



EYFS Policy

2024 - 2026

'Be the best you can be'

Field Lane, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 4AY

Our vision is to create a community based on Catholic faith and values where every child is empowered to be the best he or she can be, nurtured by outstanding teachers, staff and governors

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2023.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to the end of their Reception year. At St Martha's Catholic Primary School children are admitted into the EYFS for their Reception Year. At St Martha's there are 60 Reception year places. 30 in Reception Yellow, and 30 in Reception Blue.

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults, as well as an understanding of the importance and value of the EYFS principles amongst other school staff, this is overseen by the EYFS Phase Lead.

The Foundation Stage affects a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the child. In Reception, children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through play and a rich talking environment, children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop Personal, Social and Emotional skills whilst developing their confidence. In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises.

Aims of our EYFS setting

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually, to their full potential, striving to be the best they can be.

At St Martha's Catholic Primary School we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond, and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

At appropriate opportunities the adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- Demonstrate, model and work alongside the children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support and encourage the children
- Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- Re-direct the play if necessary
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promote children's well-being
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure

The EYFS is based upon four principles for High Quality Provision

- A unique child

At St Martha's Catholic Primary School we give each child the opportunity to be the best they can be. We have realistic and challenging expectations that

meet the needs of all of our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children, using next steps that are individualised. We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

· Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Each child has a 'Key Person' that monitors their progress and learning dispositions, this person is responsible for ensuring that the child feels safe and cared for, in order to develop a positive sense of well-being and achievement. If this person is not the class teacher, the adult communicates the observed needs of their key children to the class teacher.

· Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. The Reception unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas that the children can be active, and also be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. These may be enhanced or rethought as observations are made.

· Learning and development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning, Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Additionally there are four specific areas of learning, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive Arts and Design. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. The Early Years practitioners plan broad and varied learning experiences and activities to meet the children's learning and developmental needs. At St Martha's the starting point for curriculum development is Reception. Subject leaders are supported in understanding where the children have come from in Reception, and in which way the skills that the children have developed in their Reception year relate to the wider school and curriculum.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Martha's Catholic Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Behaviour

At St Martha's we set an example to the children by showing respect and kindness towards each other and to them. We encourage good behaviour by:

- Praising desirable behaviour and achievement. We recognise and reward positive behaviour
- We have high expectations of every child and we are positive and encouraging when talking with them about their work or behaviour
- Using Circle Time to remind children of the school rules and why we have them and to develop children's feelings of ownership, pride and 'belonging' to the school through group and individual discussions
- Organising and differentiating teaching and learning activities. Children with specific behavioural difficulties are given support by the adult, and through special needs provision if appropriate
- Dealing promptly and sensitively with unacceptable behaviour. We give children clear boundaries for their behaviour with clear explanations.
- Giving children time to reflect on their actions through the use of 'calm time'
- Giving parents regular feedback relating to their child's achievements and behaviour
- Respecting children in the way in which we communicate with them. Children are reminded of the expectations in a fair way, we discourage shouting when working closely with a child and only to indicate danger in order to keep all children safe.

Play

At St Martha's Primary School we recognise that play underpins all learning and development for young children. We do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through play, both planned and spontaneous. Staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities, with staff asked to consider whether they are 'interacting or interfering'. Most children play spontaneously although some may need adult support. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and

outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. All staff in the Foundation Stage are responsible for ensuring the safety of the children, whether this is through discussion, reminding of risks, or reporting onto CPOMS.

Early Years Curriculum

We plan a curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGS). All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

3 Prime Areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal Social and Emotional Development

4 Specific Areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Children are provided with a range of meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Record Keeping Systems for Observations and Assessment in Reception

All children are 'baselined' within the first 6 weeks of school, this takes place once we identify that they are settled and gaining in confidence, although it must be completed within the first 6 weeks of the child starting school, this is done through the government Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The statutory baseline that we must carry out does not provide results for Reception teachers to base future learning on. Therefore, alongside the statutory baseline assessment, the class teachers will carry out their own observational assessments.

Through baseline assessments, we capture a picture of where each child is within their development and where they will need to be supported. Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the Reception setting at St Martha's Catholic Primary School. Regular assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. Observations are sometimes the result of planned or adult directed activities. Practitioners make

spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations. Each child has a 'next step foot' that has an individualised target relative to their learning and development needs. The 'next step foot' is updated once the child has shown that they can meet their target confidently and consistently (five times). Children in Reception are made aware of their 'next steps'. We use 'Purple Books' to monitor the children's writing, samples of the children's writing is collected every half term. At the end of the year the learning journey provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

At the end of the academic year practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile. 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 and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request. This information is explained to the Year 1 teachers as part of transition.

We use 'Phonics Tracker' to record the children's progress within phonics. We record them from Phase 2 of their development within phonics.

Outdoor Area

Our Reception classroom has an outdoor area, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The outside area is an extension of the classroom and there are a variety of resources to facilitate learning. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

Parents and Carers as partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their child.

- Before parents apply to come to our school, we open our school to welcome prospective parents and their child. During this session the EYFS teachers, EYFS Phase Lead and the Headteacher share the vision of St Martha's and how this is achieved in our Reception setting.
- In the Summer term we invite new parents to a session where they receive further information about our EYFS structure and approach, alongside the pertinent wider school information. This session highlights to parents school start and finish times, uniform and informs the parents of the school's vision and aims.
- Parents have an opportunity to talk to the Reception team during a Reception Parents information afternoon/evening.
- We encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns, we acknowledge the busy lives that our parents have, and therefore are contactable via email or Class Dojo too.
- Teachers are available at the start and the end of the school day at their classroom doors and welcome conversations with parents.
- We ensure that children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transfer sessions/ preschool visits
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Online newsletters keep parents/carers informed regarding school events/activities and learning, each Friday the teachers share what the class have been learning in the week prior, on Dojo.
- We regularly use the 'Class Dojo' app to send messages and photos to parents, we encourage this as a two way correspondence

Induction and Transition to School

(provided government guidelines permit)

Before the child starts in Reception at St Martha's:

- The class teachers will visit them in their nursery setting and meet with their key person to discuss the child's transition into school and their progress so far (home visits will be done for children that are not at preschool)
- They will attend a taster session in Reception to meet their new class teachers and learning support assistants through a 'stay and play' session.
- Parents are given a Welcome Pack to introduce them to the routines, expectations of school and what they can expect when their child starts in Reception
- Parents information meeting is held and run by the Reception teachers in the Summer term in preparation for September.
- At St Martha's we have explored many ways of transitioning the children into school for the first time. In September we invite children to stay at school for half a day, for several sessions- during this time the children do not have lunch at school. During the second phase the children will

attend school full time every day. Transition into school is carefully managed and planned to ensure the best for the children, setting them up to be confident and happy at school.

Transition to Year 1 from the EYFS

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals (ELGs). The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key Characteristics of Effective Learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs, and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)

We strongly believe that early identification of individual needs is crucial in enabling staff to meet the needs of each child. Concerns are discussed with parents at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner. The school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator will offer support and advice, seeking outside agency partnerships as appropriate. Further information is found in our SEND Policy. A learning support plan (LSP) may be created, in partnership with parents.