



St Michael's CE Primary School

EYFS Policy

Reviewed: January 2025

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Our School Vision

As a school community, we aspire to develop life-long learners who have the confidence to explore the world around them and grow as unique individuals. We provide a safe family environment, inspired by Christian values, in which the flourishing of each enables the flourishing of all.

'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine!'

'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' Matthew 5:15

EYFS Policy

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children who are in Reception class. The term 'parents' is used as shorthand but includes other carers responsible for the child.

St. Michael's Foundation Stage consists of a single form entry Reception class known as Ducklings, which has one intake of up to 30 children in September. Children, with a birthday falling after Christmas, have the option to attend school for the mornings only until January.

Aim

In Ducklings EYFS class we help our children to grow and develop in confidence and independence in a happy and relaxed atmosphere. Our aim is for every child to attain to the very best of their ability and we achieve this through recognising the unique nature and abilities of each child and building upon these. Our children are encouraged to develop a lifelong love of learning through discovering and exploring a rich, adventurous and varied curriculum. This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Every child is challenged to develop their knowledge and skills at their level.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the ['Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)' \(September 2021\)](#).

The EYFS Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning in the EYFS curriculum. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. There are **three prime areas** that are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for expanding their capacity to learn. These are:

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

There are then **four specific areas** through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

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

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

A Unique Child

We celebrate the uniqueness of each child by offering personalised learning opportunities and through working closely with families and professionals from other settings who have knowledge of the child. In our school every child matters. Our skilled professionals understand the process involved in children's growth, development and learning. The curriculum and the opportunities we offer are designed to help children develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and we accommodate this in the provision we offer.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families and carers. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and will continue to play, in educating their children. In Ducklings the class teachers acts as a 'Key Person' to the whole class, supported by the teaching assistants.

- We talk to parents about their child before their child starts in our School;
- We attend the BFBC 'Transition For All' meeting, discussing children's needs with staff from their previous settings
- The EYFS lead practitioner visits or phones all children in their current pre-school setting prior to them starting school;
- We give children an opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during two school visits, one in the afternoon during the induction, and one in the morning as a 'stay and play';
- We invite parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and they are given a School proforma to take away;
- We hold one-to-one meetings with parents after their first half term in school to discuss transition and their child's learning at home and school;
- We offer parents regular formal and informal opportunities to talk about their child's development;
- Children's books are always available for parents to look at in class;
- We have termly meetings with parents to discuss individual children's progress;
- We provide parents with an annual written report detailing their child's progress.

Enabling Environments

Community

Creativity

Courage

Compassion

At St Michael's we recognise that the physical and human environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We observe the children and assess their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

The Learning Environment

Our learning environments are organised to enthuse children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classroom is arranged into learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our unit has its own enclosed outdoor and indoor area and learning opportunities are reflected in both areas. Children have the opportunity to move freely between the two environments during provision time. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. We plan activities and resources for the children to access indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

Teaching and Learning

We believe in the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning that are set out in Development Matters 2021. 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 achieving.

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Our curriculum is ambitious and aims to teach all children the skills and knowledge in order that they reach the seventeen Early Learning Goals described in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We teach through a range of teaching methods including child-initiated learning, whole class teaching, group teaching, investigations and problem solving together, and independently. Where possible, activities are play-based; however, there is also a need for direct teacher-led activities to ensure children gain essential knowledge and skills from their teacher. All activities are expertly modelled and children are given sufficient time, support and resources to repeat and practise them.

Top Level View of the EYFS Curriculum 2021

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1."

Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021

In Ducklings we strongly focus on:

- Social skills and emotional intelligence
- Communication skills
- Physical skills and self-care
- Independence and co-operation

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- Love and understanding of nature through outdoor woodland education
- Oral storytelling and vocabulary development
- Love of books and stories, phonic confidence and reading
- Ability to participate in sustained shared thinking
- Confidence and deeper understanding of numbers to 10 (and beyond)
- Developing creativity and imagination
- Understanding of different lives, cultures and beliefs including their own
- Opportunities to engage in philosophical discussions
- Taking on the role of Expert in order to apply and develop knowledge and understanding
- Opportunity to form opinions on art and music
- Study of history and geography through relevant topics picked according to class interests and topical relevance
- Scientific understanding of change

Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a mixture of the statutory government baseline and through teacher observations. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We record each child's level of development throughout the year and record whether each child is on track or not on track to meet a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the year in July.

Children will be judged at either an emerging level or an expected level in each Early Learning Goal. The exceeding level no longer applies. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves the teacher, teaching assistants, parents and children, as appropriate.

We record each child's level of development throughout the year. At the end of the final term in Ducklings we assess whether each child is emerging or expected in each strand within each area of learning and submit this data to the local authority. This information is also shared with the child's next teacher who uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report in July that offers detailed comments on each child's progress across all areas of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress.

Inclusion

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. The teacher will plan programmes and, where needed, in liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

The Wider Context

We work closely with outside agencies to support children's development. Where appropriate we involve health and social care professionals, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, behaviour specialists, specialist family support workers and other members of the local community. We have a diverse school and we actively promote community cohesion. We hold annual meetings with other local schools with a view to double-checking our judgements when assessing children, and to ensure that children who join us from other settings have accurate assessment data. The link with these schools also helps us to strengthen the continuity for families who join us from them.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits, and to help them understand why such rules exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We help children to self-regulate and manage their emotions appropriately and Personal Social and Emotional Education is at the heart of everything we do.

Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policies which have been written in accordance with the latest 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and the local Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. For our Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with the chef. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal.

Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles so that they can help themselves to water at any time.

A member of staff in the setting has a recognised paediatric first aid qualification in line with the EYFS framework 2021.

Staffing and Structure of the EYFS

The EYFS at St Michael's consists of one Reception Class. The class is taught by a full-time qualified teacher and supported by two part time, experienced teaching assistants.

Specialist teachers are brought in for some PE lessons.

Children can arrive into the classroom at 8:40 a.m. every morning and children are picked up at 3.15pm.

The children have a morning break with the other KS1 children on a Tuesday and Thursday, a whole school playtime on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. They join the whole school for lunchtime. The class also take part in whole-school 'PRIDE' assemblies at the end of each half term and other whole-school events.

Extra teaching assistants are employed for children who have an Education Health and Care Plan.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children. Therefore, we plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

We have a tried and tested induction programme which includes:

- ✓ An induction afternoon in June/July for parents so that teachers can get to know parents/carers and ask about individual children. The teacher gives parents information such as the ethos of the school, vision and values and more practical information about equipment and uniform needed.
- ✓ A gradual introduction to the school day. Activities are set up to engage the children to help with the transition into the classroom from parents/carers, this is the moved into independent tasks later in the Autumn term, focusing on key skills and opportunities to practise previous learning.
- ✓ A morning 'stay and play' for the children where they are able to become familiar with the class and the staff. It is also an opportunity for the children to get to know their 'Buddy'. We hope that this will help the children feel more confident and comfortable when starting in September.

When children transition into year 1 the teacher will spend time with the year 1 teacher to pass them the relevant welfare, academic and general information about all the children leaving the EYFS. The Year 1 teacher teaches the Reception children once a week in the last half of the summer term so the children can start to get to know them. Some of these sessions are done in the year 1 classroom so that the children see their new classroom before the summer holidays.

Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment is a short, interactive and practical assessment of each child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school. This must be completed within 6 weeks of each child starting school in Reception. If a child joins mid-year from another country or another school and did not take part in the Reception Baseline Assessment, then we will assess them within 6 weeks of starting with us at St Michael's.

The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out by the class teachers using an online program using an ipad or a laptop, one-to-one with each child. Once the Reception Baseline Assessment has taken place and it has been input into the online program, it will provide a helpful snapshot of where each child is when they enter reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way. The main purpose of the Reception Baseline Assessment is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. The data from the assessment will only be used by the Department for Education when each child has reached the end of year 6, to provide the baseline to measure the progress of each child's year group from Reception to Year 6. The data from the assessment, including numerical scores, is not shared with parents, pupils, teachers, or external bodies, including schools, and there will be no published scores at pupil, school or national level.