



## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

**'Together we Love, Learn and Follow Jesus'**

Mission									
Together we love, learn, follow Jesus									
Vision									
At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, through an open and generous heart, we learn together as a family in faith, following the gospel values of love.									
Values									
Hope	Thankfulness	Collaboration	Compassion	Friendship	Resilience	Empathy	Creativity	Justice	Respect

### Our Intent

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning. At St Joseph's, we seek to develop and promote lively and inquisitive minds with the desire and skill to explore new ideas. We want to foster a sense of awe and wonder and develop natural curiosity, so children enjoy learning both in and out of school. We also want children to take risks, become confident, resilient learners, and most importantly enjoy their learning and have fun!

### At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

### The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

### The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within

our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

### **We do this through:**

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities and of children from all social and cultural backgrounds.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Providing an induction meeting for parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Inviting new starters to a number of induction visits in the summer term.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how their child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through the Reading record and school newsletters.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Offering a parent/teacher consultation meeting where their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in reception.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as worships, workshops, Christmas Nativity play and sports day etc. Practitioners share information regarding their child's learning experiences via an app called Tapestry.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### **Learning and Developing**

The EYFS Curriculum — Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage — reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency

and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

**The three Prime areas are:**

Communication and language:

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

Physical development

- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor

Personal, social and emotional development

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

**The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:**

Literacy

- Word reading
- Writing
- Comprehension

Mathematics

- Numbers
- Numerical patterns

Understanding the world

- People, culture and communities
- The Natural World
- Past and Present

Expressive arts and design

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Reception pupils also participate in daily phonics sessions, following Monster Phonics.

**Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. 'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development. ' Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements. 'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.' Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. 'When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.' Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

**Planning**

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are taken from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon 6 themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. Due to the nature of changing interests, this is constantly updated and subject to change.

### **Observations**

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning.

### **Assessment**

During the first term in Reception, the teachers assess the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. Staff also administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the goals as on track or not on track. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves all Reception staff. Parent views are also sought to provide a wider assessment picture. The teachers keep limited progress records. Floor Books contain a range of evidence that parents have the opportunity to look at. Individual English, Phonics and Mathematics Books provide further evidence for teachers. The pupil tracker is updated at the end of every half term. This provides a summary sheet for each child. We record each child's level of development to be on track or not on track and then organise support and intervention for those not on track at that specific point in the year. Parents will receive a mid-term report and they will be invited to attend termly parents' evenings. Parents also receive an annual written report that offers comments on their child's progress and gives next step targets. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in July each year.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. Children have access to both inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

### **Teaching & Learning Styles**

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

## **Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children and worrying for parents; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

New intake Reception Parents are invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term to meet their teacher and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

### **This is an opportunity for staff to:**

- Go through school procedures
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Provide information on where to purchase uniform and book bag
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction into reception

## **Safeguarding**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training. Written records will be made in an appropriate and timely way and will be held securely where practitioners working with children are concerned about their safety or welfare. Practitioners will use CPOMs to record and share necessary information/ actions. These records will be shared appropriately and, where necessary, with consent. Leaders and practitioners will oversee the safe use of technology when children are in their care and take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying or children's well-being.

## **Keeping Safe**

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

## **Good Health**

All children are provided with a healthy fruit snack each day as well as having access to water at all times in individual water bottles. They have access to milk at break time and lunch time. Through the EYFS curriculum, children learn about healthy lifestyles, oral health and taking care of their health and wellbeing.

## **Intimate Care**

Please see our Intimate Care Policy.

## **CPD**

Part of the role of the EYFS Leader is to maintain his or her own CPD through courses, training, curriculum meetings and e-learning. Relevant CPD will be disseminated through INSET days, staff meetings and curriculum meetings in order to maintain good practice.

## **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher, Miss Dewhurst, will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed in January 2025 or as necessary.

**Policy Updated:** January 2024

**EYFS Leader:** Miss E. Ollerton

