St Mary's Catholic Primary School Kells

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

We grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus.

Last updated: 14th May 2026

Agreed by: Staff (May 2026)

N. Pettitt - EYFS Governor (May 2026)

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Early Years Foundation Stage Vision Statement

In the Foundation Stage Unit at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, we believe in providing a fully inclusive, safe, secure, fun, friendly and stimulating environment, routed in the teachings and values of Jesus, where each and every child can reach their potential.

We value that each child has their own personal journey throughout their time in Foundation Stage, and we pride ourselves in working with and supporting families as the child's first and most important educator, and on allowing our knowledgeable practitioners to guide each child on their personal learning journey, giving all of them a sense of belonging and being valued.

Happiness is a fundamental feeling for us all, and we want our children to enjoy and be happy in their learning. By enabling this, we will help to embed well-being and positive attitudes in these young minds for now and in the future.

Through a caring, nurturing and enabling environment, both indoors and outdoors, we aim to develop the following characteristics of effective learning:

- confident learners
- independent learners
- resilient learners
- active learners
- risk takers
- enquiring and inquisitive minds
- creative and critical thinkers
- friendships
- empathy
- trust
- respect
- time – time to reflect, practice, repeat and learn with no sense of failure

In our unit you will find children who are:

- happy
- engaged
- motivated
- curious
- confident and secure
- taking risks
- co-operating and interacting
- demonstrating and helping
- being independent
- practising things again and again
- persevering

The EYFS staff aim to ensure that children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live through the seven areas of learning and development: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. These experiences are planned and provided carefully through both child initiated and adult led activities.

Statement of intent

At St. Mary's C.P. School, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

1.2. This policy has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2025) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2025) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2023) 'The Prevent duty'

1.3. This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- **Assessment Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy**
- **Teaching and Learning Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
- **Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy**
- **Drug and Alcohol Policy**
- **Whole-School Food Policy**
- **Equal Opportunities Policy**
- **Administering Medication Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Recruitment Policy**
- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Photography Policy**
- **Complaints Procedures Policy**

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing board has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These

issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Photography Policy.

2.2. The governing board has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

2.3. The governing board has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

2.4. The governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

2.5. The governing board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

2.6. The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the headteacher, has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

2.7. Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.

2.8. Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

3. Aims

3.1. Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

3.2. Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning overtime. Children benefit from a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- Learning and development is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

3.3. To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Knows how important it is for staff to develop close relationships with children so children feel safe, secure and valued and so their interests and needs can be met.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

4. Learning and development

4.1. Our bespoke EYFS curriculum is based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development.

4.2. Our bespoke curriculum intent – created after input from all stakeholders:

Children in our EYFS department at St. Mary's follow a bespoke curriculum based on the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework 2021, the educational programmes within it, the advice and guidance in the Development Matters as well as our whole school community assessment of the barriers our children face, their interests, needs and what they value and enjoy. Using this as a foundation, it has been designed to meet the needs of the children, their parents and the wider community that our school serves.

The curriculum consists of seven areas of learning: Communication & Language, PSED, Physical Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. We teach children by planning and enabling challenging, playful opportunities in the indoor and outdoor environments, across all areas of learning, to develop each individual holistically. This is achieved through carefully planned small steps which ensure learning and development are built upon from the earliest days in nursery to when the children leave the EYFS at the end of their Reception year – where the aim of our curriculum is that the children are ready and prepared for the next phase of their education in Year 1.

We recognise that all children develop and learn at different rates so our St Mary's curriculum is designed flexibly enough to meet the needs of all

individuals, including those with special or additional needs or vulnerabilities. It has been designed and built from the foundations of effective pedagogy based on research into child development, which includes a mix of approaches, sound practitioner knowledge of phases in child development and whole school community involvement, to create an overarching curriculum which will be adapted continuously to ensure all needs are met and catered for.

We support each individual's learning by applying practitioner pedagogy and knowledge and through skilful interactions and observations which lead to regular, often immediate, next steps planning and implementation. We also support parents and carers in their child's learning journey and help them to understand the huge positive impact they can have.

The characteristics of effective learning and the research behind them, underpin our curriculum and enhance our pupils' learning. Through an enabling and well-planned environment, we ensure we provide meaningful opportunities for playing and learning, active learning and creating and thinking critically. As children utilise and develop these characteristics they become effective and motivated learners who demonstrate high levels of well-being and involvement.

4.3. In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

4.4. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

4.5. The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- Physical development
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships

4.6. The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading

- Writing
- Mathematics
  - Number
  - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

4.7. The early learning goals (ELGs) above are not used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development. The ELGs are used to support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development and their readiness for Year 1.

4.8. Activities are planned to reflect children's interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

4.9. The class teacher, supported by the EYFS Lead and SENDCO if necessary, will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress, especially in the prime areas of learning, with the child's parents. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have a special educational need or disability which requires additional support.

4.10. The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if a child is found to not have a strong grasp on English, the class teacher will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to assess if there is cause for concern about a language delay.

4.11. Each area of learning and development is implemented through activities the teacher believes are the most effective for the children they are teaching.

4.12. The school will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through friendly and positive interaction.

4.13. Activities are planned with regard to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things

- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

5. Inclusion

5.1. All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender.

5.2. The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

5.3. The Equal Opportunities Policy ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

5.4. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible.

5.5. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENDCO.

6. The learning environment and outdoor spaces

6.1. The indoor and outdoor classrooms are organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment with a variety of areas which provide and address learning opportunities for all 7 areas of learning.

6.2. Children have access to a partially covered outdoor play area on the yard, and an open grassed area and frequent outdoor activities are planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe. Both areas are fenced and enclosed so all children are safe at all times.

6.3. There is one main toilet facility available in the EYFS department, and there are hygienic changing facilities located in the large end toilet containing a supply of PPE, changing resources and spare clothes. Parents are also encouraged to provide a set of spare clothes which is kept in the children's individual lockers. For any children with particular toileting needs that are still in nappies, there is an extra toilet changing area with designated spacious changing space within the disabled toilet in the EYFS department. Within that area, there is also a shower for use if necessary in extreme toileting accidents.

7. Assessment

7.1. Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

7.2. Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development through use of the Tapestry app as well as informal and formal discussions/parents meetings with parents, and the class teachers will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

7.3. Formative assessments are used to assess the learning and development of children in the EYFS. Staff members will observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. This information will then be used to shape learning experiences for each child. These are recorded on Tapestry as well as being transferred to the Insight grids so staff can easily see each child's current level of development.

7.4. In the final term of the year in which Reception children have reached or nearly reached age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS profile will be completed by the child's class teacher.

7.5. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

7.6. Assessment procedures are set out in full in the Assessment Policy.

8. Safeguarding and welfare

8.1. All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well.

8.2. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

8.3. The DSL is Mrs Susan Starkie.

8.4. The deputy DSL is Mrs Carley Miller.

8.5. The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate.

8.6. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL.

8.7. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

8.8. Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect

9. Mobile phones and devices

9.1. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

9.2. Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Photography Policy.

Use of mobile phones by staff members

9.3. Staff members must not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present.

9.4. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present.

9.5. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time.

9.6. Mobile phones should be safely stored and turned off whilst children are present – if staff need their mobile phone on in school hours because of a home emergency then the DSL should be asked for authority to do this.

9.7. Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they must only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones must not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips.

9.8. Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action.

9.9. Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.

9.10. Staff must report any concerns about another staff member's use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors

9.11. Parents, visitors and contractors are not permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission.

9.12. Parents may take photographs and videos only containing their own child during school events.

9.13. Parents may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents of the children involved.

9.14. The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at the school or school events on social media

9.15. Staff must report all concerns about parents, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9.16. Parents can use their mobile phones to access the Tapestry app and have all signed up to the Tapestry acceptable use agreement prior to being provided with a login. Any parents who do not follow the agreed rules will be removed from the Tapestry app immediately.

Use of the school's mobile phones and cameras

9.17. Staff are provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos.

9.18. School devices must have passcode protection.

9.19. School devices must only be used for work related matters.

9.20. School devices must only be used to take photographs for assessment, recording or work related reasons to show children's achievements, progress and work products and this is all with the consent of the child's parent when they have signed up to the Tapestry acceptable use agreement when their child joined the setting.

9.21. Staff must not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, recording concerns forms and body maps are used to record observations relating to child protection concerns – these can be acquired from the DSL.

9.22. School devices must not be taken off school premises without prior permission from the headteacher.

9.23. Where staff members have concerns over material on a school device, they must report all concerns to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Health and safety

10.1. A first-aid box is located in the Nursery classroom and a first aid bag in the Reception classroom.

10.2. Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist and has been checked and recorded by Mrs Susan O'Neill/Mrs Susan Starkie, will be administered.

10.3. The school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administrating medicines.

10.4. The EYFS staff will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents.

10.5. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in the EYFS office.

10.6. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

10.7. The school has a Fire Evacuation Plan in place.

10.8. The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident.

10.9. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded and all EYFS staff will be made aware.

10.10. Fresh drinking water is available on request at all times.

10.11. Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.

10.12. The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

11. Staff taking medication or other substances

11.1. The school implements a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse, as outlined in the Drug and Alcohol Policy.

11.2. The use of alcohol or any other substance that may affect the ability to care for children by a member of staff will not be tolerated. If there is a reason to believe a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, they will not be allowed to work directly with children and further action will be taken.

11.3. Any member of staff taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children will seek medical advice. Staff will only be allowed to work directly with the children if it is confirmed that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.

11.4. Any medication used by staff is securely stored in the staff member's key operated locker.

12. Staffing

12.1. A robust Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

12.2. Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

12.3. Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

12.4. All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supported by the EYFS lead. The support will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.

- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

12.5. The EYFS lead is a fully qualified teacher and has at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. See point 12.13 below for other qualifications and ratios.

12.6. There will be at least one member of staff on the school premises at all times who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate.

12.7. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.

12.8. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates is stored by the head teacher.

12.9. The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.

12.10. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

12.11. The school adopts the following staffing ratios:

- For children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- At least one member of staff must be a school teacher (with QTS, Early Years Teacher Status or Early Years Professional Status) as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002
- At least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation. The School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations 2012 limit the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher (subject to permitted exceptions) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted. 'School teachers' do not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants or other support staff. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, a school must employ sufficient school teachers to enable it to teach its infant classes in groups of no more than 30 per school teacher

12.12. Changes are only made to the ratios under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained.

12.13. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements.

13. Information and records

13.1. Information is stored in line with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

13.2. The following information is recorded for each child:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to the school, and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- The emergency contact details of the child's parent or carer, plus 2 additional emergency contacts.

13.3. The following information about the school is recorded:

- The school's name, address and telephone number
- The school's certificate of registration
- The name, address and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children
- A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in the school, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's teacher

13.4. The following information is made available to parents:

- The school's privacy notice for parents and pupils
- How the school delivers the EYFS and how parents can access more information
- The daily routine and the activities offered in the school's EYFS and how parents can assist their child's learning at home
- How the school's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Information about the policies and procedures in place in the school

13.5. Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of the school
- The school's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the school or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

14. Parental involvement

14.1. We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents.

14.2. Parents are invited to 3 parents' evenings per year in the autumn and spring terms, as well as staff providing a written report in the summer term with the option to attend a parents meeting then too; however, the school has an open-

door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day.

14.3. The head teacher's office or adjoining office will be utilised for confidential discussions between staff and parents.

14.4. Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

14.5. Parents are asked to complete admission forms, a medical form and to have a face to face or virtual home visit with their child present before their child starts school to help the school to understand each child's needs, interests character and personality, along with providing a time for parents to make staff aware of any concerns or questions they have.

14.6. Parents can access their children's current progress and achievements through the online Tapestry app and all parents have signed up to the Tapestry acceptable use agreement prior to being provided with a login to the system. Parents can also communicate children's progress and achievements at home through the Tapestry app.

15. Transition periods

15.1. The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition to Year 1:

15.2. During the summer term, the Year 1 teacher will visit the children in the Reception class on several occasions there will then be several opportunities for pupils to visit the Year 1 classroom for transition sessions.

15.3. In the summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to enable a smooth transition to Year 1.

15.4. In the summer term, the Year 1 teacher will observe the Reception pupils in the Reception classroom to see current ways of working and teaching strategies used to engage the pupils so some of these can be adopted for consistency when they enter Year 1.

15.5. The aim is for Reception children to be Year 1 ready by the end of the summer term – Reception and Year 1 teachers establish what that entails for our own personal setting.

16. Monitoring and review

16.1. This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board, EYFS Lead and the head teacher.

16.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

16.3. All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

16.4. The next scheduled review date for this policy is February 2025.