



Early Years Foundation Policy

Folkestone St. Mary's C of E Primary Academy and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

At Folkestone St. Mary's C of E Primary Academy and Nursery, we believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Our aim is to provide a caring and stimulating environment where every child feels empowered to develop as an independent learner.

Our practitioners will provide opportunities that build upon interests, to enable all children to reach their potential in every aspect of their development.

At St. Mary's Academy, we embrace principles and commitments from 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage'. This is a statutory document which details the standards of learning, development and care for all children within the Foundation Stage. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, each child's learning and achievement will be recorded by completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

We aim to provide "Teaching and experiences that give children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and life" (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2014)

A Unique Child:

We place high importance on developing children's physical and emotion wellbeing. Through early observation, our skilled practitioners create an environment in which all our children can thrive.

We recognise that children arrive with a wide range of skills, abilities and particular interests. We understand that each child is a competent learner, so we start from the children, finding out about them before planning experiences to intrigue, challenge and extend their learning.

Our Inclusions Officer works closely with the Foundation Stage practitioners and families to develop awareness of equality of opportunity and to ensure that all children's needs are met, taking into account gender, ability, culture, ethnicity, religion, language and special educational needs. (See Inclusions and Equal Opportunities Policies).

Positive Relationships

At St. Mary's Academy, we model and foster respect, empathy and caring relationships. We encourage understanding of self and a responsibility to others. We use the SEAL (Social and emotional aspects of learning) resources to enhance our teaching of emotional literacy.

We recognise the huge contribution parents make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents. We actively encourage families to be fully involved in the life of the school, offering regular opportunities to visit their child's class and support the learning taking place. This may include helping children with reading, playing alongside them, or sharing a particular interest/expertise and contributing to their learning and assessments.

We operate an open door policy and encourage parents to speak to their child's teacher or key person to share any celebrations, concerns or worries.

Our Family Liaison Officer, Children's Liaison Officer and parent support advisors are always available to support families and children.

Enabling Environments

We will use information from parents and pre-school settings to inform our knowledge and understanding of every child. In school we will observe children and will frequently note down what we observe. We will analyse and review what we see or know about each child's development and learning and then we will make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan appropriate next steps.

We maintain files, which document the child's learning journey. These include observations, photos, video recordings, and examples of their work (see Photographs Policy). We encourage children and parents to make contributions to their child's file and to access them. We also share the individual files with parents during parent consultations. In our Reception classes, we use our knowledge of the children and the evidence collected in the children's file to inform our judgements and to support completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. At the end of the Foundation Stage, families will be given a report sheet detailing how their child has scored in the profile and their child's Learning Journey as a memento of their first year at school.

We aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment, as we know this will evoke children's curiosity and increase their motivation to investigate, explore and become involved; extending their ideas and experiences. The learning environment will comprise of inside and outside areas. Both of these areas are of equal importance and will be available to the children's learning. Resources will be reviewed regularly in order to make the best provision for the learning and development. Children will have the freedom to move from one area to the other during their Child Initiated activity.

Learning and Development

At St. Mary's Academy, we believe children learn best through real experiences and active learning. We provide a daily routine which provides for Teacher Directed, Teacher Initiated and Child Initiated learning opportunities. We support children's learning throughout the Child Initiated and planned play activities and in doing so, we ensure, we provide opportunities to engage and thrive in all aspects and areas of learning.

The statutory areas of learning are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Physical Development

Communication and Language

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design.

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. Learning should be personalised building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Children will be motivated to become life long learners. We will also use the Characteristics of Effective Learning to support children as they go through the school to become successful learners.

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
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support and encourage
- Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- Redirect the play if necessary
- Help children learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promote children's well being
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgements and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure and that the Welfare Requirements are in place.

Children are supported in developing and using the three characteristics of learning, as described in the Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Religious Education is also taught to reception classes and children take part in regular worship through class and school assemblies.

Welfare, health and safety

It is the class teacher's role to ensure that all new entrants are made aware of the important issues such as fire drills, first aid and safety rules (see Health and Safety Policy). Extra assistance may be needed for some children, but all practitioners will seek to promote and to develop children's independence. Many issues will be approached through the topic activities during the Foundation Stage.

Welfare and health and Safety arrangements are all in line with the guidance in the statutory framework for the EYFS 2012 and are covered in the following Academy policies

- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Behaviour policy

Induction Arrangements for Nursery

Parents who would like a place at our Nursery for their child will be offered a place following the child's third birthday. Depending on availability, parents can choose between two sessions of 2 whole days and a half a day – either Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning or Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday.

Prospective children and parents will attend a play and stay session to become accustomed to the Nursery environment. Parents are also encouraged to spend time settling in their child when they start.

Children attending our nursery will have opportunities to work with the teachers from the reception department through joint child initiated play sessions which take place weekly throughout the year.

Each child will have a key worker who will oversee their development and wellbeing.

Transition Arrangements for Reception Class

For children who are offered a place at our Academy, we have a smooth transition procedure to make starting school a positive experience.

In term 6 parents and children are given the opportunity to visit the school on at least three occasions. Children spend time in the Foundation Stage classrooms with the Foundation staff. Parents have the opportunity to learn about the school and the organisational arrangements for starting school. There is also the opportunity to meet a range of staff including our Family Liaison Officer and Children's Liaison Officer, the Principal and the Foundation Staff. They will also hear about the opportunities and support available to them.

The foundation staff will endeavour to visit children in their Nursery setting, where they will also take the opportunity to discuss each child's progress and needs with their Nursery teacher.

In the week before starting school, all parents and children will receive a home visit from their child's teacher. Children then start school for 1 week part time before starting full time.

Parents are invited to a parents evening within the first term to discuss how their child has settled in at school.