

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY



St Michael's C of E Primary School

Approved by ¹	
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Position:	
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The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of Reception year. For the purpose of this policy 'Early Years' refers to children in their first year of school (Reception).

The four guiding principles of the EYFS are:

A Unique child
Positive Relationships
Enabling Environments
Learning and Development

At St Michael's CE Primary School, we aim to create a secure, safe and happy environment: the wellbeing of our children is our number one priority. We aim to deliver an ambitious curriculum that encourages all children to engage, to be confident, to be independent, to communicate, to be empathetic, to be resilient, to be creative, to be curious and to take risks.

Our quality curriculum is underpinned by the principles of 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2024) and the non-statutory guidance document 'Development Matters' (2021)

We aim to work in close partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners, who thrive in school and reach their full potential, from their various starting points and to ensure that they are ready for Year 1.

Our happy, safe and stimulating environments, both indoors and outdoors are carefully planned and resourced to allow children the opportunities to:

- Develop their communication and language skills.
- Expand their confidence, independence and resilience.
- Learn through active play and exploration.
- Extend their skills/ abilities by testing them out in a range of situations.
- Enjoy learning and have fun.
- Build positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Seek challenge and learn from mistakes.
- Develop their gross and fine motor skills.
- Gain the basic skills, knowledge and understanding required to become confident, competent life-long learners.

EYFS Curriculum Implementation

Our Reception class follows the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024) alongside the non- statutory guidance Development Matters (2021) which supports children's learning in seven areas of learning and development.

The three prime areas are:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The four specific areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

The teaching of these areas of learning is practical and playful with support and challenge provided by adults in class sessions, small group sessions and working with individuals. There is a combination of adult led, teacher taught sessions as well as stimulating continuous provision opportunities to encourage curiosity, adventure and challenge. Throughout the areas of learning and the heart of our curriculum are the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'. At St Michael's School, we strive to develop these key characteristics of 'Playing and Learning', 'Active Learning' and 'Thinking Critically' in order to give the children skills that they will draw upon throughout their lifetime of learning. All these skills, knowledge and vocabulary that we teach are presented to the children throughout the year through a quality curriculum.

We recognise that the classroom environment both indoors and outdoors at St Michael's School plays a key role in supporting and in extending children's development. Therefore, we have created stimulating environments that provide opportunities for child-initiated activities, which reflect the topic that they are learning, their own interests and the EYFS areas of learning. We have well-resourced areas both indoors and outside which are accessible and open-ended so that they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. We incorporate children's interests into the areas and encourage them to be independent and reflective learners while accessing the provision.

We have worked hard with subject leaders throughout the school so that our curriculum ensures progression and that we lay the foundations that future learning can be built upon. Evidence of coverage across all areas of our curriculum are displayed in high quality floor books.

An Inclusive Curriculum.

At St Michael's School we believe that all of our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. Children develop and learn at different rates. We adhere to the EYFS framework which covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We aim to help children reach their full potential by taking into account their vast range of life experiences when planning for their learning within the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations linked to the needs of our individual children so that most achieve the Early Learning goals by the end of their Reception year.

We help them to do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups and those from

diverse linguistic backgrounds. Where appropriate we are able to access resources to support assessment in a child's first language.

We strive to support all of our learners through our skillful teaching approaches and enabling environments. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us intervene swiftly and to give the child the support that they need and, in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies such as speech and language.

Curriculum Enrichment

At St Michael's School, it is important to us to make sure that throughout their time with us, children will experience a wide range of different experiences and opportunities. Gradually widening children's experiences begins in Reception and continues throughout our school, so that children are provided with rich and engaging experiences that promotes 'Cultural Capital' across school. Ofsted (EY Inspection Handbook 2019) defines Cultural Capital as *'The essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success. It is about giving children the best start to their early education.'*

For us education is not just restricted to the classroom. We aspire to make our EYFS curriculum more meaningful and embed learning in a range of ways, including:

- Providing opportunities for children to showcase their talents in a variety of ways including taking part in a Christmas performance, participating in class assemblies and taking part in our whole school sports day.
- Taking part in and supporting charity fundraising events.
- Special visitors coming into school (including visits from local emergency services).
- Visit to Stocks Wood Forest school.
- Visits to Susan's Farm (local organic farm)
- Regular walks around the locality, including visits to the church.
- Visits to the theatre and local library.

Early Reading and Phonics

At St Michael's School, we are eager to instill a life-long love of reading in children from a young age. Learning to read is one of the most important things a child will learn to do at our school. We want our children to love reading and to want to read for themselves. Therefore, we put our efforts into making sure they develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.

We use 'Read, Write, Inc' (RWI) phonics scheme, which the children begin during their first few weeks with us. When children start, they will be taught Early Reading and Phonics as a whole class. In these sessions they will focus on fundamental pre-reading skills whilst being introduced to new sounds from the Read Write Inc programme. By October half term children will begin to work in smaller focused phonic groups where they will begin to bring home blending books. After they progress through these, they will begin the reading scheme we use throughout school. Reading books will be changed once per week on specified days with additional reading for pleasure (library books) sent home.

Mathematics

At St Michael's School, we teach Maths in Early Years following 'White Rose Maths' (following 'Master the Curriculum') and NCETM maths mastery approach, to ensure high expectations for all our children. Successful teaching of maths in the EYFS lies within the context of high-quality

classroom provision based in our indoor and outdoor learning environments. Our mathematically rich environment provides a range of contexts for our children to explore concepts using different representations on multiple occasions, using concrete, pictorial and abstract resources.

It is vital that we focus on deepening our children's mathematical understanding, reasoning, problem-solving and fluency. We aim to develop well-rounded, confident mathematicians. As a setting, the emphasis is placed on enjoying mathematical ideas, language, and activities and having regular high-quality, purposeful interactions with confident adults.

Our children are encouraged to communicate their mathematical thinking in various ways, including manipulation of resources, gestures, pointing, body language, mark-making and talk. This allows our children to acquire a secure and long-term understanding of key mathematical concepts, meaning they can progress effectively when moving on to more complex topics.

Maths in Reception is planned in many ways, including whole-class focused sessions, adult-directed small group work, continuous provision, and well-planned interventions.

Observation, Tracking and Assessment

At St Michael's School, on-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. All of our assessments in the Early Years support children's learning and development and ensures progress for all. Our on-going, daily observations and interactions with the children give us an accurate picture of the strengths, needs, interests and next steps for all of our children. At St Michael's, we do not carry out any long observations or in-depth written observations of the children within our setting. We value the importance of play and high-quality interactions with the children, and as a result, we do want staff time to be taken up with unnecessary recording. We empower practitioners to talk confidently about the children and their development without having to complete excessive paperwork.

Statutory Assessment Requirements

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS (end of reception), 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

Working towards expected levels of development

The profile reflects on-going observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/carers and with the child's Year 1 teacher. This is to ensure that subsequent learning in Year 1 builds on the children's prior knowledge.

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.

Internal Assessment Requirements (Non-Statutory)

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in our Reception takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. Quality interactions between

staff and children are an integral part of the assessment cycle. The assessment cycle is completed termly and involves the teacher, teaching assistants, parents, and children, as appropriate.

At each assessment point, we record each child's level of development and record whether each child is 'on track or below development to meet the 17 Early Learning Goals at the end of their reception year. When assessing, staff use their knowledge of children, carefully mapped out checkpoints and the end-of-year expectations document, to make a 'best fit' judgement for each child.

We assess our children internally at the following points in the year:

1. **Baseline** (on entry to each year group) These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.
2. End of the **Autumn term**
3. End of the **Spring term**
4. End of the **Summer term** (In reception this is before the closing date of the EYFSP submission. (June)

Pupil progress meetings are held following each internal data submission and are used effectively for in-depth discussions about the children's achievements, progress, and next steps. If a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how best to support the child both in school and at a home.

Working with Parents

At St Michael's we recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We ensure that parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through the following ways:

- A detailed and inclusive transition programme (see below) communicated to parents shortly after your child place has been accepted at our school.
- Inviting parents/carers in to attend parental involvement experiences throughout the school year, curriculum workshops, termly Stay and Play sessions, Class Assemblies, monthly Reading Cafe, Christmas productions and Sports Day etc.
- Offering two parent-teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress and well-being are discussed (1X in the Autumn term and 1X in the Spring term). At these meetings, the child's class teacher will facilitate discussion about the child's progress and work in partnership with parents/carers to set next steps and offer support and advice of how everyone can work together to support these both at school and at home.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment, progress, and attitude at the end of each year group. At the end of the Reception year, parents are informed of their child's attainment against the EYFS profile. This information helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities when leaving EYFS.

- Sharing photos, updates and 'wow moments' on Seesaw (our online communication and home learning platform). We also reach out to parents through the social media platform Facebook.
- Half Termly Curriculum Newsletter and Quiz Me Questions to support and consolidate learning at home.
- RWI support videos loaded onto Seesaw.
- Operating an open-door policy at the beginning and end of the school day for parents/carers with any queries or concerns.

Transition Arrangements

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children. Therefore, at St Michael's School, transitions are carefully planned for, and significant time is given to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily. At times of transition, we acknowledge each child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

We are constantly reviewing the systems and procedures that we use and this year we will be introducing a slightly different approach in the transition to school.

Shortly after confirmation of a place at St Michael's School parents will receive a welcome letter from our head-teacher outlining our transition programme. (The children will also receive their own letter through the post.)

This includes:

Stay and play sessions where you are invited to visit the EYFS classroom and stay with your child to explore the provision, meet staff and find out more about our school.

Following this a home-visit will be arranged, this is an opportunity for our staff to visit your child 1-1 in the security of their own home. It allows us to gain more insight on your child which helps us to make their first days run more smoothly.

Our reception teacher will telephone any nursery settings that your child attends so that all essential information is shared between providers.

On occasions where a child may need additional transitional support we will liaise with parents and pre-school settings to ensure this is in place.

Following this, parents will receive an invite to join Seesaw which is our safe online learning app where we can begin communication with you.

At the end of Reception, we recognise the importance of ensuring this effective transition continues. Therefore, towards the end of Summer Term in Reception children will have the opportunity to meet Year 1 staff more regularly and spend time in their new classroom.