



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

Early Years Curriculum Letter

Autumn 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

This term we will be focussing on settling the children into Early Years life at St. Mary's. Throughout the term we will be supporting the children to build positive relationships with their peers and teachers, helping them to recognise their feelings as well as considering the feelings of those around them. In the first half term our topic is 'All About Us' where the children will reflect on themselves, and think about what makes them special and unique, whilst getting to know their peers and teachers and celebrating each other's similarities and differences. Next half term our topic is 'My Family', during this topic we will describe and talk about our families and help the children to begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history. Our Power of Reading (literacy topic) book this term is 'Owl Babies' by Martin Waddell which explores themes around separation, feelings and relationships.

The bullet points below show the objectives that we will be focusing on this term from the seventeen aspects of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (this will be split into Nursery and Reception, however depending on where your child is on their learning journey they may be Reception age and working from the Nursery age Curriculum and vis versa).

Throughout the topics there may be other focuses that we will explore based on the children's interests and events that are important to them.

Religious Education

Our topic for this half term will be 'God's World'. During this topic the children will: listen to stories such as 'Guess How Much I Love You' by Sam McBratney and reflect on who loves us and how this love is shown, talk about God's love for us, listen to the Creation Story and re-tell the story using props. They will also think about what makes us all different and special.

Our learning goals will be:

- To know that God loves and cares for each one of us, and reflect on this.
- To hear about and respond to the things God created for us.
- To know that God has asked us to care for the world and to think of ways in which we can help to do it.
- To know that God made each one of us different and special, and reflect on this.



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

We will also be learning our Class Prayers, the Sign of the Cross and practising for our Christmas Nativity.

After the half term our topic will be 'God's Family'. During this topic the children will: listen to stories and think more about family and how we are all part of God's family, listen to Bible stories, think about how we can help and show our love to others, and learn about the Nativity story. Our learning goals will be:

- To be aware that God made all the people in the world to be part of his family - and that we are part of it too.
- To know that God made us to know and love him and to show our love for him by helping one another.
- To know that God has given us gifts so that we can show his love to others.
- To know that God's greatest gift to us was to send us his only son, Jesus, and respond to that gift.

Throughout the year we also teach and explore different beliefs and celebrations with the children, for example this term we will be introducing the children to Judaism and learning about Diwali.

Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The children will be learning in a language-rich environment where both the physical (open-ended resources, signs and labels) and emotional (tuning in, cosy spaces) environment has been considered to support the children to be comfortable to initiate and engage in positive interactions with their peers and teachers. If your child has English as an additional language we encourage you to use your home language at home for linguistic as well as cultural reasons. Our main objectives this term are for the children to:

Nursery

- Listen to simple stories with the help of pictures.
- Use simple sentences and phrases.
- Understand simple questions about 'who', 'what' and 'where'.
- Pay attention to more than one thing at a time.

Reception

- Maintain careful listening and to understand why listening is important.
- Learn new vocabulary and social phrases.
- Engage in story time (fiction and non-fiction), songs and rhymes.
- Listen to and talk about stories to build up familiarity and understanding.

Throughout the year we will read to the children daily to provide them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts. Every half-term we choose five age-appropriate stories that we read with the children over and over again,



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

we call them our 'favourite five'. This provides the children with opportunities to learn and use new vocabulary, build up familiarity, encourage the children to re-tell stories and the children gain a better understanding of story structure.

Language of the Month

Every month we have a 'Language of the Month' to celebrate the diverse and wonderful languages spoken in our class. We teach the children words and phrases to use from the chosen language, such as 'hello' to answer the register. Children are always welcomed to share books, photographs and other items linked to the 'Language of the Month' (or linked to the countries that speak this language) with their teachers and their peers.

Personal, social and emotional development

Children's personal, social and emotional development is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. This term we will be spending lots of time helping the children to settle into their new environment and supporting them to form strong relationships with their new teachers and peers. This will be during adult-led activities such as circle time but also during the children's day to day activities and interactions with others (with adult modelling and guidance).

We will be focusing on the children being able to:

Nursery

- Talk about how they are feeling using words like 'happy' and 'sad'.
- Develop a desire to do things independently.
- Begin to get to know other children beyond family or close contacts.
- Select and use activities and resources, with help when needed.

Reception

- See themselves as a valuable individual.
- Increasingly follow rules, understanding why they are important.
- Develop confidence in trying new and unfamiliar activities.
- Build constructive and respectful relationships.
- Recognise and identify feeling: sad, angry, worried, happy, excited and to know the reasons for these feelings.
- Express their feelings and consider the feelings of others.

Physical development

Physical development is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. The children will have access to fine and gross motor activities on a daily basis in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Their physical education (P.E) lessons will start on the week commencing Monday 25th September 2023. If your child is in **Nursery their P.E session will be on a**



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

Tuesday, they wear their normal uniform with trainers. If your child is in **Reception they will have P.E on a Tuesday and a Wednesday. On these days the children come into school in their P.E kits and remain in their kits all day.** This term in P.E the children will be learning fundamental movement skills. The lessons are delivered in a game-based structure which include: running, jumping, balancing, throwing, catching, co-ordination and agility.

We will be working on the children being able to:

Nursery

- Show an increasing desire to be independent, such as wanting to dress themselves.
- Continue to develop their movement, balancing, riding (scooters, trikes and bikes) and ball skills.
- Go up stairs, or climb apparatus using alternate feet.
- Use simple one handed tools- glue sticks, brushes.

Reception

- Be increasingly independent as they get dressed and undressed, for example, putting coats on and doing up zips.
- To revise and refine the fundamental movement skills (such as: rolling, jumping, running, skipping and climbing).
- Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.
- Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.
- Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. This term we will be introducing the Early Years children to their 'favourite five' books as well as sharing a variety of other texts with them, such as books that they show a particular interest in and our topic book (Owl Babies). When sharing books with the children (as well as rhymes, poems and songs), we will discuss the meanings of words, as well as talking about the children's interests. Story time and discussion also opens up opportunities for the children to extend their knowledge of the world around them.



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

This term we will be specifically focusing on the children being able to:

Nursery

- Understand that print has meaning and can have different purposes.
- Know that we read English text from left to right and from top to bottom.
- To join in and sometimes fill in missing words from familiar rhymes/songs.
- To give meaning to a range of marks “that’s mummy”.

Reception

- Read their own name label and familiar words, responding to what they can see.
- Engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.
- Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list and ‘a’ for apple.
- Write their name independently (with a capital letter only at the beginning of their name).
- Read individual letters by saying their sounds
- Form letters correctly (of sounds learnt).

Phonics (Reading/Writing)

The phonics programme we use at St. Mary’s is called ‘Supersonic Phonic Friends’. The children are introduced to different ‘Supersonic Phonic Friends’, who support the children to develop confidence and apply different skills to their own reading and writing. For example: ‘listening with Len’ helps to remind the children that in that moment they need to use their listening skills.

Nursery

We will be introducing the children to Phase 1/ Firm Foundation phonics activities this term which will support the children to develop their speaking and listening skills. The emphasis on Phase 1 is to get the children attuned to the sounds around them. It is divided into seven aspects: environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and oral blending and segmenting.

It is intended that each of the first six aspects should be dipped into throughout the year, rather than going through them in any order, with a balance of activities. Aspect 7 (oral blending and segmenting) will typically come later, when children have had plenty of opportunity to develop their sound discrimination skills.

Reception

The children will continue to have access to a range of Phase 1/ Firm Foundations phonics activities that many of the children will have been exposed to during their time at nursery, such as: listening activities, songs, stories, rhymes and activities to distinguish between speech sounds. This term we will be introducing the children to



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

Phase 2/The Basics 2 Phonics. The purpose of this phase is to teach the children at least 19 letters (the sound for each letter), and move the children on from oral blending and segmentation to blending and segmenting with some letters. We will also teach the children to read high frequency 'tricky words' (words that cannot be sounded out: the, to, go, no). By the end of the phase we aim for the children to read some VC (at, it) and CVC words (sat, pin) and to be able to spell them.

Writing

The children will have access to mark-making resources (such as pencils and paint) at all times and they will be encouraged to engage in self-led mark-making/ writing activities (based on their particular interests) as well as adult-led mark-making/ writing activities which are set up by the teacher. They will also engage in writing activities during their phonics lessons (Reception).

Handwriting

At St. Mary's we have introduced a handwriting scheme across the school called 'Kinetic Letters'. In the Early Years we will start by exposing the children to the red strand 'Making Bodies Stronger'. They will learn different positions and movements to support their general development as well as for handwriting. For example: the children will get themselves into different 'animal positions' These five named positions align joints so that muscles and ligaments can work together to build strength and stability.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. In the EYFs curriculum mathematics is split into two parts: number and numerical patterns. In addition, we provide the children with opportunities to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. The children will take part in adult-led mathematics lessons and activities on a daily basis, but also have access to a variety of resources that they can access every day to build on their mathematical skills, knowledge and mathematical interests independently. For example: learning about capacity through their sand, mud and water play indoors and outdoors.

This term we will have a particular focus on the children being able to:

Nursery

- Recite numbers past 5.
- Say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5.
- Show 'finger numbers' up to 5.
- Notice patterns and arrange things in patterns.
- Recognise similar shapes.



Reception

- Count objects, actions and sounds.
- Subitise beyond 3.
- Link the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal number value (1-5, and then 6-10).
- To compare amounts- less, more, same as (up to ten).
- Continue, copy and create repeating patterns.
- To make comparisons of weight, capacity, and size.
- To select, rotate and manipulate shapes in construction.

Understanding the world

'Understanding the World' is split into three parts: Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World and involves us guiding the children to make sense of their physical world and community. This term we will be supporting the children to share significant events in their own lives and exploring what makes the children unique, sharing our similarities and differences. They will:

Nursery

- Show interest in the lives of people who are familiar to them.
- Talk about special times or events for family.
- Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history.
- Explore natural objects, plants, creatures and materials in the environment.

Reception

- Name and describe people who are familiar to them.
- Talk about members of their immediate family and community.
- Continue to develop positive attitudes about the differences between people.
- Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways.
- Explore the natural world around them (collect, smell, listen, record).

Expressive arts and design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. The children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts throughout the year, enabling them to explore and play with a range of media and materials. This term the children will become familiar with the resources in the setting and learn how to safely use them. They will also explore making marks using different resources and create a simple observational drawing applying their observational skills, using mirrors to draw themselves. This term the children will be working on being able to:



Nursery

- Take part in simple pretend play, using objects to represent something else.
- Explore different materials freely, to develop their ideas about how to use them and what to make.
- Explore colour, textures and constructions using a range of materials.
- Participate in action songs and rhymes, dancing and music making.

Reception

- Explore and use a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.
- Play instruments with increasing control to express their feelings and ideas.
- Develop storylines in their pretend play.
- Begin to build up a repertoire of performance arts: songs, dance and role play.

Key dates

Friday 22nd September- Jeans for Genes Day (Mufti Day)

Friday 6th October- CAFOD Family Harvest Fast Day

Monday 23rd October-Friday 27th October- Half Term

Wednesday 8th November (2:45pm-3:15pm)- Reception Reading Workshop for parents

Friday 17th November- Children in Need Mufti Day

Wednesday 29th November (1:30pm onwards) - Parents Evening (online)

Tuesday 12th/ Wednesday 13th December- EYFS and KS1 Nativity (EYFS Parents Day to watch is to be confirmed)

Wednesday 13th December- School Christmas Lunch (wear Christmas jumpers)

Wednesday 20th December- Class Christmas Parties

Thursday 21st December (1:15pm)- End of Term

Learning at home

Here are some ways in which you can support your child at home:

- Helping them to gain independence e.g.: encouraging them to put on their own coat, jumper or cardigan and tidying up their toys when they have finished playing with them.
- Reading books with your child and discussing the book e.g.: the characters and the setting, or encouraging them to join in with repeated refrains or phrases.
- To make marks for a variety of different purposes (shopping lists, birthday cards etc.).



Living & Learning, inspired by our faith

- Emphasising the initial sounds in words to support your child in hearing and saying initial sounds, for example “I am going to buy a b ,b, banana”.
- Pointing out shape and number in the environment, for example going on shape or number hunts to see how many different shapes or numbers you can find together.
- Counting together- for example through cooking opportunities “please pass me three eggs”.
- Discussing amounts with your child, “you had five carrots, you have eaten one, you now have four carrots”.
- Asking your child ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions to explain reasoning.
- Singing lots of songs and rhymes with your child and dancing to different types of music.

Finally, if there is ever a significant event in your child’s life we would love to hear about it! This gives us a great insight into their lives and is a fantastic talking point with the children. You can do this using our ‘Wow Moment’ sheet attached to our class page or send in information or pictures with your child.

We look forward to settling your child into the Early Years this term and working in partnership with you.

Yours sincerely,

The Early Years Team

Miss S Collis and Miss J Brownscombe