

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

*The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education (DFE) 2017***

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework produced by the DFE and sets the standards for learning and development of children from birth to five. At St Joseph's the children join the school for the later stages of the EYFS, initially part-time in the nursery in the academic year in which they turn four, progressing to the reception classes in the academic year in which they turn five.

The EYFS is based upon four themes:

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

A Unique Child

At St Joseph's 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, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals. All children at St Joseph's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children with special educational needs are identified and supported in liaison with the Special Needs Coordinator and /or appropriate outside agencies where relevant.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children 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 to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

Welfare

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. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2017

At St Joseph’s we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Therefore we:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Positive Relationships

At St Joseph’s we recognise that children learn to be strong 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 acknowledge that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We value their contribution and involve them in their child’s education as fully as possible.

We do this through:

- Inviting both new nursery and reception intake parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Offering visits to children in their home setting prior to their starting nursery
- Where possible, arranging to visit children in their pre-school/nursery setting if they have not attended our own pre-school or nursery
- Ensuring the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during ‘get to know us’ sessions
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- Operating an ‘open door’ policy so that parents can discuss any worries or concerns

- Offering regular consultation meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress
- By providing parents with a report on their child's progress at the end of each school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, e.g. 'Show and Share' sessions, Christmas Crafts week, local trips, Foundation Stage Liturgy, Sports Day etc.
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's 'Learning Journals'

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We have good links with local pre-schools and visits to these pre-schools are undertaken by the EYFS teachers before children move on to our school. Children from our on site pre-school are invited to visit the nursery and join in with picnics, stories and play sessions before they are admitted. Children new to reception (who have not attended our nursery) are invited for a preliminary visit, which provides them with the opportunity to meet the other children from the nursery who will be in their class and familiarise themselves with the classroom environment.

Enabling Environments

At St Joseph's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Both the nursery and the reception classes have their own covered outdoor area and there is a large, secure garden. This has a positive effect on the children's development; being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. At St. Joseph's we recognize the importance of the children accessing the outdoor area and we plan activities and resources for the children for outdoors that help them to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning objectives within the EYFS are taken from the Early Years Outcome Statements and are based around half termly themes or topics and these plans are used by the teacher as a guide for weekly planning. However, the planning may be altered in response to the needs, achievements or interests of the children. This will be indicated on the appropriate planning sheets.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of both formal and informal observations; staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. Observations are recorded on assessment sheets, in reading folders and in the children's individual 'Learning Journals' and are used to inform the Early Years Outcome Statements. At the end of the reception year the children's progress is recorded onto the EYFS Profile and each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals. We provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgments with the teacher if they wish.

For further information, please read our Assessment Policy.

Learning and Development

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. The characteristics of effective learning for young children are defined as:

- playing and exploring (engagement) – finding out and exploring; playing with what they know; being willing to 'have a go'
- active learning (motivation) – being involved and concentrating; keep trying; enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- creating and thinking critically (thinking) – having their own ideas; making links; choosing ways to do things

Furthermore, there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings.

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. These are the prime areas and they continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

Prime areas:

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

The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences and run through and support learning in all other areas. Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific areas:

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

The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge; they grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Play

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and taking part in play which is guided by adults."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2017

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication

- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS
- 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 indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS coordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

What is a 'good level of development' in the EYFS?

- A 'good level of development' (GLD) will be achieved if a child attains or exceeds the ELG in 12 aspects – all the aspects in the Prime Areas and all aspects of Literacy and Maths