

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Canterbury Road, London, NW6 5ST
Telephone: 020 7624 1830
Email: admin@marycps.brent.sch.uk



EYFS POLICY

2025 - 2026

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Responsible Person: Headteacher

Our Mission Statement

In Christ we Live, we Learn, we Love.

We will live in Christ by:

Following the Catholic faith;
Offering opportunities for prayer, worship and liturgy;
Creating a strong friendship between home, school, parish, diocese and the wider community;
Recognising, celebrating and sharing the unique and God-given gifts and talents of all members of our school family;
Listening to and valuing each other's contributions;
Celebrating diversity and respecting different beliefs, cultures and ways of life;
Laughing together and developing an authentic love of learning.

We will learn in Christ by:

Providing high-quality, inclusive and innovative learning opportunities so that pupils are engaged and can realise their full potential
Providing a motivating, challenging learning experience, that encourages a lifelong desire to learn;
Nurturing a strong learning partnership between home, school, parish and our wider communities;
Learning with and from one another;
Setting high expectations for our spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development;
Challenging everyone to become independent learners with enquiring minds and positive attitudes, determination and resilience.

We will love in Christ by:

Valuing all members of the school community -pupils, parents, governors, teaching and support staff;
Showing respect, kindness and consideration to all;
Following in the footsteps of Christ in all that we think, say and do, so that our lives are a living witness to the Gospel and walking authentically in our faith journey;
Praying and worshiping together, enriching our relationship with God;
Ensuring that compassion and forgiveness are strong, forever present in all that we do;
Growing in our awareness of God's unchanging love for each of us.

Our Values based on the Beatitudes

As a school, our values - based on the Beatitudes

Be faithful

Be kind

Be gentle

Be honest

Be forgiving

Be unique

Be respectful

And be determined, and be the best you can be

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- Children access a **broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum** that gives them the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for future learning and life.
- High-quality, consistent teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A strong and respectful **working partnership with parents and carers**, recognising them as the child's first educator.
- Every child is included and supported through **equality of opportunity**, early identification of need, and anti-discriminatory practice.
- That children experience **joyful, purposeful play**, supported by carefully planned adult interactions.

This policy reflects the school's Catholic ethos, placing the dignity of every child at the centre of our provision.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on the statutory requirements outlined in the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework 2023**.

It also aligns with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)
- Our school's safeguarding policy
- Our behaviour and relationships policy
- Our funding agreement and articles of association

Progress Check at Age 2:

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School does not currently admit two-year-olds; therefore, this requirement does not apply. Should provision change, this policy will be updated.

3. Structure of the EYFS

Our EYFS provision is organised as a **single, integrated EYFS unit**, where Nursery and Reception children learn together within shared indoor and outdoor environments. The unit is staffed by **two qualified teachers and two teaching assistants**, allowing for flexible grouping, high-quality interactions and strong continuity in provision.

The EYFS unit includes:

- **A Nursery cohort** offering 30-hour entitlement places.
- **A Reception cohort** of up to 30 children.

Children access a rich mix of **indoor and outdoor continuous provision** throughout the day. This structure supports purposeful play, independence, social development across age groups, and seamless progression through the EYFS.

4. Curriculum

Our provision follows the statutory EYFS framework, organised into the **seven areas of learning**.

4.1 Curriculum Intent

At St. Mary's, our curriculum is designed to:

- Build strong foundations in the **Prime Areas**
 - Communication & Language
 - Personal, Social & Emotional Development
 - Physical Development
- Deepen knowledge through the **Specific Areas**
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive Arts & Design
- Provide purposeful learning linked to our school values and Catholic character.
- Prepare children effectively for Year 1 through a clear sequence of knowledge and skills.

We follow a **Curriculum Map** that outlines progression across Nursery and Reception, supported by a blended **planning in the moment** approach.

4.2 Planning

Planning considers:

- Children's interests
- Stage of development
- Previous learning

- SEND needs
- Language and vocabulary development

SEND children are supported using a **graduated approach**, with personalised plans created alongside the Inclusion Lead and external agencies where appropriate.

The learning environment is organised to promote:

- Independence
- Curiosity
- Exploration
- Child-led learning

4.3 Teaching

Teaching combines:

- **High-quality adult–child interactions**
- **Guided learning and modelling**
- **Child-initiated play**
- **Adult-led activities**

The balance shifts gradually to more adult-led learning in Reception to ensure readiness for Year 1.

4.4 Communication and Language

We prioritise spoken language, vocabulary and oracy through:

- Attention & Listening groups in Nursery
- Helicopter Stories
- Talk for Writing (oral imitation of model texts)
- Daily stories, rhymes and songs
- High-quality dialogue and vocabulary teaching

4.5 Physical Development

Children develop fine and gross motor skills through:

- Daily outdoor learning
- PE lessons (Reception)
- Fine-motor progression maps
- Dough disco, cutting practice, threading, mark making
- Morning handwriting carousel (Reception)

4.6 Phonics

We follow **Read Write Inc Phonics** consistently from Nursery onwards.

- Nursery children learn initial sounds, oral blending, Fred games and early grapheme–phoneme correspondence.
- Reception children receive daily phonics sessions in ability groups.
- **Children are assessed half-termly and regrouped accordingly** to ensure rapid progress.

4.7 Maths

- Nursery: 3 discrete sessions per week + continuous provision
- Reception: 4 whole-class inputs + guided groups
- We follow Maths Mastery principles and mapped-out progression.

4.8 Religious Education

We follow the document “To Know You More Clearly” and for Prayer and Liturgy “To Love You More Dearly.”

Children take part in daily collective worship, class prayers, and Liturgy of the Word.

4.9 Home Learning

Families use **Seesaw** to:

- View weekly learning
- Participate in home learning tasks
- Share observations
- Communicate with staff

5. Assessment and Impact

We use a range of assessment approaches:

- **Baseline assessment** for all Nursery and Reception children
- **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** within first 6 weeks
- **Observation-based assessment** through play and interactions
- **Half-termly phonics assessments (Read Write Inc.)**
- **Summative assessments** (Autumn 1, Spring 2, Summer 2)
- **EYFS Profile** at the end of Reception

All assessments:

- Inform next steps
- Are moderated internally and externally
- Are shared with parents
- Support early identification of SEND

6. Working with Families

We work in partnership with families through:

- Daily communication
- Stay & Play sessions
- Seesaw
- Termly family meetings
- End-of-year reports
- Invitations to worship, workshops and school events

Every child has a **key person** who supports care, learning and family engagement.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Safeguarding is the responsibility of every member of staff at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School. We meet all safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2023)** and **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025)**. Our procedures ensure all children are kept safe, healthy, and protected at all times.

7.1 Safeguarding & Child Protection

- All EYFS staff receive **annual safeguarding and child protection training**, including updates throughout the year.
- Any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing are reported **immediately** to the DSL or a Deputy DSL.
- Staff follow the school's **Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, and Low-Level Concerns Policy**.
- EYFS staff receive specific training on risks associated with **non-verbal children, children with SEND, and children who may communicate differently**.

7.2 Supervision of Children

- Children are **supervised at all times**, including during toileting, outdoor play, and lunchtime.
- Staff-to-child ratios meet statutory requirements.
- Staff follow procedures for **intimate care**, including record-keeping and 2-person protocols where appropriate.

7.3 Preventing Choking & Food Safety (NEW)

Ofsted has strengthened expectations around **choking prevention** in early years settings.

We follow all government guidance, including Public Health England's *Safe Food Preparation for Early Years*, to prevent choking hazards:

- No whole grapes, cherry tomatoes, cocktail sausages or similar foods are served unless **cut lengthways**.

- Popcorn, hard sweets, marshmallows, and other high-risk items are **not permitted**.
- Staff supervise children carefully **while eating or drinking**.
- Children sit down when eating—**no walking or running with food**.
- Play areas are checked daily for small objects that could pose choking risks.
- Any resources that contain small parts (e.g., beads, buttons, loose parts) are **risk assessed** and supervised accordingly.
- Parents are informed about choking risks through newsletters and the induction pack.

7.4 Health, Hygiene & Safety

We promote good health through:

- **Supervised tooth brushing** following all national guidance.
- Lessons on **healthy eating**, hygiene and oral health.
- Access to clean drinking water at all times.
- Policies in place for sun safety, illness, and infection control.

We comply with updated EYFS guidance on:

- Nappy changing and toileting
- Hygiene routines including handwashing
- Cleaning schedules for resources and high-touch areas

7.5 Medicines & First Aid

- At least one **paediatric first-aid trained** member of staff is on site and available at all times.
- Medicines are stored and administered only in line with school policy and parental permissions.
- Accidents are recorded and shared with parents.

7.6 Mobile Phones, Devices & Technology

In line with EYFS requirements:

- Staff mobile phones are **never used** in the EYFS learning environment.
- No personal photographs of children are ever taken.
- Tablets used for assessment (e.g., Seesaw) follow strict data-protection guidelines.

7.7 Risk Assessment & Environment Safety

We carry out risk assessments for:

- Indoor and outdoor continuous provision
- Trips and visits

- Equipment and resources
- Seasonal hazards (ice, sun exposure, heat)

Daily checks ensure the EYFS environment remains safe, well maintained and fit for purpose.

7.8 SEND, Medical Needs & Additional Vulnerabilities

We follow a **graduated approach** to identify, assess and support children with SEND and additional needs, working closely with external agencies and families.

Extra safeguarding steps are in place for:

- Children with medical needs
- Children with communication delays
- Children with social or emotional needs
- Children with disabilities requiring adaptations

7.9 Attendance & Missing Children Procedures

We follow strict procedures for:

- First-day calling
- Reporting concerns to the DSL
- Recording patterns of absence
- Risk assessing persistently absent children

7.10 Safeguarding Linked to Curriculum

We teach children how to keep themselves safe through:

- Personal, Social & Emotional Development
- Online safety (age-appropriate)
- Road and fire safety
- Healthy eating and oral health
- Safe relationships and boundaries (through RHE curriculum)

7.11 Links to Other Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Behaviour & Relationships Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Curriculum, Achievement and Standards Committee and approved by the Local Governing Body.