

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School



EYFS Policy

September 2025

Review: September 2028

"Treat others as you wish to be treated"

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Standards, Safeguarding and Curriculum Committee.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Standards, Safeguarding and Curriculum Committee in September 2025.

It is due for review in September 2028.

Hayley Francis
Head Teacher



Date: September 2025

Lindsay Wise
Chair of Governors



Date: September 2025

Early Years Foundation Stage policy

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St. Joseph's all school children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.) Key Stage 1 begins for all our children at the beginning of year 1. The EYFS is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the EYFS. Children can also start their learning journey with us in Nursery from the age of 6 months.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community or to our nursery on site. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what the 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 activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment with a range of adult and child-initiated activities.

Aims of the EYFS:

The 'Characteristics of Learning' underpin all future learning by supporting, promoting and developing children's positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning, social skills, attention skills and persistence through the 7 key areas:

Prime areas:

- ★ Personal, social and emotional development,
- ★ Communication and language,
- ★ Physical development, *Specific areas:*
- ★ Literacy: reading and writing,
- ★ Mathematical development, ★ Understanding of the world,
- ★ Expressive arts and design.

There are four themes in the EYFS which express important principles, underpinning effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children. The four themes are: a unique child; positive relationships; enabling environments, learning and development.

Each of the underlying principles is supported by four Commitments.

Theme: A Unique Child

Principle:

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

Commitments

Child Development: Babies and children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Every area of development – physical, cognitive, linguistic, spiritual, social and emotional – is equally important.

Inclusive Practice: The diversity of individuals and communities is valued. No child or family is discriminated against.

Keeping Safe: Young children are vulnerable. They develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults.

Health and Well-being: Children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being and is supported by attention to these aspects.

Theme: Positive Relationships

Principle:

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person

Commitments

Respecting Each Other Every interaction is based on caring professional relationships and respectful acknowledgement of the feelings of children and their families.

Parents as Partners Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning.

Supporting Learning Warm trusting relationships with knowledgeable adults support children's learning more effectively than any amount of resources.

Key Person A key person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents.

Theme: Enabling Environments

Principle:

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning

Commitments

Observation, Assessment and Planning Babies and young children are individuals first, each with a unique profile of abilities. Schedules and routines should flow with the child's needs. All planning starts with observing children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

Supporting Every Child The environment supports every child's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.

The Learning Environment A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.

The Wider Context Working in partnership with other settings, other professional and with individuals and groups in the community supports children's development and progress towards the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*: being healthy, staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution and economic well-being.

Theme: Learning and Development

Principle:

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

Commitments

Play and exploration 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.

Active Learning 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

Creativity and Critical Thinking When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Area of Learning and Development The EYFS is made up of seven areas of Learning and Development. All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are equally important. All areas of Learning and Development are underpinned by the Principles of the EYFS

Teaching and learning style:

The more general features of **good practice** in our school that relate to the EYFS are: -the partnership between teachers and parents, so that the children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;

-the understanding that teachers have the knowledge 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 achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the 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 regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the EYFS.

Transition

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

Starting Nursery - Parents of all children starting Nursery will be invited to visit Nursery with their child to meet nursery staff and learn more about how children learn in nursery. Parents are welcome to stay for part of their child's first session where this assists the settling in process and settling in plans will be discussed with parents where appropriate or necessary to meet individual needs.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

In the first few weeks children may come directly into the classroom so their parents can settle them if necessary. Each new child is paired with an older child as a 'buddy' to support them at lunchtimes, at reading time, school outings etc to support and help them.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

At St. Joseph's we believe that every child should reach, if not exceed, their potential. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking into account our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion.)

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. They will make significant progress towards achieving Development Matters Age Bands in Nursery and the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.

Some children progress beyond this point. 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, religious and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. If additional needs are identified, the class teacher (or Nursery Manager/Key Person in Nursery) will liaise with the SENCO to set targets to support the child's progress.

Planning:

We 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 and help them 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, such as speech therapy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning and development identified in the Early Years Outcomes. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning and development.

In Nursery the children's needs and interests, linked to the Areas of Learning and Development, provide the basis for planning throughout Nursery. We have an overview plan identifying key learning intentions and opportunities and this is expanded and updated in our weekly/daily plans to take account of developing needs and interests.

In Reception - The children's needs and interests, linked to the Early Learning Goals, provide the basis for planning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our medium term planning is completed half termly and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and for those working towards Levels 1 of the National Curriculum. *We encourage independent learning by giving the children a starting point for the topic and build on the children's prior knowledge and include them in the planning of what they want to find out.*

Assessment

During the first half term in nursery and reception class the staff observe the children and assesses the ability of each child against the Early Years Outcomes, which can then be compared to the end of year score. We share our observations with the parents at the parental consultation meeting. Children are assessed in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.

When children join our nursery parents are encouraged to have an induction meeting to share their knowledge of their child with the nursery staff, as a starting point for their attainment on entry.

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 observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate, and although not always formally recorded it **always** informs future planning. The children's individual targets are linked to the ELG's in Reception and Birth to five Matters in Nursery. Each child has a Learning Journey on the IT assessment tool called Evidence me, which collates our observations through photos and notes, linking them to the stages of development. Observations are shared electronically with parents on a regular basis via Evidence me. Nursery also use Evidence me for the children's termly assessments and share this with the parents through the online portal.

In Reception, we track the children's progress on Sims, adding the child's stage of development from baseline in October through to updating the tracking grids at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be emerging, developing or securely working within the birth to five Matters ranges. If a child's stage is below that of their age-related outcome, then interventions will be put in place to ensure that progress is made to achieve the ELG at the end of the year.

At the end of the academic year, the parents are given more detailed comments on their child's progress and this follows on in the learning journeys. They are given next steps which help to inform the parents of things the child will need to work on in Reception if they are moving up from Nursery or Year 1 if in Reception. We value the children's viewpoints and experiences. In Reception they also have the opportunity to comment on their first year at school.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts school on a 1:1 basis and to spend time with their child in the class room environment and to meet the Headteacher. Home visits are also offered to parents so they have the option to either make an appointment with the teacher at home or school;

- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school, and the teachers visit their nursery settings where possible;

- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and encouraging an 'open door' policy with good dialogue between parents and staff;

- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances; children begin on a part-time basis for the first two weeks;

- arranging a range of activities that support the involvement of parents, such as tea parties to 'see how we learn';

- encouraging parents to comment in their daily diary and Learning Journey in Nursery.

- encouraging parents to comment in the child's reading record book (Reception class)

Equal Opportunities

All children will be included, valued and supported in our setting.

We will:

- ensure that all pupils and staff are treated with respect.
- not discriminate against any child/adult.
- ensure that all pupils have access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- strive to remove any forms of discrimination either direct or indirect that may form barriers to learning or to the development of any child or group of children.
- challenge stereotyping and prejudice.
- celebrate the cultural diversity of our school community and the wider world.

Health and Safety

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. We continually risk assess the classroom/outside area to maintain a high level of safety.

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014). ***Please also see Statutory Welfare Requirements document.***