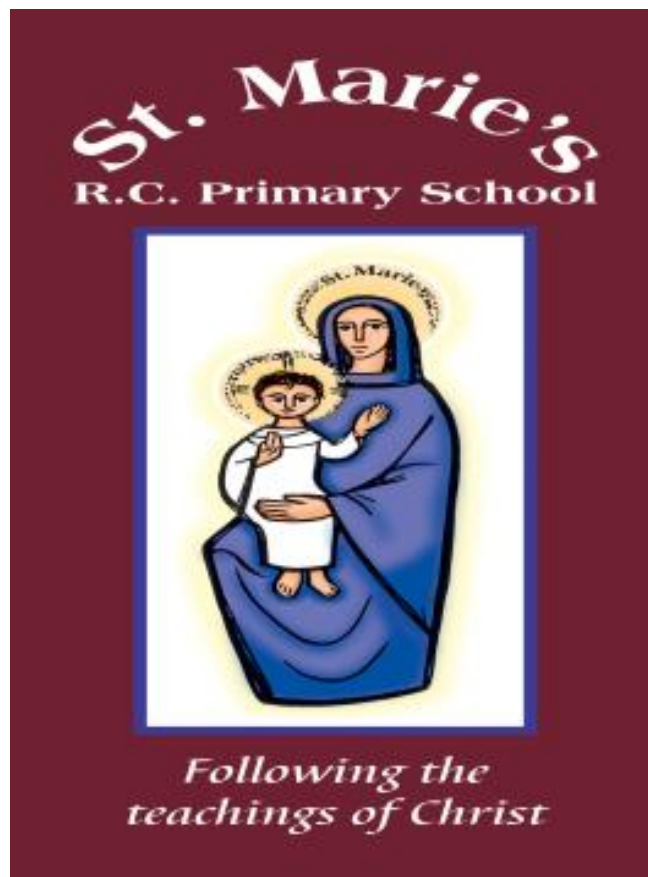


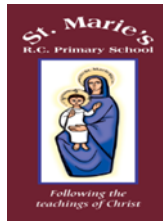


Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Last updated: March 2026

M. Mallalieu



Vision Statement

St Marie's is proud to be Catholic school, using the teachings of Christ as our foundations.

Within the care of Our Blessed Lady, we aim to make our school a place where children can safely learn through outstanding and innovative teaching, build on their potential, fulfil their dreams, and grow in faith and love.

Our Mission

As Christ's hand and feet on earth, we will...

- Follow the teachings of Christ so that all may grow in faith
- Recognise and value each child as a loved and unique child of God
- Treat each person with respect, tolerance and honesty in an atmosphere of love and security.
- Celebrate, nurture and strengthen the relationship between our school family: Our school, our families, our parish and our community
- Inspire those within our care to become successful, caring members of our diverse society and transform the lives of others.

‘All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.’ (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024)



As a Rights Respecting School, the following articles underpin this policy for our approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage

Article 2 The Convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. **Article 3** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 12 Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 29 Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS) sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. This sets the standard for learning, development and care for children from birth to 5 years old. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

Each year The Department for Education publishes an updated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The Department for Education (DfE) has published Development Matters (2023), which is a non-statutory curriculum guidance which supports the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and Birth to 5 Matters, published by the Early Years Coalition (2021). We currently use these at St Marie's RC Primary School to support the teaching and learning across our early years. These documents encourage early years practitioners to use their knowledge to facilitate holistic learning and development and help children make progress.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four overarching principles: These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

To put these principles into practice, we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

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

There are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- 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. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Our Ethos

Explore, Discover, Grow

Exploration and discovery is at the heart of our Early Years philosophy. Children learn through first hand experiences and innovative ideas, enabling them to **grow** in themselves, their ideas and their values.

Our language-rich and engaging environment, encourages children to explore, investigate, question and learn.

Our curriculum is challenging and ambitious. It is carefully planned and rooted in the interests of our children; it is inclusive, flexible and unique to the needs of our diverse, and multicultural community.

Through well established, caring relationships our children and their families are nurtured to build strong foundations enabling us to thrive and learn together.

Our ethos supports our children to develop a positive sense of themselves, show empathy for others, build friendships, flourish as unique individuals and develop an appreciation of God's wonderful world.

As we journey together and follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we Explore, Discover and Grow.



Our Provision

Children will be given an extensive range of structured play and practical experiences in all areas of the curriculum both indoors and outdoors. They learn best when they feel safe and secure and play an active role in their learning. To achieve this, consideration is given to the organisation of the indoor and outdoor environment and areas of learning. Every effort is made to cultivate self-motivation and the inherent drive to explore, develop intellectual ability and aptitudes, building flexible minds and enquiring spirits, whilst taking into account ethnic origins and family backgrounds. In celebrating our diverse, vibrant and respectful school community, we ensure that our environments are a reflection of

our communities and that they appeal to and harmonise with all children's experiences and backgrounds. Our staff team is skilled in effective support for learning through play, having a deep understanding of processes, motivations and the nature of play and playfulness knowing when to scaffold and enhance, deepen learning and experiences and when to step back so as not to inhibit, interfere or interrupt a child's learning. It is important that continuity and progression are built into the experiences provided for each child, this also ensures that the transition into their next phase of school is as smooth as possible. We know that attitudes are expressions of values and personal qualities that determine behaviour in a variety of situations. Through this understanding we foster respect, tolerance, independence, perseverance and curiosity.

We support children to:

- Develop an understanding of themselves in relation to people in their immediate environment and progressing to those in the wider world.
- Acquire and develop mathematical concepts and skills such as cardinality and counting, comparison, composition, pattern, shape and space and measure.
- We facilitate the children becoming expert subitisers to develop number sense and master key calculation strategies early.
- Have the opportunity to work with computers and programmable toys.
- Choose and use tools and materials, exploring their unlimited potential.
- Be encouraged to explore, question, predict, observe and investigate the world around them near and far, and their environment, past and present.
- Acquire and develop gross and fine motor skills through a range of experiences indoors and outdoors. Physical games and activities, music and movement, provide structured opportunities to improve gross motor control, self-confidence and coordination.
- Develop and extend their imaginative and creative abilities through the media of art, music, dance, stories and role-play. Storytelling is embedded into our everyday routines.
- Develop an awareness of personal safety and hygiene through good personal and oral health.
- Children enjoy an open ended, flexible space which skilled practitioners choreograph and respond to the need of different group sizes depending on task and stage of development.

Beginning Nursery

Our children join us at the age of three when they enter our Nursery Class. Children and parents are invited to induction evenings and visits prior to starting in Nursery.

Parents and carers are given information with details about our school, its procedures as well as an insight into what their children will experience during their time in our Early Years setting. An induction pack is provided, which includes all relevant practical information such as details about routines, school dinners etc. We gather information from any previous early years settings children have attended in order to be as prepared as possible in welcoming each child.

Beginning Reception

Many of our children have attended our Nursery prior to starting Reception. Others have joined us from a variety of early years settings. Information from previous settings is shared before children

start Reception. Children and parents are invited to induction evenings and visit days in the summer term prior to their child starting our Reception in the September. All parents and carers are given details about school procedures as well as an insight into what their children will experience during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An induction pack is given during the induction, which includes all relevant information such as details about routines, school dinners etc.

Planning and assessment

Our Early Years curriculum has been designed and planned in line with the EYFS Development Matters 2023 and Birth to 5 documents. At St. Marie's we have our own bespoke Curriculum, based upon high quality texts, the children's interests as well as seasonal topics. Children's knowledge and skills are built upon from Nursery into Reception to ensure a deep understanding of what has been taught. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. In addition, topic vocabulary has been carefully planned throughout Nursery and Reception to ensure our children are being exposed to a wide range of new vocabulary which they use confidently.

Assessment in our EYFS

Assessments of children's learning is vital to identify children's next steps as well as informing future planning so it can reflect identified needs.

- On Entry into Nursery and Reception staff complete informal Baseline Assessments to enable them to set targets and support children with individual needs.
- Children in Nursery and Reception are formally assessed three times per year and are carefully tracked to ensure all children make progress. Children are assessed as either 'on track' or 'not on track'. Children 'not on track' will be assessed specifically using our own curriculum and development matters bandings. Children with SEND may be assessed using the Cherry Garden assessment framework.
- Children in Reception will complete the Government Reception Baseline Assessment These are completed in line with statutory guidance within the first 6 weeks of starting Reception.
- Assessment often takes the form of observations, and this involves the teacher, other adults and parental contributions as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and contribute to the child's individual assessments.
- Children each have a Learning Journey folder where work is recorded and shared with parents throughout the year.
- The use of Seesaw allows parents and carers to share home learning to help inform our holistic image and development of each child.
- Ongoing reflections and discussions between our experienced staff inform the opportunities we provide.
- Through ongoing reflection and knowing each individual child, adapting the provision and experiences to ensure all children are supported in the most individualised way.

- Read Write Inc set 1 assessments will be given to the children in the Nursery who are ready.
- WELCOMM is used in Autumn to baseline the children and the outcomes are then utilised to inform groups and intervention. WELCOMM is revisited every term, for those that need it, to monitor progress and further inform intervention.
- Phonics observations and assessments are ongoing throughout the year for Reception children.
- At the end of Reception we use the EYFS Profile to record each child's level of development against the early learning goals.
- Within the final term of the Nursery and Reception, we provide a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in the form of a written report. In Reception, parents will be informed of their child's outcome against the early learning goals.
- We provide parents with an opportunity to speak with their teacher about any of these comments or judgements. We also offer opportunities for parents to speak formally with the class teacher about the child's learning twice a year at parents evening.

Strategies for teaching

It is recognised by the Early Years team at our school that our children learn best through a combination of continuous provision, structured play, first-hand experience, and adult-directed focused teaching opportunities. We also recognise the value of free choice and spontaneity as a means of developing and expanding children's immediate interests, with the adult role being to utilise those interests through effective questioning and a sustained shared thinking approach, in order to broaden the children's experiences and provide the most appropriate teaching and learning opportunities. Staff confidently use the ShREC approach to support high quality interactions. This approach from the EEF includes 4 evidence-informed strategies to promote high quality interactions with young children (Share attention, Respond, Expand, Conversation).

The adult role

Our role as an adult in supporting and extending learning for our children, including specific language support. Spending time in the areas of provision as a focus as well as direct teaching- to allow ourselves to respond to and get involved with child's play spontaneously. Sometimes initiating, supporting, extending, demonstrating and combining all as appropriate. The use of key questions and observations to guide assessment in each of the areas of learning. We use observation to identify next steps. The behaviour of the child tells us about them - behaviour clues in their play informs us how we can teach them in the best way. We allow time for this - both planned and incidental, which can be written or verbal. We look for what they can do, know and understand, and how they approach their learning and may track this over time. We may focus on a specific area in the classroom or just an area of learning.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to giving all children equal and equitable access to all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage regardless of gender, race or disability. We are committed to reflecting the diversity

of our school community and global community in the spirit of Article 2, by tackling stigma, creating new norms and ensuring dignity and respect for all.

- All genders are respected and stereotypical imagery is not tolerated.
- Any form of discrimination is challenged.
- Diversity is a given, rather than a highlighted or superficial aspect.
- We care deeply about every member of our community.

Safeguarding

Our ethos is that the effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of a system where we listen and hear what they say. Every individual within St. Marie's R.C Primary School will play their part, including working with professionals from other agencies, to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and keep them safe. We take opportunities to teach children about important safeguarding issues in a way that is age and stage appropriate and are committed to working and sharing information with other schools, professionals and agencies. Our school aims to provide a child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding, in which a vigilant culture provides children with a safe environment. We "*see it, hear it, believe it, do something*". If there are safeguarding concerns we will respond with appropriate action in a timely manner for those children who may need help or be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. All school staff are trained annually in safeguarding, and children are encouraged to share any concerns they may have. Please refer to our School Safeguarding policy for further information.

Special educational needs & inclusion

At our school we embrace and celebrate the uniqueness of every child. We recognise that children develop at different rates. Along their learning journey some children may experience temporary or longer term barriers to learning. Our EYFS team are experienced at identifying needs and implementing strategies to ensure all children access the curriculum and progress well in their learning journey. For further information see our SEND and Inclusion policy.

Parental involvement/home school links

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We aim for the school and parents and families to work closely. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge. We endeavour to find as many opportunities to encourage parents to play an active role in their child's education. These include, but are not limited to; weekly drop-ins, home school reading record, Seesaw, library books, parent and pupil craft mornings, coffee mornings, assemblies, charity fundraising events, Stay, Pray and Play as well as Reading and Intake meetings. We have an open door policy where staff are always happy and available to chat with parents.

Strategies for Ensuring Continuity and Progression

The staff at St. Marie's are proactive and always seeking ways to improve or develop themselves.

The EYFS team work closely together having weekly meetings as well as working with other members of staff across the school. This ensures staff are...

- Developing personal expertise in order to keep abreast of new developments
- Attending relevant early years networks, training and courses, and disseminating information as appropriate
- Receiving in-service training and performance management through appraisal to all staff
- Monitoring and moderating planning, assessment and children's work in the Early Years as a team and with other Early Years Staff from other settings when appropriate (including methods of assessment and record keeping)
- Developing and interpreting the EYFS to meet the needs of the children in our school

Health and safety

The health and safety of our children is paramount to all staff.

- A first-aid box are located in the Nursery and Reception classrooms.
- Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered. (see Medication Policy)
- Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in the Nursery and Reception Classrooms.
- The Headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.
- The school has Fire Evacuation Plan, Invacuation and Lockdown Procedures in place.
- Any food or drink provided to children is healthy, balanced and nutritious.
- The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident.
- Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.
- The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

Staffing

- A robust Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.
- Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.
- Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

- The EYFS Lead holds at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification alongside at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. At least half of the other EYFS staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
- There will be at least one member of staff on the school premises at all times who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate.
- Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will also hold a PFA certificate.
- The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.
- The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the school office
- The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.

The school adopts the following staffing ratios:

- For children aged three and over:
- Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification. Where no qualified teacher is present the ratio of 1 adult per 8 children will be kept.
- Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios.
- Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements.

Transition

Transition is a process, not an event. We understand the importance of effective transitions for all children and appreciate this is the key to ensuring our children feel safe and secure in their new environment. Dialogues with previous settings, staff visiting children in their homes or settings can also help children begin to develop those important relationships. Children are given opportunity to spend time in their new classrooms as well as spending time with their new teacher will also ease new transitions. Staff in school have opportunity to discuss all the children in detail to ensure the new teachers understand how best they can support the children. Children are all individual and each transition is carefully planned depending on the needs of each child; with some children needing more transition support in order to make the best start possible.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Named EYFS Governor: Meghan Nelson

EYFS lead: Michelle Mallalieu