

# EYFS

## The EYFS Curriculum at St Mary's Voluntary Catholic Academy Primary School

### Mission Statement

Christ is at the centre of St. Mary's as we strive to nurture and care for all our community members by encouraging them to **Believe, Succeed** and **Soar** within God's love, to achieve the very best that they can, in all areas.

### Our Vision

We are disciples who put our faith into action in all that we do.

We are role models who encourage others to shine and be the best version of themselves that they can be.

We are investigators who ask questions about the past, the present and the future.

We are artists who show our creativity and talents with flair and imagination.

We are storytellers who have a passion for reading and are able to communicate in many ways.

We are problem solvers who tackle tasks with an open mind and a positive approach.

We are team players who work together to achieve our goals.

We are explorers who learn new skills, embrace other cultures and value our locality and the wider world.

We **Believe**. We **Succeed**. We **Soar**.

### Our Gospel Virtues

**To achieve our full Christian potential, we all need to live out our Gospel Virtues: -**

#### **Love**

A Christ-like love respects the talent of each person in our school.

#### **Faith**

Faith helps us to do God's will in this world.

#### **Hope**

Hope helps us to see a new life beyond our present one.

#### **Peace**

We know that if we love one another, peace will be all around us.

#### **Mercy**

We believe that mercy will be shown by the way we forgive others.

#### **Community**

We believe our community here unites us all as followers of Jesus.

The **General Principles** of our curriculum are that children:

- **Meet Jesus through all aspects of their work.** Our intention is for children to encounter Jesus throughout their time at St. Mary's. Our curriculum has 'Christ at its heart' and every opportunity is made for the children to welcome God into their hearts.

- **Experience the challenge and enjoyment of learning.** Early Years is so important to ensure the best foundations are provided to ensure our children are happy, secure and want to be lifelong learners – to give them the building blocks for life!
- **Learn within a coherent and progressive framework.** The EYFS curriculum is built upon children's interests, learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development.
- **See clear links between different aspects of their learning.** EYFS is the crucial start to children's education and it is vital that children have every opportunity to have the skills, knowledge and resilience to be ready for Key Stage 1. Our curriculum is built to ensure all children have the opportunities to experience (first hand, where ever possible) to prepare them for their role as a proactive citizen in our multicultural society.
- **Understand the purpose and value of their learning and see its relevance to their past, present and future.** As well as continuing the theme in the point above, children will learn about influences on their lives from their families, communities and cultures around them as well as globally.
- **Explore the breadth and depth of The Foundation Stage.** The intention is that the learning is fun, immersive and supports the 'whole' child. **Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking**

### Intent

Our EYFS curriculum allows children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become creative thinkers. We aim to provide a fun, secure, challenging and rich educational environment that enables each individual to thrive.

Our Mission statement 'We **Believe**. We **Succeed**. We **Soar**' is at the heart of everything we do. We place a strong emphasis on the religious, spiritual, moral and cultural development of all our pupils.

We ensure pupil have a safe and stimulating environment in which to learn and explore and aim to foster children's individual wants, needs and interests in order to enable them to get the most out of their experiences. Our aim in the EYFS is to build strong foundations rooted in academic success as well as moral and spiritual development, so that ultimately our pupils can be successful, go on to be active citizens in our multicultural society and be happy, curious life-long learners.

Children have lots of opportunities to facilitate their own learning through carefully resourced provision areas and adults support children through high quality interactions that challenge thinking and extend learning. Our curriculum is designed around the child. By giving learning a purpose and application, skills for reading, writing and solving mathematical problems will become meaningful and more desirable.

Through play-based learning and topics we endeavour to provide each child with a range of opportunities which stimulate their creativity and support their development based on their likes and interests. We value the importance of the outdoor environment in order to enable children to develop their thinking, problem solving and collaborative working skills.

## **Implement:**

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This is made up of four overriding principles which our early year's education is based upon:

**Unique Child** – Every child is unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

**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 practitioners and parents and carers.

**Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## **Areas of learning and development**

There are seven areas of learning and development. The **prime areas** are: -

**Communication and Language** – involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

### *Phonics*

*We follow the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme that teaches children to read and write, at the same time as developing their spoken language, vocabulary, grammar and spelling. Phonics is taught daily in small differentiated groups. All phonics sessions are planned for by the teaching staff and all staff have received up to date training. Children are given the opportunity to consolidate their phonics skills through continuous provision activities around the classroom. We provide lots of fun opportunities for children to listen to and contribute to rhymes, stories and poems, exploring words and meaning.*

*Here are some links for further information about the Read Write Inc Phonics programme that we follow.*

<https://youtu.be/bXOJUPNVnLc>

<https://youtu.be/TkXcabDUg7Q>

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

**Physical Development** – involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

As children grow and make progress in the prime areas, this will help them to naturally develop skills within the four **specific areas**. These are:

**Literacy** – the early teaching of literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

**Mathematics** – the early teaching of mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and describing shapes, spaces, and measures.

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding – such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting – children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, ‘have a go’, talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

**Understanding the World** – this involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children’s vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

**Expressive Arts and Design** – this involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide 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.

The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

We aim for all of our children, no matter what their background, needs or challenges, to **‘believe, succeed and soar’** with their knowledge in all 7 areas of the EYFS curriculum and are ambitious for all of our learners.

## **Impact**

We want each child to get the best possible start in life and to be ready to thrive in KS1. At St Mary’s, we do this by ensuring ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning process.

Staff observe pupils and these observations are used to plan next steps and future lessons. Baseline assessments are carried out in the Advent term to allow us to monitor and track pupils progress right from the start.

Using Tapestry, each child has a Learning Journey where observations are recorded and evidenced. This Learning Journey is shared with parents constantly online. Parents are also invited to termly Parents evenings to discuss pupil progress.

At the end of EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals. As a team, we carry out regular internal moderation sessions and also ensure that staff attend external meetings and training to ensure that we feel confident with our judgements and that these judgements are consistent with a range of other settings. By monitoring assessment procedures regularly, we can effectively demonstrate what learning is taking place and how each child is progressing in all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

The EYFS staff are committed to raising standards by attending relevant CPD and ensuring each child at St Mary's has the best start on their school journey.

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to be exciting and engaging, focusing around purposeful play, open-ended resources and a rich learning environment with awe and wonder experiences to inspire and enthuse our children. Our curriculum incorporates our vision, our virtues, our environment, our daily routines and timetables, our interactions and engagement with our children in addition to our written curriculum. It is designed to have a level of flexibility which responds to the needs of our children and enables children to help steer the curriculum to support their learning. Our long term curriculum is intended to be flexible and adaptable according to the needs and interests of our children. We have a focus on the development of communication, vocabulary and language, focusing on our children's starting points. Our curriculum is carefully planned based on the needs of all of our children and their interests, thinking carefully about their background and experiences and is designed to give children, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

As a result of our rich and diverse community, we currently have 37% EAL in school and over twelve different languages and 33% SEND. Some of our children start with no or little English and many of our parents only speak their home language to their child so our curriculum is designed to be rich in language and communication experiences. Our first hand experiences and activities using objects of reference, are a key strand throughout the curriculum to develop language. We use songs and books as a key focus of our curriculum to support language development.

We recognise and look to provide for the needs of our EAL and non-verbal learners through speaking in other languages (we have a TA in school, who can speak other languages, another who is Makaton trained and use translation tools such as talking pens, communicate in print and Alexa to speak in other languages as well as staff learning simple words in different languages we have represented in our setting), visitors of different cultures, celebrating festivals from different cultures, singing and stories in other languages, representing pattern and print from other cultures and audio CDs in the setting and developing a cultural awareness in all.

In our school and local community, we have a wide range of cultures and we seek to broaden our children's understanding of the world 'on their doorstep' and beyond through their experiences in the curriculum, for example experiencing food and festivals from the cultures in our setting,

welcoming and working with members of our local community and working closely with our families through regular shared experiences. Our curriculum is planned to give many opportunities to experience life, celebrations and experiences from our cultures to promote harmony and understanding in our children as they grow and to prepare them for their role as a proactive citizen in our multicultural society.

According to a report Sept 2019 (LINCOLNSHIRE LIVE) Our school community is the **14,448th** most deprived area of England. (out of **32,844** neighbourhoods) There are significant levels of deprivation affecting skills and employment. Many of our children don't experience the range of career opportunities they could have in the future so our curriculum is designed to give them experiences of the wider world of work through our visits and visitors and key themes. Through our curriculum we seek to ensure our children '**believe**' to be the best they can be and to '**succeed and soar**'.

We recognise that many of our families do not have their own gardens and indeed outdoor space and through our curriculum and provision, we aim to support our children to learn outdoors and develop their physical skills, problem solving skills in the outdoor physical space and through our physical experiences in the curriculum. We recognise and support Lincolnshire's priority health issues to increase the level of physical activity and dental hygiene and support this.

It is our intention that our children in EYFS develop their love and enthusiasm for learning through their play, based on what they already know and can do and they develop resilience, engagement, problem solving, collaboration and aspiration to support them in their future learning. We link this to the most in-demand skills employers look for in order to start our children on their learning journey to future career opportunities (IT skills, adaptability, creativity, collaboration for example). As a staff we considered the key outcomes for our children at the end of EYFS and have tailored our resources and planning to ensure we give ALL children the opportunities to achieve in these areas. Our aims and aspirations are based on our children's cultural capital. They are:

**Nature**- recognising creatures and not being afraid, caring for creatures, observant, looking after plants and developing skills to grow plants and use and eat their produce. Using our WOW (wonderland of wonder) area weekly, throughout the year and learning life skills.

*Why?* -Many of our children do not have any experience of pets or animals and live in environments which do not give them the opportunity to grow plants and experience nature.

**Understanding of each other**- their place in the world, tolerance and acceptance of others, conflict resolution, enjoying a range of celebrations.

*Why?* We live in a multi-cultural community where racial conflict has been known to arise and our children need to be able to understand others and the world around them to become a responsible citizen in our community.

**Physical skills** - co-ordination skills in order to be able to ride a bike, climb trees, balance, jump and explore their space and to be able to use real tools to design and build their own creations.

*Why?* Our children often start school below where we would expect them to be with their physical skills and this is partly due to their environment- many of our children do not have gardens or outside spaces and don't have access to many opportunities to develop key physical skills both gross and fine motor.

**Risk Taking** - to be confident in taking risks.

*Why?* We are aspiring to support our children to become confident in identifying risks and taking appropriate risks to learn to deal with risk as they grow. We feel this is something that our children need to become confident learners as through taking risks they learn to grow.

**Language-** to be able to speak in a full sentence, making up their own stories and using language to make their wants and needs known to others.

*Why?* To support our children in their development of language- many of our children start School with no or very little English (coming from a different cultural background) or have poor language and communication skills when starting. Language and communication is fundamental for our children to develop all of their other skills and we prioritise these skills in all our time with our children.