Reception Skills Progression

This document provides a progressive overview of the skills, knowledge and experiences children will develop across all areas of learning within Development Matters. It has been designed to support practitioners in planning meaningful learning opportunities, identifying next steps and ensuring clear progression throughout the year. The progression outlined within this document should be used flexibly to inform teaching, provision and assessment, while remaining responsive to children's individual interests, needs and rates of development. By embedding the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning throughout all curriculum areas, we aim to develop confident, independent and resilient learners who are fully prepared for future learning.

Updated September 2026

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At St Marks, we recognise that the **CofEL underpins** all aspects of the Early Years curriculum and **form the foundation** for future success.
We believe that how children learn is just as important as what they learn. Through **high-quality interactions, purposeful provision and carefully planned experiences**, we actively promote the development of **independence, resilience, curiosity and confidence** in all learners.
We understand that children **develop at different rates** and therefore **adapt our practice** to ensure every child is supported and challenged appropriately. By encouraging children to play and explore, engage in active learning and think critically, **we help them to become motivated, capable and reflective learners** who are willing to take risks, persevere through challenge and develop their own ideas.
At St Marks, we place a **strong emphasis on independence and resilience**, recognising these as **essential life skills** that prepare children not only for the next stage of education, but for lifelong learning and future opportunities. We strive **to create an environment where children feel safe** to 'have a go', learn from mistakes and take pride in their achievements, developing the confidence and attitudes needed to thrive both within and beyond the classroom.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Playing and Exploring	• Bring their own interests and fascinations into early years settings. This helps them to develop their learning. • Make independent choices		• Realise that their actions influence the world, so they want to keep repeating them. • Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.		• Guide their own thinking and actions by referring to visual aids or by talking to themselves while playing • Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects.	
Active Learning	• Participate in routines, • Show goal-directed behaviour		• Begin to predict sequences because they know routines. • Begin to correct their mistakes themselves. • Begin to keep on trying when things are difficult.		• Keep on trying when things are difficult.	
Creating and Thinking Critically	• Take part in simple pretend play. • Sort materials. • Begin to review their progress as they try to achieve a goal. Check how well they are doing		• Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective. • Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas • Make more links between those ideas.		• Review progress- Check how well they are doing • Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them. They are increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions • Solve real problems	

Communication and Language

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Listening & Attention	**3-4Y** To enjoy listening to longer stories & remembering what happens. **3-4Y** To pay attention to more than one thing at a time.	**3-4Y** To understand a question or instruction that has two parts. **3-4Y** To sing a large repertoire of songs & rhymes. **3-4Y** To be able to talk about familiar books.	**REC** To understand how to listen carefully **REC** To listen to talk about stories building familiarity.	**REC** To understand why listening is important **REC** To ask questions to find out more and clarify understanding. **REC** To engage in non-fiction books.	**REC** To listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding. **REC** To learn rhymes, poems and songs.	**REC** To listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.
Speaking	**3-4Y** To use talk to organise themselves and their play.	**3-4Y** To use a wider range of vocabulary. **3-4Y** To use longer sentences of four to six words. **3-4Y** To express their point of view with words and actions. **3-4Y** To start a conversation with an adult or friend	**REC** Begin to ask questions to find out more **REC** To engage in story times **REC** To begin to use new vocabulary in different contexts. **REC** To use manners consistently.	**REC** To use new vocabulary through the day. **REC** Describe events in some detail **REC** To articulate their ideas in simple sentences.	**REC** To articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences. **REC** To use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities.	**REC** Connect one idea or action to another using connectives. **REC** To explain why things might happen **REC** To retell the story using some as exact repetition and some in their own words.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• To participate in a small group and one to one discussions. • Begin to offer their own ideas using new vocabulary. • Begin to listen and respond to what they hear. • Begin to express some ideas and feelings about their experiences.		• To listen attentively & respond to what they hear. • To make some comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify understanding. • Begin to offer explanations for why things might happens. • Express their ideas and feelings through simple sentences.		• To respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments on actions when being read to. • To hold a conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with others. • To offer own ideas in group discussions. • To express their ideas and feelings using full sentences including use of past, present and future tenses and attempt to make use of conjunctions.	

Personal, Social and Emotional

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Self-Regulation	**3-4Y** To remember rules. **3-4Y** To talk about their own feelings. **3-4Y** To begin to understand how others might be feeling.	**3-4Y** To find solutions to conflicts and rivalries. **3-4Y** To follow rules and understand why they are important. **3-4Y** To develop appropriate ways of being assertive.	**3-4Y** To understand how others might be feeling. **3-4Y** To be increasingly independent in meeting their own needs. **3-4Y** To understand how others might be feeling.	**REC** Begin to see themselves as a valuable individual. **REC** To identify and begin to moderate their feelings socially and emotionally.	**REC** To moderate their feelings socially and emotionally.	**REC** To see themselves as a valuable individual.
Managing Self	**3-4Y** To select and use activities and resources. **3-4Y** To develop their sense of responsibility and membership of the class.	**3-4Y** To show more confidence in new social situations. **3-4Y** To be able to use the toilet and washing hands. **3-4Y** To make healthy choices about food, drink activity and toothbrushing.	**REC** To manage their own needs. **REC** To know and talk about some factors that support overall health and wellbeing.	**REC** Begin to show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge. **REC** To express their feelings. **REC** To begin to consider the feelings of others.	**REC** To consider the feelings of others. **REC** To know and talk about the factors that support overall health and wellbeing.	**REC** To show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
Building Relation-ships	**3-4Y** To play at least one child, extending and elaborating play ideas.	**3-4Y** To become more confident outgoing with unfamiliar people. **3-4Y** To play with more than one child.	**REC** To begin to think about the perspective of others.	**REC** To begin to build respectful relationships.	**REC** To build constructive relationships.	**REC** To think about the perspective of others.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• Begin to understand emotions and learn ways to regulate their behaviour. • To set and work towards a goal by sustaining play. • Begin to have focused attention to what teachers say. • To follow one step instructions. • Begin to show confidence, independence and determination. • To know the school rules and begin to understand why they are important. • To manage some of their basic hygiene and personal needs. • To form positive attachments to adults and some peers.		• To use ways to regulate their emotions and behaviour • To be able to wait for what they want and begin to control immediate impulses. • To follow instructions involving several ideas and actions. • To be confident and independent • Begin to show resilience and perseverance. • To know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly • To play cooperatively and take turns with others.		• To show understanding of own and others feelings. • Given focus attention to teachers. • To show resilience and perseverance. • To work with others cooperatively. • To maintain positive relationships with peers. • To show sensitivity to their own and others needs.	

Physical Development

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Gross Motor	**3-4Y** To use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks. **3-4Y** Begin to take part in group activities of teams. **3-4Y** To choose the right resources to carry out their own plan. **3-4Y** Collaborate with other to manage large items.	**3-4Y** To go up steps and stairs using alternate feet. **3-4Y** To skip, hop, stand on one leg and hold a pose for a game. **3-4Y** To be able to use and remember sequences and patterns of movements related to music. **3-4Y** Match their developing physical skills to tasks and activities in the setting.	**REC** To revise fundamental movement skills they have already acquired. **REC** Begin to develop overall body strength, co-ordination, balance and agility. **REC** Begin to combine different movements. **REC** To develop the skills they need to manage school day successfully.	**REC** Begin to refine fundamental movement skills they have already acquired. **REC** Begin to move with a more fluent style of moving with control and grace. **REC** To use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture sitting on the floor. **REC** To safely use a range of apparatus. **REC** To develop confidence activities involving a ball.	**REC** To refine fundamental movement skills they have already acquired. **REC** To use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture sitting at the table. **REC** To develop overall body strength, co-ordination, balance and agility. **REC** To develop a range of ball skills.	**REC** To move with control and grace. **REC** To combine different movements with ease and fluency. **REC** To confidently use a range of apparatus. **REC** To develop precision and accuracy activities involving a ball. **REC** To refine a range of ball skills.
Fine Motor	**3-4Y** Begin to be independent as they get dressed.	**3-4Y** To use one-handed tools and equipment **3-4Y** To show a preference for a dominant hand. **3-4Y** To zip up their own coat.	**3-4Y** To use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils. **REC** To use a range of tools safely. **REC** To develop some foundations of a handwriting style.	**REC** To use a range of tools competently. **REC** To develop a handwriting style that is accurate.	**REC** To use a range of tools confidently.	**REC** To develop a handwriting style which is fast and efficient.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• To negotiate space safely. • To move energetically by running, jumping and dancing. • To hold a pencil using tripod grip. • Begin to use a range of small tools.		• To negotiate obstacles safely. • To demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination. • To move energetically by hopping, skipping and climbing. • Begin to show care when drawing		• To demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination. • To hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing. • To use a range of small tools. • Begin to show accuracy when drawing.	

Literacy

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Comprehen-sion	**3-4Y** To understand that print has meaning. **3-4Y** To understand print can have different purposes.	**3-4Y** To understand we read English text from left to right and from top to bottom. **3-4Y** To understand the names of the different parts of a book.	**3-4Y** To engage in conversations about stories. **3-4Y** To understand page sequencing.	**3-4Y** To engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary, **REC** To re-read books to build enjoyment.	**REC** To re-read books to build understanding.	**REC** To read back what they have written to check it makes sense.
Word Reading	**3-4Y** To develop phonological awareness to spot rhymes **3-4Y** To develop phonological awareness to clap syllables in a word	**3-4Y** To develop phonological awareness to recognise words with the same initial **REC** Read all individual letters by saying the sounds for them	**REC** To read some letter groups that each represent one sound.	**REC** To blend sounds into words **REC** To read a few common exception words. **REC** To re-read books to build confidence.	**REC** To read simple phrases.	**REC** To read simple sentences. **REC** To re-read books to build fluency. **REC** To read many common exception words.
Writing	**3-4Y** To use some of their print in early writing. **3-4Y** To write some of their name	**3-4Y** To use some of their letter knowledge in early writing. **3-4Y** To write all of their name **3-4Y** Write some letters accurately.	**3-4Y** To use their letter knowledge in early writing. **REC** To form some lower-case letters correctly.	**REC** To spell words by identifying the sounds and then writing the grapheme.	**REC** To write short phrases. **REC** To form most lower-case letters correctly.	**REC** To write short sentences with capital letters and full stops. **REC** To form capital letters correctly.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• To demonstrate understanding by retelling stories in their own words. • Begin to anticipate key events in stories. • To use some vocabulary introduced in rhymes. • To write some recognisable letters		• To demonstrate understanding by retell stories using recently introduced vocabulary. • To use and understand some vocabulary introduced in role play. • To say a sound for each letter in the alphabet. • To read words consistently, • To write recognisable letters. • To spell some words.		• Anticipate key events in stories. • To use and understand some vocabulary in non-fiction texts. • To read aloud simple sentences and books including common exception words. • To write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others	

Maths

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Number	**3-4Y** To say one number for each item in order. **3-4Y** To know the cardinal principle. **3-4Y** To show finger numbers up to 5	**3-4Y** To subitise up to 3 objects. **3-4Y** To recite numbers past 5. **3-4Y** To link numerals and amounts **3-4Y** To solve real word maths problem up to 5.	**REC** To count objects, actions and sounds within 10. **REC** To link the numeral to its cardinal value. **REC** To explore the composition of numbers within 10.	**REC** To subitise up to 5 objects. **REC** To begin count beyond 10. **REC** To begin to compare numbers. **REC** To begin to understand one more and one less. **REC** To automatically recall some number bonds 0-5.	**REC** To subitise up to 10 objects. **REC** To count to 20 accurately. **REC** To understand one more and one less. **REC** To automatically recall all number bonds 0-5 and some 6-10. **REC** To compare numbers.	**REC** To subitise some objects beyond 10, noticing patterns. **REC** Begin to count beyond 20. **REC** To understand the one more and one less relationship between consecutive numbers. **REC** To automatically recall some number bonds 6-10.
Numerical Patterns	**3-4Y** To talk about and identify patterns around them. **3-4Y** To talk about and explore 2D and same 3D shapes. **3-4Y** To select shapes appropriately and combine to make new ones.	**3-4Y** To compare quantities. **3-4Y** To make comparisons between objects. **3-4Y** To extend and create ABAB patterns **3-4Y** To understand position through words alone.	**3-4Y** To notice and correct an error in a repeating pattern. **3-4Y** To discuss routes and locations. **3-4Y** Begin to describe a sequence of events. **REC** To compose shapes.	**REC** To continue, copy and repeat patterns. **REC** To decompose shapes. **REC** To compare length.	**REC** To select, rotate and shapes to develop spatial reasoning skills. **REC** To compare weight. **REC** To compare capacity.	**REC** To manipulate shapes to develop spatial reasoning skills.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• To have a deep understanding of number to 5. • To subitise to 3.		• To have some understanding of numbers within 10. • To subitise objects up to 5. • To automatically recall some number bonds to 5. • To verbally count beyond 10. • Begin to compare quantities. • Explore and represent patterns within 10.		• To have a deep understanding numbers within 10. • Subitise objects confidently up to 5. • To automatically recall all number bonds to 5. • To automatically recall some number bonds to 10. • Explore and represent how numbers can be doubles and quantities can be distributed equally.	

Understanding of the World

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Past and Present	**3-4Y** To begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history.	**REC** To talk about members of their immediate family. **REC** To comment on imaged of familiar situations in the past.	**REC** Begin to compare and contrast character from stories.	**REC** To talk about members of their community. **REC** To name and describe some people who are familiar to them.	**REC** Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and others.	**REC** To compare and contrast characters from stories.
People, Culture and Commun-ities	**3-4Y** To show interest in different occupations.	**3-4Y** To develop positive attitudes about the differences between people. **REC** Begin to recognise people have different beliefs and celebrations.	**REC** To understand that some places are special to members of their community.	**REC** To recognise people have different beliefs and celebrations. **REC** To recognise some environments are different to the one in which they live in.	**3-4Y** To talk about the differences in countries that they have experienced or seen in photos. **3-4Y** To know that they are different countries in the world.	**REC** To understand people have different beliefs and celebrations.
The Natural World	**3-4Y** To use their senses in hands on exploration. **3-4Y** To explore and talk about different forces they can feel. **3-4Y** To explore collections of materials with similar and different properties.	**3-4Y** To explore how things work **3-4Y** Begin to understand the need to respect and care the world around them. **3-4Y** To talk about what they can see using vocabulary.	**3-4Y** To talk about differences between materials and changes they notice. **REC** To explore the world around them.	**REC** Begin to understand the effect of changing seasons. **REC** To draw information from a simple map.	**3-4Y** To understand the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal **REC** To describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside. .	**REC** To understand the effect of changing seasons.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• To talk about the lives of people around them • Begin understanding past through characters and events encountered through books. • To explore the natural world around them. • Begin to understand some natural changes in the world around them.		• To talk about peoples roles in society. • To describe their immediate environment. • To know some similarities and differences between religious and cultural communities. • To make observations of the natural world. • To know some similarities and differences to the world around them.		• To know some similarities and differences to the past. • To explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and others. • To understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them.	

Expressive Arts and Design

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Creating with Materials	**3-4Y** To explore materials freely. **3-4Y** To create closed shapes with continuous lines. **3-4Y** Begin to use shapes to represent objects. **3-4Y** To explore colour mixing.	**3-4Y** To develop ideas about what to use and make with materials. **3-4Y** To join materials and explore different textures. **3-4Y** To draw with increasing complexity and detail.	**3-4Y** To develop their own ideas and decide what materials to use. **3-4Y** To show different emotions in their drawings. **3-4Y** To draw to representing ideas for movement and loud noises.	**REC** Begin to explore and use a variety of artistic affects to express their ideas and feelings. **REC** Begin to return to and build on their previous learning. **REC** Begin to create collaboratively and sharing resources	**REC** To return to their learning and refine ideas.	**REC** To create collaboratively and sharing ideas and skills. **REC** To use and refine a variety of artistic affects to express their ideas and feelings.
Being Imagin-ative and Expressive	**3-4Y** Take part in pretend play. **3-4Y** Begin to develop complex stories using small world.	**3-4Y** To listen with increased attention to sounds. **3-4Y** To respond to what they have heard. **3-4Y** To remember and sing entire songs.	**3-4Y** To make imaginative and complex small worlds with blocks and construction kits. **3-4Y** To pitch match when singing. **3-4Y** To create their own songs.	**REC** To develop storylines in their pretend play. **REC** To explore and engage in dance. **3-4Y** To sing the melodic shapes of familiar songs. **3-4Y** To play instruments with control.	**REC** To walk and talk about dance and performance art. **REC** To explore and engage in music making.	**REC** To listen attentively, move to and talk about music. **REC** To sing in a group or on their own.
	At the end of Autumn Term children can:		**At the end of Spring Term children can:**		**At the end of Summer Term children can:**	
ELG	• Begin to make use of the props and materials when role playing characters. • To share their creations. • Begin to invent narratives and stories with their teachers. • To sing some well-known songs and rhymes. • To perform songs and stories in time with music.		• To make use of the props and materials when role playing characters. • To explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture. • Begin to adapt narratives and stories with peers. • To sing many well-known songs and rhymes. • To perform rhymes and poems in time with music.		• To safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. • To invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and teachers. • To share creations and explain the process they have used.	