EYFS Policy

St. Michael's C.E. (VC) First School



Through God we love, laugh and learn.

Created by: Mrs Farrell (EYFS Phase Leader)

Reviewed: September 2026

Witnessed by: Mrs Wass (Headteacher)

'When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.'

(Development Matters 2023)

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year. At St Michaels CE (VC) First School we aim to provide an exciting, enriching and creative learning environment where all children are encouraged to fulfil their potential giving them the best possible start in their learning journey, building strong foundations and getting them 'school ready'. Our Christian ethos is at the heart of everything we do and our nurturing environment inspires our young children to develop their emotional wellbeing through our core values. Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning from previous settings and their experiences at home, provide first hand learning experiences, whilst allowing the children to build resilience, ambition and integrity. Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we celebrate and welcome differences within our school community.

Our aims:

- To develop a love of learning and positive attitude.
- Provide a safe, caring and inclusive environment to nurture our children, making them feel valued and secure.
- Develop curious and imaginative learners built on communication and exploration.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers, uniting our school families with us.
- To build relationships with the local community, inviting visitors to school and experience cultures around the wider world.
- Develop caring, independent, confident and self-managing learners.
- To provide an enriched curriculum with hands on learning, first hand experiences and driven by our children's interests.
- To allow children to play developing core skills such as exploration, critical thinking and resilience.
- Ensure all children make excellent progress and reach their full potential.
- Ensure all children can access our curriculum through an adaptive approach where necessary.

Implement

Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to develop curious, ambitious learners who flourish with confidence. Our curriculum at St Michael's is enriched by first hand experiences, trips, children's interests and creativity. We use our knowledge of the children's prior learning and successes to shape our curriculum, ensuring it is progressive, adaptive and enriched. The children are exposed to learning through play both indoors and out and our topics are planned half termly.

The EYFS curriculum is based upon the 4 guiding principles;

- **Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**
- **Learning and development**
  (EYFS Statutory Framework 2025)

Our children follow the EYFS statutory framework (September 2025)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

And our Nursery children also access the Development Matters document (September 2023)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2

The EYFS framework for both our Nursery and Reception explores 7 areas of learning which are interwoven and taught with equal importance. We ensure the Prime areas of Learning are developed and secure as these support the Specific areas of learning. Language development is vital in all 7 areas of the curriculum and at St Michael's we ensure children are exposed to new vocabulary, speech is developed where necessary alongside outside agencies and language is encouraged when children talk, explain or discuss their learning.

Each area of learning is explicitly planned and taught in every half termly topic with carefully planned activities and enhancements in their continuous provision to scaffold and develop learning outcomes. Our classroom environments enable children feel heard, safe and excited to learn. We ensure their play and learn time is progressive, adaptive and encourages curiosity and a love of learning.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are regularly observed, planned for and implemented across our curriculum. The three characteristics are:

• **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.

• **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

• **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

At St Michael's we encourage all of these characteristics in our planning and activities and we regularly observe the children to assess how they learn best and where to progress their skills. Our children play and explore daily with many opportunities to have a go at something new. We develop concentration and focus throughout the year and teach the children to persevere and be resilient learners through positive feedback and encouragement. As their Foundation Year progresses, the children are exposed to opportunities to develop their own ideas e.g designing in DT, making links between learning through cross curricular planning and to reason and explain their learning. These skills develop over the course of their EYFS journey and close monitoring by our staff ensure children are challenged and catered for wherever their learning is at.

Our teaching approaches

Our children learn in a variety of ways through both child initiated and adult led teaching and learning. The timetables in Nursery and Reception are designed to ensure **high quality interactions** with the children through continuous provision both indoors and out on a daily basis. We encourage our staff to interact with the children in their play and join in as this is vital and a key component in our EYFS teaching as this builds confidence and understanding for the children as well as a means of assessment for next steps.

Our teaching approaches ensure children are **observed, interacted with, inspired and challenged** in a playful environment with adult led focused groups planned in to scaffold learning. We teach during dedicated teaching times as well as explicit adult-led activities. And we also engage in play-based learning acting as facilitators to learning.

We use Tapestry as a means of collecting evidence for our own assessments but also to share with parents/carers at home. This is a wonderful approach to engaging our families and sharing the learning we are doing as well as celebrating the children's' achievements.

Our timetable has dedicated teaching times planned in for all areas of the curriculum every week and daily sessions for Phonics, Reading and Mathematics. On a weekly basis our individual Nursery and Reception teams will collaborate with each other to discuss successes of the week and ideas for activities the week after, ensuring all staff feel heard. Every half term the Foundation Stage Leader will hold a team meeting to reflect on learning, look at pupil progress and discuss next steps, including CPD if it is requested.

Our continuous provision is created by all staff in the EYFS and ensures children have time to access each activity and apply their skills deeply. Our continuous provision is both indoors and outdoors. Everyday activities are set up ensuring there are opportunities for all 7 areas of learning. Our continuous provision both indoors and outdoors focuses on;

- Reading area to encourage story telling and imagination
- Role Play changed at least half termly
- Construction
- Small world
- Sand and Water

- Creativity table – Malleable resources, painting, messy play
- Mathematics
- Fine motor and mark making/phonics

The design and planning of our provision is based on **topics** to develop knowledge and vocabulary, **children's interests** to hook their learning and enhance their current knowledge and **planned focused activities** to close gaps in learning. The children share their ideas of the provision they would like taking a child-led approach with further enhancements provided by the staff.

Phonics and Early Reading

We follow Little Wandle phonics which develops a love of reading and learning in our EYFS. Little Wandle is taught within both our Nursery and Reception classes. The Foundation Stage Leader works collaboratively with the local schools and nurseries to share ideas and reflect on learning to ensure transition is smooth from nursery to reception, as our school has a variety of feeder nurseries as well as our own. We encourage our families to engage in our phonics workshops at St Michaels to support learning at home. Phonics and reading is taught daily as part of our teaching routine and assessed every half term to highlight next steps and keep up groups where necessary.

Phonics begins in the Autumn term in Reception and is taught through to Summer term. We progress from Phase 2 initial sounds to Phase 4 in the summer and reading and writing longer words, captions and sentences. In our Nursery setting Little Wandle focuses on the auditory side of phonics where the children listen to sounds, play games such as Bertha the Bus and enjoy weekly rhymes to learn. We find that children learn best when they're engaged and the learning is fun which Little Wandle encourages.

Children are encouraged to read as early as Autumn term and books are carefully planned and set linked the children's phonic knowledge. Our books come from the Collins Big cat range. We read with the children 3 times a week and then their book is sent home to further their fluency. The children begin on wordless books to develop their book behaviours and oral segmenting and blending. They then progress through the phases at their pace. For those children who need extra reading support we offer extra 1:1 reading and have access to blending practice books. We engage parents in reading by holding a phonics workshop in the Autumn Term focused on Little Wandle and then a Phonics Family Café in the spring term to develop further skills as the children are learning them, such as tricky words and writing.

Alongside their reading books we actively encourage children to read for pleasure. Each week they access our school library to choose a book and take that home too. We enjoy a trip to the local library in town and invite the librarians in to promote reading challenges. Reading for pleasure is a key component to harbouring a love of reading and we also encourage this without inviting reading areas, daily story times and inviting parents/carers in to be Secret Storytellers. This approach is whole school and the children really enjoy reading for pleasure.

Writing

Writing is encouraged daily at St Michael's and core skills needed are good communication, imagination and fine motor skills. We actively teach all of these core skills from the Prime Areas of learning which then supports our writers. We are keen for children to make marks and this is set out in continuous provision daily. In teaching times we model phonics and writing as well as engage in adult led activities to develop skills such as word writing, captions and story writing. Alongside this explicit teaching, we encourage children to write for pleasure by ensuring writing is available across the classroom. Writing is encouraged in our role play areas, outdoors with big chalks, making lists at tables and many more opportunities. Paper and writing equipment is always available and the children are taught where to access this in their provision.

Mathematics

We follow the NCETM Mastering Number scheme alongside WhiteRose maths for the children's Shape Space and Measure learning. Maths is taught daily and focuses on subitising, composition of numbers, counting, ordinality and comparison. The children enjoy hands on learning in mathematics and the link to number blocks as this is engaging and a hook to learning. We have a wonderful set of resources available to support our teaching and learning too.

Interventions

Throughout our daily observations, interactions in play and adult guided work we are always on the look out for next steps and interventions if needed. Interventions are provided to children where sometimes an extra daily top up of learning is needed to encourage in depth learning. Examples of these are the keep up sessions in phonics and name writing. Our inclusive curriculum encourages all children to work together and then extra teaching that is required is carefully planned in to ensure children are given every opportunity to progress. We have staff trained in Little Wandle phonics, Wellcomm, HOPE and NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) to support groups in specific areas ranging from their PSED to literacy and language.

Communication and Language

At St Michael's oracy is at the forefront of our teaching and learning. We encourage daily interactions with the children developing their communication and language through high quality interactions with each other and adults. We assess the children coming into Early Years using the WellComm speech and language scheme and use this data to then take groups or children 1:1 to progress at their rate and level. Communication and language is vital to the EYFSP and children's development which is why we aim to intervene early, informing parents and working collaboratively. Our approaches in class range from daily story telling, interactive story telling, role play opportunities, conversational lessons, talk partners, answering questions and news time. **(EEF;2023)**

Assessment

On entry to St Michaels in Reception we assess the children using the RBA Baseline assessment in line with the Government expectations. We also carry out our own baseline assessments looking at children's Prime area skills (fine motor, gross motor, communication and PSED). We do this as we have a variety of nursery settings feeding into our reception cohort. This allows us to identify where the children's learning is currently at and areas of development. We then use this to support our planning. Throughout the year the EYFS team lead by the Leader engage in conversations to discuss each individual child's progress and needs. We then set targets for whole class or individuals and reflect on the successes at our next meeting. In Nursery, we also assess the children on a 1:1 basis through short adult focused activities such as name writing, counting as well as observing the children in play.

Each term both Nursery and Reception complete data on our online system. Nursery focus on the Prime areas of learning which feeds into pupil progress meetings but have verbal discussions in meetings with the EYFS leader about the specific areas. In Reception we enter data for Literacy, Maths and Communication termly and at the end of the year we complete the End of Year Reception data for the Local Authority in all areas of the curriculum. This data that is submitted to the LA is also presented to the parents/carers in their child's report. The end of EYFS data is on a shared system for Year 1 teachers to access and discussions in transition ensure children who need to remain on the EYFS profile are highlighted and their needs met in year 1.

Our assessment approaches take the form of;

- **Discussions and interactions with children**
- **Observations**
- **Tapestry**
- **Explicit adult led learning notes**
- **Book evidence**
- **Online data system**

The progress of children's learning is shared with the headteacher in Performance Management and subsequent meetings, Key stage meetings and with parents at Parents Evening. If a child requires intervention or adaptive learning from our observations then extra meetings are held with parents and the SENDCo to discuss this.

At St Michael's we prioritise interacting with our children and leading their learning through play, discussion and modelling. We evidence work in some areas such as Literacy and Maths in individual books as well as whole class floor books however our main focus is on joining in children's learning and developing their skills during active play. This ensures our staff know every child, collecting evidence for a well rounded holistic view of them.

Moderation

We aim to moderate work frequently at St Michael's both inter-school and out of school. We moderate across key stages in subject areas to show progression and discuss how to progress, this is a great opportunity for all year groups to see how their teaching and learning impacts other key stages. We also moderate termly for data entry bringing our

Nursery and Reception staff together. Discussions and pupil progress meetings are held to design targets and check progress from previous sessions. These meetings consist of the teachers however daily interactions with a variety of adults supports this as we all know our children well. For example learning assistants.

We moderate across schools within our local area also, sharing ideas, practice and work with each other. This discussion is of great value to our teaching staff to reflect on their approaches, learn new ideas and share our successes to others. We attend termly meetings with other local schools just for the EYFS, inviting practitioners and leaders to attend. Beforehand the leaders from each local school will discuss an area of provision to discuss.

Transition & Induction

Transition is of great importance at St Michael's and we approach it in different ways for our EYFS. In our Nursery we engage our new families through look around visits, phone calls and invite them in for some play and stay sessions. The play and stay sessions encourage our new starters to explore the environment firstly with a parent there also and then further sessions by themselves to begin to make new friends. If a child is joining from another nursery, we will also collect data and information from the previous nursery with the parents consent to ensure we continue their learning journey.

For our Reception starters our transition begins in the summer term before they begin their Reception year. The EYFS leader and SLT hold a parent evening meeting to welcome our new parents and hand out information packs ready for September. This meeting is a great opportunity for new parents and current ones to share thoughts and ask initial questions. We follow this up with the EYFS teacher and/or leader visiting the local nurseries to meet the children in their current setting and discuss information with their key workers. Again this builds a strong foundation for their start in September. Also during the summer term we invite our new to reception children in for 2 play and stay sessions. The first one is an hour with their parents to explore and another opportunity to welcome our parents. The second session is longer during the afternoon and the children are dropped off to engage in an activity afternoon. Our play and stay sessions alongside the parent meeting is a strong basis for transition ready for September.

Transition to Key Stage 1 takes the form of ongoing conversations throughout the year as well as a meeting with the teacher in the summer term before the children move up. As part of our discussion we ensure the Key Stage 1 teachers are aware of the children's current academic achievement, highlighting those who are working above the expected, at and below. If a child is still working within the EYFS profile we will discuss these children in greater depth, suggest next steps to achieve the profile and support in September too with provision ideas. In the summer term before joining year 1, the children enjoy time in their new class and with their new teacher for a learning session.

Additional induction play and stay sessions can be arranged for those children who may need a little extra support or who have additional needs with our SENDCo in attendance. We make a transition booklet for our SEND children both for starting reception from Nursery and transition into year 1.

Family partnerships

Engaging our school families is a key priority and very successful in our Early Years, both Nursery and Reception. We value the role that parents/carers play in their child's development and we seek opportunities to work with them to continue this. We aim to develop positive, respectful and professional relationships with our families by;

- Parent evening meetings – twice a year we hold a meeting to inform parents of their child's achievements and next steps. An opportunity to look at their children's work and ask questions.
- New to Reception induction meeting – Summer term before their child begins in Reception to explore school readiness and share information packs.
- Family Café's – Learning and playing together with their child. See below for more information.
- Social media and our website – informing our parents of information and ongoing updates. We use Facebook as a means of sharing learning and key updates. Our website is updated regularly to inform parents of our curriculum, year group pages and policies.
- Open door policy – We welcome parents/carers in for meetings or phone calls if they have something they wish to discuss as we are always there to support our children and families.
- Tapestry – sharing their child's achievements and encouraging posts to be uploaded from home to share in school.
- Regular texts, emails or calls from school where necessary to keep families informed.
- Extra Curricular – offering trips, secret storyteller sessions, productions (Christmas, Harvest and Easter) and inviting parents/carers in linked to topics such as people who help us.
- Written reports – We send a written report in the summer term to parents to highlight their child's achievements. A meeting is offered to parents if they would like one to discuss anything further.
- Our PTA is run by some wonderful parents of our school and we always seek new volunteers to support the fundraising and running of events alongside the teaching staff.

Family café's

Our family café sessions are a wonderful way to engage families in their child's learning. Nursery and Reception hold a café once a half term, themed either to a festival or learning opportunity. Our café themes range from Harvest and Easter activities, Phonics learn and play and maths focuses. Our families are then invited in to join in learning with their child and explore activities to support learning at home. The teachers lead the session with the children either as a lesson or as a mini performance, then our families enjoy time to explore activities and learn with their child whilst the teaching staff support and walk around engaging with the families. We open our Family Café' doors to all grown ups to attend limited to 2 per child and if a parent/carer or grandparent is unable to attend, those children will still join in the activities with a teacher. Our Family Café's run between 1 hour

and 1.5hours, we offer tea and coffee with snacks to the families to enjoy and make our learning relaxed and fun.

Impact

Our children leave the EYFS at St Michaels feeling confident, curious, explorative and excited to learn more. We aim to create scientists, historians, artists and writers of the future. We lay the foundations ready for our children to flourish in Year 1 and above and teach the children skills to use across the curriculum. Through experiences and teacher knowledge we ensure the children leave reception making good or better progress. We believe our high standards are due to our enriched and engaging curriculum that is play based, but rigorously assessed to identify gaps in learning to then intervene. We draw upon our Christian values to ensure our children become resilient, thankful, kind, caring and curious in their learning and school journey.

Role of the EYFS Lead

Our EYFS lead is committed to raising standards, providing a well designed curriculum and ensuring the children get the best possible start in life in their Early Years journey by;

- Regularly informing and providing the Headteacher and SLT with data, trends and targets for the EYFS.
- Presenting information for the Governing Body.
- Use monitoring to plan effective CPD for all staff.
- Plan an effective monitoring system to ensure learning is coherent, collaborative and engaging for the children at St Michaels'.
- Leading team meetings to discuss areas to progress, celebrate successes and reflect on pupil progress.
- Supporting parents and carers in their child's learning journey with an open door policy.