

# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



September 2021





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#### Our Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement is:

Dear God,

With all your help and guidance,

let us always show respect, friendship, excellence and care in all we do and say.

We will love each other as you have loved us.

Amen

Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children in Nursery and Reception

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”* - Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, September 2021.

Early year’s provision must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. It is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.



This Early Years Policy includes the following:

- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Classroom organisation and resources
- Use of whole school resources
- Induction
- Involving parents
- Language and Literacy Supporting your Child
- Assessment and record keeping
- Safeguarding
- Monitoring and evaluation

### Aims and Principles

This policy aims to ensure:

- Early Years practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- That all children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Opportunities are provided for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves.
- Practitioners will acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.

### Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers children in Nursery and Reception.



At St. Joseph's, we follow the EYFS Statutory Framework (2021). Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice.

These are:

1. **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. 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 over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children **develop and learn 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 (SEND).

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are inter-connected.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical Development – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
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- Mathematics – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- Understanding the World – Children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- Expressive Arts and Design – Children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

As previously outlined our curriculum incorporates learning through play, learning by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching. It is also important to highlight that our plans are flexible to allow us to respond quickly to children's new interests and/or needs.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School are three **Characteristics of Effective Learning**.

- **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 achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

Throughout their time in the Early Years our children partake in an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

The descriptors for these can be found in appendix 2.

- The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child- initiated activities.



- The long term plan is the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is an overarching framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities that are available while children are in the early years.
- Medium term planning takes the form of a topic based upon real life themes and current affairs and the children's interests.
- Short term plans select activities and learning objectives from medium term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly.



## Classroom Organisation and Resources

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities.

The Early Years class provides the following areas:

- Story shelves for retelling stories
- Construction
- Sand and water
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Small world toys
- iPads
- Interactive whiteboard
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative equipment
- Maths games and equipment
- Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including a role-play house, large sand pit, reading den, sheds providing mark making and maths equipment, outdoor chalkboard and whiteboards, planting equipment and areas, mud kitchen, large construction, water trays, bikes and trikes, woodland area and other outside toys.

The Early Years class also has a set of boots and waterproof clothing in order to make full use of the outside classroom, school field, walks to the woods and the on-site Forest Schools area.



## Transition

## Nursery

When children start St. Joseph's we will first liaise with parents/carers to begin to get to know the child and family we will then arrange for a visit into the setting. Our open-door policy allows the teacher to consult with parents about how their child is settling into school.

## Reception

On starting Reception, each child will have a Year 6 buddy who will take special care of them during play time and help them be involved in wider school events.

In the final summer term, the Reception children visit the Year 1 classroom and take part in activities with the Year 1 teacher. This helps them get to know the environment and routines before September. The children also spend the morning with their new Year 1 teacher during the final weeks of term.

Whether Nursery or Reception we understand that not all children will be ready for their full entitlement at the same time. At St. Joseph's we will work alongside families to ensure a smooth settling in period





## Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered during the new parents meetings, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Curriculum letters are sent home termly to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs.
- Operating an "open-door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Sharing 'Wow moments' to record any special moments or achievements at home.
- Inviting parents to help in class and to accompany children on school visits.
- In the Autumn term, there will be an evening meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an interim report at the end of the Spring term and an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.

## Language and Literacy Supporting the Reception Child

- The first books that children bring home to share with parents/carers will be picture books and then books with simple repetitive text and rhymes.
- During the year, each child will take home independent reading books that have been shared at school.
- Once children are confident with their phonics, they will begin to receive High Frequency Word flash cards to both read and spell.
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- Each child may also take home a range of reading games or activities that involve matching sounds and pictures; making, reading and writing simple words that can be practised at home.

### Assessment and Recording

In line with the school Assessment Policy, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development (expected)
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

### Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

This is in line with the school self-evaluation policy and associated documents.

### Roles and Responsibilities beyond the Class Teacher

#### Teaching Assistant

A TA is assigned to work with the Early Years class each day. It is the TA's role to assist and support the teacher as fully as possible. The TA will work with individuals and groups of children under the direction of the teacher. The TA will be proactive in encouraging development in all areas of learning as well as aiding assessment, administration and enhancing the work space. Input and feedback to the teacher is seen as a vital element in the education of the children.

#### Head Teacher

The Head Teacher's role is to support and challenge the class teacher in order to secure the highest quality education to the children

## Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

<b>Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS</b>	<b>Where can it be found?</b>
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy

## Appendix 2: The Early Learning Goal Descriptors

### Communication and Language

#### ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

#### ELG: Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

#### ELG: Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

#### ELG: Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience, and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet, and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

#### ELG: Building Relationships

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

## Physical Development

### ELG: Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping, and climbing.

### ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

## Literacy

### ELG: Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems and during role-play.

### ELG: Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

### ELG: Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

## Mathematics

### ELG: Number

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number.
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

### ELG: Numerical Patterns

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

### Understanding the World

#### ELG: Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

#### ELG: People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and –when appropriate – maps.

#### ELG: The Natural World

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

### Expressive Arts and Design

#### ELG: Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools, and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

#### ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Invent, adapt, and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Perform songs, rhymes, poems, and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.