



Mark First & Pre-School CE Academy

Early Years Policy

Within this document, the term 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) is used to describe children who are in our Pre-School and Reception classes.

At Mark First & Pre-School CE Academy, we recognise how a quality early years provision can have such a positive impact upon a child's development in the future. We aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating, creative and enjoyable learning experiences, that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

Intent

- To "create a love of learning" within a happy, safe and inspiring environment, where everyone feels valued and respected.
- To provide a firm foundation that is progressive towards their primary education and beyond.
- To enable our children to feel secure and happy.
- To enable our children to make progress at their own individual level and achieve their full potential.
- To enable our children to be able to communicate with others effectively.
- To incorporate a model of citizenship through our school Christian values.
- To enable all children to access a well-planned, ambitious curriculum.
- To support a love of early reading and writing skills, including a structured programme of phonics teaching.
- To support our children to have an understanding of number in a practical context.
- To facilitate curiosity and intrigue in the world around them, where children are encouraged to ask questions to find out more.
- To support the physical development and emotional health of our children.
- To enable our children to explore their creativity through The Arts.
- To value the importance of social interaction with others.
- To support our children to achieve the Early Learning Goals across all seven areas.

Curriculum

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS (September 2021) and the four guiding principles that shape the practice within our Early Years settings.

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The Early Years team have created a Curriculum, structured using the guidance document Development Matters (July 2021). Our curriculum is progressive from two to five year olds and is based on key skills in each area of learning.

The validated scheme 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' is our chosen approach to the teaching of daily phonics and early reading throughout both classes.

Our curriculum informs medium and short term plans, which remain flexible and responsive daily to the children's next steps in learning. We incorporate links with home, educational visits and external visitors, to enrich learning experiences offered to the children.

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

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

There are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

Implementation

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, using play to facilitate learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Effective communication with parents, forming links with the wider community.
- Create challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by practitioner observation and formative assessment.
- Promote the school ethos and positive approach to behaviour management.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment, both indoors and outside.
- Incorporate time for children to be active, calm and reflective throughout the day.
- Provide an exciting and engaging curriculum, tailored to the children's developmental needs, curiosities and interests.

Teaching and Learning

Each area of the curriculum is implemented through purposeful play based opportunities, through adult and child initiated activities. Interactions with adults and peers are maximised through planned classroom provision, that promotes communication skills and is considerate to the different ways that children learn. Provision is also considerate to the children's ethnicity, religion, home language, background and gender.

Group teaching sessions build up gradually, as the children progress through the EYFS, towards daily maths and phonic sessions in the Reception Class.

Each class has a covered outdoor area with an all-weather soft surface, to enable the outdoors to be incorporated within daily classroom provision. Children are taught how to select resources from the classroom or storage areas to develop their play further.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are referred to, when planning, to help practitioners reflect on the different stages of child development and guide them in adjusting their practice appropriately – Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically.

As the children progress through the Prime Areas within the EYFS, there is a greater focus on teaching the Specific Areas in preparation for The National Curriculum in Keystage One.

Assessment and Reporting

- An observational approach to formative assessment is integral to the learning and development process with The Early Years classes.
- All activities are inclusive to all children, differentiated through support and resources. This enables all children to access learning opportunities and progress at their own level.
- A Keyworker system for each child is in place. This supports day to day assessment of the children's development. The Keyworker is responsible for reporting and liaising with parents/carers. The Reception Teacher is the Keyworker within the Reception Class.
- Staff access regular training sessions to support and moderate their assessments of the children's development.
- Daily practice will include informal or recorded observations of children's progress. These observations will be used to plan the children's next steps.
- Floor books are used within the Reception Class to record the journey of the class over the year in specific areas, in line with the whole school approach to evidencing progression. Each book is passed on and added to as the cohort moves up through each school year.
- Parent consultations will take place twice a year.
- Significant moments of children's achievements will be shared with parents using Tapestry, our online learning journal. Parents are also encouraged to share their moments with their child at home.
- Practitioners complete a statutory assessment when a child is between 2 and 3 years of age. This reviews the child's progress and provides parents/carers with a written summary of the child's progress in the 3 prime areas. Parents are also encouraged to share this check with other external agencies that are involved with the child.
- Children transferring from Pre-School to School will receive an end of year report using Tapestry.
- Reception children are all assessed as part of the statutory 'Reception Baseline Assessment' (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting school. A report is available to parents/carers on request.
- At the end of the Reception year, practitioners will complete The Foundation Stage Profile assessment all areas of learning. Children will be assessed as expected or emerging towards the expected level of development. A report will be given to parents/carers.

Transition

Our induction process supports children starting Pre-School and Reception.

At Pre-School our induction meeting with parents incorporates their child's individual needs interests and routines. Time is planned for the child to visit with their parent/carer, before attending a short 'settling in session' independently. The induction can be lengthened to support the child accordingly.

In preparation for the Reception Year, we have a planned transition, commencing in the Spring term, where the children are welcome to visit their new classroom for story and 'stay and play sessions'. This supports the children and staff to form relationships and make plans in preparation for starting school. Reception staff liaise closely with all Pre-School settings and gather information about the children's development, next steps and interests, as well as talking to parents.

Parents/Carers are invited to an Induction Meeting to find out about the school staff, induction, routines and expectations. We invite all children to 'stay and play sessions' with their parent/carer.

Our induction programme in September, helps the children to be welcomed into the setting, form relationships and learn new routines. The option of a longer induction is available if required, following a revised induction plan.