

St Richard's RC Primary School, Longsight



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

The mission of St Richard's is that we know, love and follow Christ by looking after each other and trying our best every day.

Proposed by JM

Seconded by

Approved & signed by Chair of Governors

Date:

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Our Mission

As part of our school's mission, we seek to develop a partnership between the staff, children, parents, parish and the wider community of St Richard's in order to look after each other and to try our best physically, spiritually, emotionally and academically. All aspects of our school's mission begin in our Early Years Foundation Stage.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

At St Richard's, it is imperative that all our children are safe. 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 strive to educate children on the importance of boundaries and rules. We encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them in the choices they make. We aim to protect the physical and mental wellbeing of all our children. We promote good oral health and the importance of a healthy diet. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our whole school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which applies fully to our EYFS.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- Describe our vision for how children in EYFS at St Richard's will access a broad and balanced curriculum that provides them with the knowledge and skills needed for excellent progress throughout school and life.
- Explain how quality and consistency in teaching and learning will be delivered so that every child excels academically and no child gets left behind at St Richard's
- Explain how a close working partnership between staff and parents/carers will develop the potential of each individual child in our EYFS provision physically, spiritually, emotionally and academically.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) (Effective from January 4th 2024)

Structure of the EYFS at St Richard's

At St Richard's RC Primary School, the EYFS is structured as follows:

A Nursery class of 52 children. There are two teachers and three teaching assistants. Intake is staggered across a period of four weeks each September.

Two Reception classes of 30 children. Each class has one teacher and one teaching assistant. Children arrive in Reception on a full time basis from the start of the academic year.

Children in our EYFS are usually offered a full time place and the vast majority of pupils do have a full time place. This is occasionally adjusted, according to individual learning needs.

The curriculum at St Richard's

'A good early education is the foundation for later success' (Bold Beginnings, Ofsted November 2017)
In St Richard's EYFS, our curriculum aims to:

- Secure essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics
- Develop children's confidence, concentration and their ability to listen carefully and follow instructions
- Build quickly on children's prior learning
- Foster an effective working relationship with parents
- Set expectations of excellent behaviour
- Prepare children for the demands of KS1 and beyond

Our Nursery and Reception curriculum is guided by the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) and we use the Development Matters guidance to support the curriculum. At St Richard's RC Primary School, we enrich the EYFS framework with our own bespoke and challenging curriculum. Our intention is that our knowledge and skills-based curriculum is progressive, relevant, extends opportunities, inspires and motivates children to learn more and achieve academic excellence which prepares children sufficiently for the challenges of Key Stage One.

Learning to read is at the very heart of our curriculum. We recognise that reading is essential in developing children's language, vocabulary and comprehension skills. Acquisition of these skills is our priority and we enrich these in all aspects of children's work.

Children's learning experiences begin the minute they walk through the doors. Every part of our school day forms part of our curriculum, from the beginning and end of day routines to snack and lunchtimes and beyond. Every learning opportunity is captured, maximising children's learning at all times.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. Three of the areas are referred to as the Prime areas. These are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving (Early Years Framework 2024)

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring - children investigating and experiencing things and 'having a go'.
- Active Learning - children concentrating and keeping trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoying their achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically - children having and developing their own ideas, making links between ideas and developing strategies for doing things.

At St Richard's, we explore the characteristics of effective learning through a purposeful progression and a careful balance of adult direct teaching and child-initiated learning. Through being exposed to our bespoke sequenced curriculum, we strive to ensure that children at St Richard's will achieve developmentally appropriate goals across all seven areas of learning. This will enable children to leave our EYFS well prepared for KS1 and beyond.

Planning

The EYFS curriculum at St Richard's is meticulously planned to ensure there is a clear sequenced progression from Nursery to Reception and then from Reception to Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum guides the planning in our Nursery and Reception classes. We plan half termly themes with daily whole class direct teaching in phonics, reading, writing, maths and topic. Staff select themes according to children's interests, experiences and prior learning. Progress and curriculum coverage is monitored half-termly. Each learning area in the classrooms and outdoor areas have provision plans, which identify learning opportunities and suggested enhancements. Staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. They also respond to children's social and emotional needs as well as their academic achievement.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Staff plan carefully in order to provide a range of opportunities for children to move learning from their short to their long term memory. In Nursery and Reception, the learning environment is used to display children's learning throughout each half term. In Reception, children then take part in low-stakes 'sticky knowledge' quiz on a weekly basis to support knowledge retention in key areas of the curriculum covered throughout each half term.

Teaching

Staff at St Richard's are aware that teaching has different purposes but that most learning cannot be self-discovered or left to chance through each child's own choices.

With this in mind, we deliver 'playful' teaching and learning for all aspects of the curriculum through a judicious balance of direct whole class teaching, small group teaching, partner work and planned purposeful play and learning experiences.

We follow set routines with daily designated times when the children come together to be taught maths, literacy, phonics, stories and topic work. These times provide the opportunity for children to develop their ability to work as a group, to listen carefully, to take turns, to ask and answer questions and to concentrate. Whole class reading and story time are important parts of our day. We want our children to develop a lifelong love of reading. In both Nursery and Reception, every child is provided with a carefully selected book that matches their current phonic ability to take and share at home and at school. Reception children have the opportunity to select a book for enjoyment from their class library on a weekly basis.

Prime areas of learning are taught discreetly throughout all aspects of our curriculum with children in Reception also taking part in weekly indoor PE sessions led by their class teacher and outdoor games sessions led by our sports coach.

Developing 'Back and Forth Talk' across the curriculum

The number and quality of conversations that our EYFS children have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is absolutely crucial to their development. At St Richard's we have in place a language-rich environment where adults talk with children throughout the day. At St Richard's, we support the aim of reducing the language gap between children from language rich homes and other homes. We aim to ensure that disadvantage is reduced and progress is secured for the children at St Richard's through adults engaging with them in high-quality dialogue and direct teaching so that our EYFS children can:

- Articulate what they know and understand
- Develop their knowledge across all areas of learning, using the vocabulary they need.

Literacy

In both Nursery and Reception story time is a carefully planned and valued part of our daily routine with children being read aloud to from high quality texts at least twice daily. During this time, children are encouraged to engage with fiction, non-fiction, rhyme and poetry texts, participate with whole class discussions, learn and use new vocabulary and question what is being read.

In both Nursery and Reception, daily systematic synthetic phonics sessions take place using the 'Bug Club' scheme, with children being streamed into ability groups to ensure targeted teaching. Guided reading sessions take place daily with each child given the opportunity to frequently read out loud from carefully selected books that closely match their phonic knowledge.

Children use pencils and exercise books to record their written work. Staff teach children the correct pencil grip and posture and also teach them to sit at age-appropriate tables to support good controlled

letter formation. A focus high quality text is chosen and shared with the children. Writing tasks are then devised around the text that build on children's spoken language and comprehension of the text.

A low-stakes playful spelling test is introduced in Reception in the Spring term to support children's phonic knowledge and handwriting is directly taught through the use of the Letter-Join scheme. We focus on correct letter formation. Cursive handwriting is only introduced towards the end of KS1 at St Richard's.

Maths

Developing secure knowledge of number is a priority in our EYFS provision. Our maths curriculum is part of our whole school 'teaching for mastery' approach and is guided by White Rose Maths, which is used throughout the school. Daily whole-class direct teaching takes place. To ensure good progress, we use concrete manipulatives to support children's grasp of numbers and to develop their understanding of linking concrete experiences with visual and symbolic representations. As the children become secure and automatic in their knowledge, more formal written recordings are introduced.

Understanding the World

This area of learning is taught under a topic theme. Themes change each half term. A learning journey accompanies each theme. In Reception, each theme alternates between a history/geography focus and has a science element running throughout. Key subject-specific vocabulary is introduced to prepare children for The National Curriculum in Year One.

Expressive Arts and Design

In Nursery, we explore EAD through our topic theme and focus text.

In Reception, we work closely with Pennine Studios to devise and deliver a skills-based EAD curriculum with termly projects being completed. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing through positive and warm interactions and back and forth talk. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete a task with them; at other times, they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible.

Assessment and Recording

At St Richard's we want EYFS assessment to be meaningful without being onerous or counter-productive. Observation of children's achievements is important but observation can put adults in a state of judgement rather than interaction. Every moment spent in observing, recording, collecting and compiling evidence takes adults' time away from teaching, interacting and talking.

On entry to Nursery, children complete a baseline assessment (see appendix). Parents also have the opportunity to enrich and complement in-school assessment by sharing their child's prior knowledge by completing an information booklet which is sent home to them in the summer term before their child starts Nursery.

Reception children complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). From here, assessment for learning is then ongoing. At St Richard's RC Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. 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.

Throughout the year, EYFS staff document evidence of achievements across all areas of learning through judgements based on quality interactions and meaningful observations and book/work-based evidence. These judgements are recorded on:

- In Nursery, online learning portfolios are commenced for each child using '2Simple-Evidence Me'. Nursery Practitioners use iPods to photograph children's key achievements. These achievements are linked to learning objectives. 'Next steps' comments can then be made to take the children's learning forward.
- In Nursery, practitioners often use photographs to evidence key achievements when participating in practical activities.
- In Reception, practitioners often use photographs of children's practical experiences as a stimulus for their written responses. They complement this by using 2Simple- Evidence Me.

- Nursery and Reception both use the same whole school Phonics Tracker in order to record and monitor pupils' phonological progress. Updates are made at least every half-term – and often more frequently.
- Half termly monitoring trackers: Nursery and Reception both use tracking sheets to record and monitor pupils' achievements in all 7 areas of the curriculum.
- Where Learning Journeys are used in Nursery and Reception, an ongoing record of each pupil's progress is recorded by the child's teacher against each objective as part of our Marking and Feedback policy. This record is also the start of a whole school process in place at St Richard's which is designed to involve and inform pupils of their progress and achievements in their Learning Journeys.

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 ('expected')
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The EYFS profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents/carers and is used at St Richard's as a guide to end-of-Reception expectations rather than to define what is taught. The results of the EYFS profile are shared with parents/carers for their child.

Partnership with Year One

In the summer term before Reception children move on to Year One, the results of the EYFS profile are shared by our Reception teachers with receiving teachers, so that Year One teachers have a good understanding of each child's strengths and prioritised areas for development. In addition, Reception teachers share checks of children's phonics knowledge, any standardised test scores and samples of pupils' work. The profile is moderated to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Partnerships with parents

At St Richard's, we believe that parents are the first and most important educators of their children. We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers. We therefore want to work very closely to ensure that parents/carers are involved in their child's education, and provide them with a weekly home learning task detailing what we are learning and how they can support their child at home. Parents are encouraged to share their home learning tasks with staff on their Google Classroom platform.

At St Richard's we offer workshops to provide parents with an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years Curriculum, detailing ways in which they can support their child's learning at home.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy was updated and approved by the full Governing Body at its Spring Term Meeting on Wednesday 20th March 2024.