



Learning, Development and Assessment Policy

St Marks Pre-school aims to ensure that every child that attends is:

- Fully included and supported to learn and develop well, ensuring every child makes progress.
- Enabled to develop a broad range of knowledge and skills for good future progress through school and life.
- Safe, healthy and happy, with every family feeling welcome.

Children's Development and Learning

St Marks Pre-school aims to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment;
- is given generous care and attention, because of the pre-school ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as volunteer helpers;
- has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together;
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do;
- has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes satisfactory progress;
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop; and
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to 5 years is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage. St Marks Pre-school provision reflects the four overarching principles of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2014):

A Unique Child

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers.

Learning and Development

- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

How we Provide for Development and Learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by St Marks Pre-school setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The Areas of Development and Learning comprise:

Prime Areas

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development
- Communication and language

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year of their education.

The Early Years Outcomes (DfE 2013) guidance sets out the likely stages of progress a child makes towards the Early Learning Goals. St Marks Pre-school setting has regard to these when we assess children and plan for their learning. The pre-school programme supports children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

Personal, social and emotional development

- making relationships;
- self-confidence and self-awareness; and
- managing feelings and behaviour.

Physical development

- moving and handling; and
- health and self-care.

Communication and language

- listening and attention;
- understanding; and
- speaking.

Literacy

- reading; and

- writing.

Mathematics

- numbers; and
- shape, space and measure.

Understanding the world

- people and communities;
- the world; and
- technology.

Expressive arts and design

- exploring and using media and materials; and
- being imaginative.

Our Approach to Learning and Development and Assessment

Learning through play

Being active and playing supports young children's learning and development through doing and talking. This is how children learn to think about and understand the world around them. St Marks Pre-school uses the EYFS statutory guidance on education programmes to plan and provide opportunities that will help children to make progress in all areas of learning. This programme is made up of a mixture of activities that children plan and organise for themselves and activities planned and led by practitioners.

The pre-school session

The practitioner team organise each session so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity and are encouraged to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playrooms.

Characteristics of effective learning

St Marks Pre-school understands that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning described in the Early Years Foundation Stage as:

- playing and exploring - engagement;
- active learning - motivation; and
- creating and thinking critically - thinking.

The pre-school aims to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child is learning and being clear about what the practitioner team can do and provide in order to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Assessment

St Marks Pre-school assesses how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. Each child's key person uses information that they gain from

observations, as well as photographs of the child, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. The pre-school believes that parents know their children best, and each child's key person will ask you to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what a child likes to do at home and how parents are supporting development.

Each child's key person provides assessment summaries of children's achievement based on on-going developmental records. These form part of children's records of achievement. Key persons undertake these assessment summaries three times a year, as well as at times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

The progress check at age two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that St Marks Pre-school supply parents and carers with a short, written summary of their child's development in the three prime areas of learning and development - personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language - when a child is aged between 24–36 months. A child's key person is responsible for completing the check using information from on-going observational assessments carried out as part of everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

Starter assessment

For every child that starts at St Marks Pre-school a starter assessment will be completed within 2–3 weeks of first attending. This will be a brief overview of a child's current level of learning and development, which will be presented in written form and discussed with the parent/carer, whose contribution is actively encouraged.

Records of achievement

St Marks Pre-school keeps a record of achievement for each child. Each child's record of achievement helps both the pre-school and parent/carers to celebrate together each child's achievements and to work together to provide what a child needs for their well-being and to make progress.

A child's key person will work in partnership with each parent/carer to keep this record. To do this the parent/carer and key person will collect information about a child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify a child's stage of progress. Together, the key person and parent/carer will then decide on how to help a child to move on to the next stage.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on
(date)

Signed on behalf of the pre-school

Also see: Maintenance, Storage and Transfer of Records
Promoting Positive Behaviour
Children with SEND
Parental Involvement Supporting
Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion and Equality