



## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School EYFS Policy

### 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- that 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;
- there is quality and consistency in teaching, learning and assessing, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- a close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers;
- that every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

### 2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that was last updated in November 2024.

### 3. Structure of the EYFS

From birth, children are eager to learn about their environment by exploring and investigating. In the Foundation Stage, we aim to build on and reinforce this natural sense of curiosity. The Early Years and Foundation Stage Curriculum is taught through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Through play and discovery, children are supported by staff to acquire new skills, concepts and attitudes in all aspects of their social, physical and intellectual development. Our EYFS at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5. Our reception and nursery class children are taught in a mixed age setting for the mornings. In the afternoons, just the reception children in school. The EYFS class has a qualified Class Teacher and a Level 3 Teaching Assistant. The ratio for nursery children is 1:13, when the teacher is present and 1:8 when a teacher is not present.

The school day for EYFS begins at 8:35am and ends at 3.15pm. The day includes outdoor provision, as well as snack time, where children have fruit from the government scheme.

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary school, the children always have access to outdoor provision when in continuous provision. The outdoor area provides an alternative learning experience. Adults are trained to observe, facilitate and assess the learning. Adults assess the children and collect photographic evidence using 'Tapestry'. In addition to our online journals, the reception children have a writing book, a topic book, a maths book and a Read Write Inc book.

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*



## 4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework last updated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected.

However, 3 areas (known as the prime areas) are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

As a Catholic school, we also teach the RE curriculum through 'The Vine and The Branches' scheme and we teach RHE (Relationship and Health Education) following TenTen: 'Life to the Full' which is compliant with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

## 5. Planning

The 3 prime areas are at the core of early years planning. Staff carefully plan activities which enable children to link personal experiences with new learning, providing a wide range of contexts to revisit, practice, apply, and develop transferable skills and understanding. Emphasis is placed upon the importance of using sensory play in the development of language skills, alongside enhancing provision for identified groups of children. Staff consider the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. Staff are reflective in their practice and systematically observe and evaluate the effectiveness and value of planned provision within the inside and outside learning

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*



spaces. They respond to children's levels of interest and engagement, ensuring accurate pitch and pace for developing cognition and learning. Planning and interactions are supported by progressive sequences of questioning to develop thinking, understanding and language for reasoning.

## 6. Teaching

Early Years practice demonstrates a balance between play and formal teaching. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1. In nursery, the focus is mainly on the prime areas of learning, and once these are secure, we focus on the specific areas in Reception with more formal opportunities to learn.

Nursery – Attend 5 full days a week	Reception – Attend 5 full days a week
4 x a day story	4 x a day story
Morning Meeting with Wellcomm focus	Morning Meeting with Wellcomm focus
Daily phonics – phase 1 and Nursery Read Write Inc phonics from Summer	Daily phonics – Read Write Inc – following 'Starting Strong in Reception'
3 x Maths lessons Mastering the Curriculum 2 x Maths songs	Daily Maths lesson 1 x SSM Maths No Problem 4 x Mastering Number
Weekly RE/PSHE/ RSE Lesson	Daily Write a sentence lesson linked to class book.
1 x topic lesson	Weekly RE/PSHE/RSE Lesson
2 x PE lessons	2 x PE lessons
1 x Music lesson	1 x topic lesson
Daily Nursery Rhymes	1 x Music lesson
Continuous Provision	Daily Nursery Rhymes
	Continuous Provision

Staff interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play provide rich opportunities for communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. Staff understand that play is about much more than content, but helps to build flexible minds and an enquiring spirit. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. They consider the equipment provided and the attention to the physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Staff understand that teaching is in every activity provided within all of the learning environments.

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*



There are no activities that occur in the setting which adults do not consider to be opportunities for teaching. While staff do not always know where these opportunities will present themselves, it is the skill of the adults that enable them to readily recognise the 'teachable moments' when they arise and respond to them appropriately.

The more specific features of good practice which apply to the EYFS are as follows:

- A close partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to develop a positive self-image of themselves as learners and, therefore, to feel secure and confident at school;
- the understanding that teachers have of early child development and special educational needs and how this relates to teaching and learning;
- a kinesthetic and visual approach to curriculum delivery, which provides rich and varied opportunities for 'small world' play - using toys and models which replicate real life activities - and for role play (involving areas inside and outside the classroom which simulate real life situations and provide opportunities for imaginative play);
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences; give clear explanations; make appropriate interventions; and establish and develop the children's ability to play, socialise and communicate with others;
- a very strong emphasis on communication - including speech therapy as required - to generate a language for learning; to seek every opportunity to talk with children about their learning, encouraging them to listen and respond productively as appropriate to their level of need;
- the carefully planned and well-resourced curriculum and schemes of work that help children to maximise their potential against the Early Learning Goals (see above). This includes off-site visits and drawing on the resources of the local and wider community;
- a safe, high quality-learning environment - both indoors and outdoors, available throughout all seasons and weathers;
- the assessment, through observations, of children's achievement, progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers, and the appropriate resourcing and training of staff to meet the children's needs;
- the good relationships between St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, other educational and early years settings and agencies within the area.

### 7. Assessment

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, 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. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers. In order to measure children's progress, during the first few weeks in Nursery, the teacher will assess the ability of each child on entry. A brief initial assessment of number, handwriting grip, speech and language and phonics is carried out. Within the first 6 weeks of a child starting reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child.

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*



Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. Nursery assessments are also shared with parents in the end of year report. All assessments, including the profile are moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. In the summer term, reception assessments will also be moderated with the Year 1 team. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

### **8. Working with parents**

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Each child is assigned a key person (their class teacher) who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Further communication systems between school and parents include:

- Tapestry;
- weekly homework to practise/extend learning from the week (reception only);
- half termly newsletters;
- daily opportunity for brief updates at the point of dropping off or collecting children. Anything more than a few minutes' conversation will require an appointment to be made through the school office;
- home/school reading journal;
- email / telephone via the school office;
- progress meetings will take place in November, March and a written report in June;
- information meetings and workshops will take place throughout each school year. In EYFS this will include the teaching of reading and early maths skills.

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*



### 9. Induction and Transition

A parent information evening is held in June for parents of the prospective reception and nursery group. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to the St. Joseph's family, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasise the vital importance of home-school cooperation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all our children. From other settings and carers into St. Joseph's nursery: The EYFS recommends that all child carers work closely together to ensure the best learning experiences for each and every child. The nursery teacher receives information from child minders, private and independent settings as the children are due to start at St. Joseph's. If other settings wish to have a face to face meeting, this is accommodated, as well as telephone meetings and visits. The new parents' induction meeting in June is followed by a visit from the children for approximately an hour, in small groups. We then have a 'Watch me Learn' session in EYFS at the end of the first half term so parents can see how their child has settled and get a taste for what their morning looks like.

From nursery to reception: We feel that the children moving from St. Joseph's nursery into reception are well placed to make a smooth move, as the classroom and teaching staff are familiar. Towards the end of the nursery/reception year, the teachers will begin to prepare the children for the education which they will receive in Reception and the more formal education in Year 1.

We do this by:

- gradually moving the timetable in the summer term to one more akin to that of Reception/Year 1;
- allowing the children to spend time in the Year 1 classrooms with new staff – more frequently for those children with special needs;
- scheduling a 'meet the teacher' day towards the end of the summer term, when all classes will spend part of the day with their new teacher in their new classroom;
- allowing time for the teachers of the existing classes to 'handover' to the Year 1 teachers, giving information on family background, learning styles, friendship groups, academic ability, progress achieved through the year etc.
- ensuring we have an open-door policy for any concerns the parents and/or children may have. This transition continues into the first term of Reception/Year 1 when children experience a curriculum similar to their previous year, based on their end of year assessments.

### 10. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

St Joseph's Catholic Primary takes the safety of its pupils very seriously and various related safety policies and procedures are available in the school office and published on our website. The headteacher or the governor with responsibility for Health and Safety will be happy to discuss these in more detail should a parent/carer wish to do so. Specifically, the following procedures must be observed:

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*



- At 8.45am the gates to the school area are closed and locked. Security systems operate throughout the day to enable visitors to enter via one main gate and report to the school office. A visitor can only gain access to the teaching parts of the building via the school office and foyer, requiring a staff member to open security doors. All parents must leave promptly at 8:45am.
- Similarly, the reverse of the above procedure operates from 3.15pm, to enable prompt collection of children at the end of the day.
- No child will be handed over to the care of any adult other than a parent/carer or person nominated by the parent and known to the EYFS staff. If an alternative adult is collecting a child, the parent is required to call the school office so that a password system can be put in place to ensure that the correct adult collects the child.
- No mobile phones/cameras other than the designated school mobile phone and cameras may be used in EYFS. Visitors, including parents, are expected to respect this. Any visitor or volunteer spending time in Reception will be asked to leave mobile phones in a secure place.
- The EYFS learning environment is checked frequently for health and safety and this is risk assessed.

The class teacher is responsible for the pastoral care of each child, as well as the academic side of school life. Permanent members of staff within the EYFS are Paediatric First aid trained. Medication will be kept in the school office, well out of reach of pupils and administered in accordance with the First Aid Policy and Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy. EYFS follow the whole school behaviour policy. Physical intervention is only permitted to avert immediate danger of injury to self or others. Such occasions will be recorded and reported to the headteacher/governors (as appropriate). Parents will be informed on the same day or as soon as possible. Any occasions where intimate care is required will be assessed on a situation basis. St Joseph's Catholic Primary doesn't have the facilities to change nappies. Where assistance is required, 2 members of staff should be present or the member of staff must be in view of another adult (not the child). Where this is not possible, parents will be contacted for assistance. We ask parents to provide a spare set of clothes for their child, in addition to having a box of donated clothes available as spare clothes when accidents occur. All safeguarding and child protection concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and procedures followed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

In addition to the above, we promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- the effects of eating too many sweet things
- the importance of brushing your teeth Children in Reception also have visits from the school nurse in their Reception year to check their hearing and eye sight.

### **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Leadership team each year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

*'Where every child is known and loved, as a child of God'*