



“Growing and Learning Together In God’s Love”

EYFS Curriculum Intent

At St Mark’s, we are ambitious for our children to achieve well, and believe that in order to achieve this, we must put character before qualification so that we develop each and every child. In all that we do we hope to build firm foundations for our children and this journey begins in the EYFS.

Our school is rooted in our distinctive Christian values of love, forgiveness, hope and faith. The basis of these values is God’s deep love for us. We hold these values dear, and weave them into our everyday life at St Mark’s.

We want our children to be excellent learners for life, and so we have 8 learning behaviours which are underpinned by and linked to our Christian values.

- Resilience
- Team Work
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Risk Taking
- Curiosity
- Pride
- Creativity

These learning behaviours help to develop the skills needed for life-long learning, as well as the understanding of what that means. Whilst knowledge is interesting and helps us make sense of our world, we know that learning is more than gathering knowledge and we need to learn how best to learn.

We desire our children to experience a full and rich curriculum which is irresistible for all children to learn and irresistible for all teachers to teach. We believe that excellent learning experiences underpinned by high quality teaching set in a highly nurturing environment are essential for children to achieve and develop well in all areas.

We are a fully inclusive school; we welcome children of all backgrounds, beliefs, cultures and circumstances. We recognise and celebrate our differences, too. We believe that all children deserve to be valued as an individual and we are passionate in allowing our children to achieve their full, unique potential. At the beginning of each year we begin by looking at the individual needs of our children and taking into account their different starting points. We then carefully develop our EYFS Curriculum which enables our children to follow the path of their learning journey that is suitable for their unique needs and stage of development.

The curriculum in Early Years is designed to provide a broad and balanced play based education which allows them to gain skills, knowledge and understanding as they start out on their educational journey. This play based curriculum supports them as they progress from their individual starting points and prepares our children for the next stage of their education. Those children with particular needs, including SEND, are supported appropriately, allowing them to be successful.

Daily activities involve child-initiated and adult-led learning using continuous provision, enhanced provision and one to one support. An indoor and outdoor environment supports their learning through play and enables a wide range of learning opportunities for all children.

It is essential to create a partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points. We 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 supporting transition into KS1.

Implementation

We achieve our curriculum intent by providing high quality teaching and learning opportunities for all children. The curriculum is delivered by following the Statutory EYFS Framework Sept 2021 and supported by the Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance July 2021

Our Early Years curriculum at St Marks is planned to provide teaching and learning opportunities activities across the seven areas of learning.

The Prime Areas:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

The Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We have a curriculum that is child-centred and that is based upon enrichment experiences and topics which engage the children. We take time to get to know children's interests and regularly develop existing topics to respond to the children's changing needs and interests.

All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum.

The principles which guide provision in the EYFS are grouped into 4 themes:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Our environment incorporates continuous and enhanced provision. We believe that access to continuous provision activities provides the children with vital opportunities to embed prior learning and independently practise skills previously taught. Through initiating their own play in continuous provision the children can be creative in their approach to their learning and develop vital communication and language skills as they collaborate, share and take turns.

Enhanced provision activities are more focussed, often topic based, and designed to be stimulating and engaging. They allow children to develop particular skills essential to their development.

We aim to ensure that these areas are always stimulating and exciting and that, importantly, they are accessible to all children, regardless of where they are on their learning journey. The environments are developed to encourage challenge and allow them to access the curriculum independently and confidently with the necessary level of support and challenge.

We ensure our continuous and enhanced provision supports the development of the children's **Characteristics of Effective Learning**. These are:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and have a go;
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in the development of their individual learning behaviours and observing the context of their play is essential to identifying next steps for learning.

At St. Mark's, we use a systematic synthetic phonics programme called Read Write Inc (RWI) to teach children to read. Phonic sounds are introduced in a fun and engaging way during our children's first term in Early Years. Sessions are taught daily and children work in small groups according to their confidence and competence. The groups are reassessed and re-organised on a regular basis in order to match the pace and progression of each child. The overarching aim of the RWI programme is to teach pupils to:

- Segment words into their constituent phonemes in order to spell words.
- Apply the skill of blending to read real and monster (made up) words.
- Learn that blending and segmenting are a reversible process and help with both reading and spelling.
- Read high frequency words (red words) that do not conform to the regular phonic patterns.
- Read texts and words that are within their phonic capabilities as early as possible.
- Decode texts effortlessly so that they can focus on using reading to learn; comprehension skills.
- Spell accurately using the sounds that they have already been taught.

All children take two reading books home a week which are matched to the phonic sounds they have been taught and are currently learning.

Our aim for Writing is to foster in our children a desire to write for purpose, and the confidence to write independently.

Firstly, we recognise that children need to be physically ready to write, so we ensure that there are gross and fine motor activities available in our provision daily as well as motivating mark making and phonics writing activities. We make sure to identify where each child is developmentally when they start school and support them in the progression of their skills throughout the year. Large writing materials are used and over time these are refined down to finer and smaller materials in order to develop handwriting fluency and legibility.

We also recognise that children need to be confident talkers before they can be confident writers so we place a lot of emphasis on building quality interactions and talk.

We use an approach called 'The Write Stuff' to develop children's writing skills throughout the school at St Mark's and this starts in the Early Years. Children have daily whole class sessions based on quality fiction and non-fiction books and the focus is on developing children's use of rich language, and applying it in their writing. Children explore writing for different purposes and are taught to use their phonic knowledge and key word acquisition to develop writing independently.

Mathematics is taught through practical whole class sessions four times a week. We follow the White Rose Maths scheme and use a 'number of the week' approach, using the BBC Numberblocks program and materials to motivate and enthuse the children for their Maths learning. This is then supplemented with enhancements within the provision which provide opportunities for children to practise, apply and consolidate skills learned in the whole class sessions. Our key focus is to develop children's reasoning skills.

The role of the adult is key to our provision, and children are well supported in their play and learning. Teachers and LSAs track children's developing skills, identifying gaps in learning and providing support to aid them in achieving their next steps. Children who are not on track are given additional support within the provision, and if needed children have personalised interventions such as Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language therapy.

We use Tapestry to record WOW moments and share these with parents. Parents are encouraged to share learning from home too, and we celebrate this in school amongst their peers.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured in the way the children engage with their learning and how they develop knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum throughout the year. It is also measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well rounded individuals who embody our Christian values and Learning Behaviours and carry with them the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens.

Children's progress and development is measured through ongoing assessments and the information gathered from these assessments is used to support, challenge and plan at every stage. Our children develop their characteristics of learning and are able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations, making links, explaining their ideas and demonstrating their understanding. Because of this our children have the confidence to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with adults, drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing.

From their own starting points, our children make good progress academically and socially, developing a sense of themselves which prepares and supports them in the transition to Key Stage 1.