



St Monica's Early Years Policy

'Here at St Monica's, we recognise that we are all cherished members of God's family. We love and care for one another, and trust God to guide us in all we do and say. By learning together, we aim to achieve and by working together, will succeed'.

OVERVIEW

At St Monica's RC Primary School, we believe in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development for our children. 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. Reception and Nursery work closely with each other to ensure continuity and consistency between the foundation stages.

Our Mission statement states 'we learn together to achieve and work together to succeed.' We place a strong emphasis on the religious, spiritual, moral and cultural development of all our pupils. Learning at St Monica's is values-based. We value our faith and the message of tolerance and peace that it brings to all in our school. We value our safe environment where we come together to rejoice as a family, secure in our faith. Our values shape how we behave, what we say, how we build relationships and how we learn. They are incorporated in every aspect of life at St Monica's. We recognise that every child is a unique individual, formed in the image of Our Lord. We celebrate and welcome the differences within our school and local community.

We work from the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2021, which sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old. Opportunities are provided for the children to meet the expectations laid out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage'. This non-statutory guidance material supports practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of the EYFS.

INTENT

In the EYFS at St Monica's, our curriculum recognises children's prior learning from previous settings and their experiences at home. We believe that children in the EYFS need to experience a wide variety of first hand, practical learning opportunities to enable them to develop to their full potential. We aim to provide a secure, enjoyable and caring educational environment where each and every child feels valued. We work hard to create continuity between our Nursery and Reception classes so the children can build on skills already developed and follow routines that fit with their needs. We want the children to feel safe and confident throughout their early years, in preparation for their future years in school. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. Our knowledge-rich curriculum provides children with opportunities to learn facts and information, but also gives them diverse and rich experiences from which they are able to develop transferable skills. We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that our first experiences of school should be happy and positive, enabling us to develop a lifelong love of learning. Community involvement is also an essential part of our curriculum as we celebrate local traditions, learning new skills to enable the children to take an active role in events throughout the year. Throughout their time in EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to our school community, ready to transition to year 1. They have the confidence and skills to make decisions and self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners.

We intend:

- To work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points.
- To understand and follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure children meet their next steps.
- To create an indoor and outdoor environment which supports learning.
- To prepare children to reach the Early Learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage and ensure children make at least good progress from their starting points. To support transition into KS1.

IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout EYFS at St Monica's, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework. This framework is split into 7 important areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. 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 strengthened and applied through the remaining 4 areas, known as '**Specific areas**'

The prime areas are:

Communication and language

Physical development

Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the world

Expressive arts and design

These 7 areas are used to plan children's learning, activities and experience. We have a curriculum that is child-centred and is based upon experiences and topics which engage the children. We encourage active learning to ensure the children are motivated and interested. We take time to get to know children's interests and their likes to support learning. All areas of the EYFS curriculum are planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment.

Continuous provision practise and principles begin in EYFS and support children to develop key life skills such as independence, innovation, creativity, enquiry, analysis and problem solving. During the school day, children will have an opportunity to work and play independently, work and play collaboratively with their friends and with members of staff. Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. Our outdoor areas are used all year round and in most weather conditions. Daily guided activities are also planned to cover different areas of the EYFS curriculum and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. There are also a range of stimulating and engaging activities, which the children can access independently, and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play. In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practise. We regularly assess where the children are, using the 'Development Matters' document to ensure our planning, adult interactions and learning environment support children to reach their next steps. Interventions are put in place for those children

who are at risk of not reaching a 'Good Level of Development'. Staff in the EYFS facilitate children's play and learning, to ensure their next steps are met.

Communication with Parents/Transition

To support our wider curriculum, we provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to come into school, share their work and celebrate successes. We keep parents informed and we meet regularly with them to ensure children's transition into school and through the EYFS is happy and allows them to reach their potential with the support needed. This includes transition sessions, nursery or home visits, stay and play sessions, parent workshops, Tapestry learning journeys, dojo, reports and parent consultations as well as more frequent and informal communication to suit individual families.

We also support the transition into Key Stage 1 for both child and parents. We prepare children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of EYFS and the start of Year 1. Parents have the opportunity to meet with new teachers and visit their child's new learning environment.

SEND Provision and Equal Opportunities

All children are offered a broad and balanced curriculum, they are encouraged and supported to develop their full potential, irrespective of their gender, ethnic and social backgrounds, and special educational needs. Some children may require extra support in their learning and opportunities for consolidation and reinforcement. Activities are differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils

IMPACT

We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be at least in line with National Expectations. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. We use O-Track at key points throughout the year to track children's progression and assess whether they are on Track to meet the Early Learning Goals or need further support.

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

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers at the end of the year. Children must achieve 'expected' level of development in the 'Prime areas' as well as Literacy and Mathematics in order to reach a 'Good Level of Development'.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored in line with the school's Monitoring and Evaluating the Curriculum Policy and the policy will be reviewed by the staff.