to ‘let their light shine’. With Jesus in our hearts, we encourage love and respect for all. We strive to reach our goals, as we learn, and grow, in a safe and enjoyable environment.”***

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences 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.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, March 2021

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Aims at St. Matthew’s we aim to:

Make the transition from Nursery (pre-school) to Reception (full time education) as smooth as possible

- Provide a secure and caring learning environment in which children are happy and eager to learn.
- Provide a broad, balanced and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned and purposeful play in all areas of their learning and development.
- Develop a close working partnership between home and school.
- Provide quality and consistency in teaching and learning so every child can achieve their full potential.
- Ensure that every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Starting School and Settling In

When joining Reception, the children make a preliminary visit with their parents the previous term. Parents will have access to a presentation which will provide them with all of the information needed about the start of their Reception year. Reception children attend full days from the beginning. In the first term of school parents/carers will be invited to a Phonics workshop and a Maths workshop. These workshops offer ideas on providing effective support at home as well as building strong bonds between school and home from the first instance.

Staffing and Organisation

The Early Years team are passionate about inspiring children from the very start of their journey at St Matthew's. We provide a wide range of exciting opportunities and experiences through a curriculum which encompasses the best of both the indoor and outdoor space. Our aim is to ignite their appetite for learning, and provide them with the core characteristics required to become independent, confident, hardworking and creative individuals. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free flow play both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to children's learning. The Early Years staff liaise together in planning, preparation and assessment. We have 1 Reception Class, with a maximum intake of thirty children. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 within the Reception Year; there is a Teaching Assistant in the classroom throughout the school day.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** - children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** - children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional development** - help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

Prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- **Literacy** - children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** - children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- **Understanding the World** - Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Planning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The Foundation stage staff use an agreed format which includes details of curriculum provision, deployment of staff, learning intentions and targeted

children. Annual and Half Termly plans ensure that children experience a broad and balanced curriculum which is appropriate for their age and development. Short term plans select activities and learning objectives from medium term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly. Short term weekly plans also have scope for 'spontaneous planning', based on learning needs and interests as they occur through the week. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Assessment

At St Matthew's, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with Parents

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years' settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We operate an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work. Individual next steps and progress is discussed with parents/carers at parents' meetings in Autumn and Spring terms. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good health in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- Positive mental and physical health.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Equal Opportunities

As in all aspects of school life, the children will be treated at all times with the requirements of equal opportunities in mind. No pupil will be disadvantaged by reason of race, class, gender or ability. This does not mean that all pupils will necessarily have an identical provision as, for example, those with Special Needs or English as an Additional Language may receive additional support or have separate programmes of work. However, all pupils will receive an educational provision which is equally suited to their needs. For

specific reference to Special Educational Needs please see school policy. Monitoring and Review It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher, EYFS Leader and Subject Leaders carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. Internal half termly moderation meetings are held where EYFS staff meet to look through Floor Books/R.E./maths/literacy books, discussing progress and assessment in relation to the ELG's. Termly Cross-school moderation meetings are attended by EYFS teachers.

The EYFS policy has been created by the EYFS Leader (Miss Shawcross) in consultation with her EYFS colleagues and the Head Teacher (Mrs E Alderson)