

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

“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, 2012

MISSION STATEMENT

We are growing together on our journey of achievement with Jesus in our hearts, heads and hands.

POLICY STATEMENT

The aim of this policy is to put in place the steps to ensure that every child makes a successful transition between home and school. To enable this to happen we will:

- a) Promote the intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each child through a well-planned and managed curriculum. This curriculum takes into account each child’s aptitude to learning through different forms of activity, in particular through active involvement and play.
- b) Ensure that each child has equal and adequate access to the curriculum and that his/her progress is commensurate with his/her developing ability regardless of gender, ethnic or social background or special needs.
- c) Enable each child to make a satisfactory transfer to KS1 by ensuring that he/she has developed sufficient skills, aptitudes and understanding.

POLICY AIM

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

Our primary aim is to provide an environment that is caring, stimulating and one that fosters children's independence. To know that every child is **a unique child**, who is constantly learning and 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 celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We understand that children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships** with peers and key workers. We value the importance of children learning and developing well in an **enabling environment**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. We understand that children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates and we shall work to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all children regardless of ability or special educational needs.

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 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.

The learning and development requirements comprise three elements:

1. The early learning goals – the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach age 5 (young children).
2. The educational programmes – the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children.
3. The assessment arrangements – the arrangements for assessing young children to ascertain their achievements.

The Early Year Curriculum:

There are **seven** areas of learning and development.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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 three areas, the prime areas, are:

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

We must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

Positive Relationships

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

Parents as Partners:

We recognise 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 the children. We do this through:

1. Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
2. Hosting a new parents induction evening where they will receive information for their child starting in September. They will meet the Head teacher, Class teacher, SENCO and Governors and be provided with information . This provides the parents with an opportunity to see the learning environment and ask any questions.
3. All children will be offered a home visit prior to starting school.
4. Children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Come and Join in' mornings.
5. At St Joseph's we have an open door policy where parents can have regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and discuss any worries or concerns.
6. There are two parents evening where the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and discuss next steps. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress three times a year.
7. We arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents for example, class assemblies, sports day, play and stay sessions etc.
8. Providing parents with WOW moments where they can contribute to their child's learning journeys.

All staff at St Joseph's Primary School aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school We have three key worker groups where we have designated group time to discuss a variety of things e.g. feelings, stories, taking in turns etc. to develop strong and secure relationships.

We have good links with Footsteps (the nursery attached to the school) and visits are undertaken by the EYFS teacher and the Head teacher. The Reception teacher meets with reception staff every morning to discuss the planning and routine for the day. Once a week reception and nursery staff meet to discuss curriculum changes, policies, planning, learning environment and any other matters. Before the new children start school in September as unit we discuss children coming from Footsteps Nursery and put any action plans into place if need be to support children's transition.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The characteristics of effective learning are a key element in the Early Year's Foundation Stage. They detail the ways in which children should be learning from their environment, experiences and activities. Children up to the age of five should all be displaying the characteristics of effective learning every day.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- 1. Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- 2. Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- 3. Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however, the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child and will use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. We shall focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, we discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. We consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. If so, we shall help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate alongside our SENCO carrying out observations.

On entry to Reception the teacher and key workers assess the children against the EYFS development matters and ELG to successfully build on their previous experiences. Information from the children's previous setting as well information gained from parents is also used to make these assessments and is completed within the first half term depending how they settle.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Their learning is continuously tracked and is assessed against the EYFS development matters statements, age bands and ELG every half term. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journeys'. They also contain information provided by parents and other settings. At St Joseph's Primary School we use the 2Build a profile to record judgements against the EYFS criteria.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's. Towards the end of the year the children's key worker will use the assessments collected in the children's learning journal and what they know about the children, to make a final judgement against the ELG. This is the EYFS profile and it is used to describe children's attainment at the end of EYFS. For each ELG, practitioners must judge whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding), or not yet reaching this level (emerging). This information is submitted to the LEA. The Learning Journals are moderated at local level in Cluster groups and by LEA advisors. Once the data has been submitted the setting's GLD (Good Level of Development) will be published. This percentage is a measure of how successful the setting is in ensuring children is ready for their next phase of learning. (The number of children achieving 'Expected' in the three prime areas and Literacy and Maths)

English as an Additional Language - EAL

For children whose home language is not English, we will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. We also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS: ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, we assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, we will explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is 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 located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. 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 to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 6 areas of learning.

Play

"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, 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.

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through 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. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by teachers, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Monitoring and review

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

Edited by Mrs Zsuzsa Gallagher
 Policy to be reviewed annually.
 Policy to be the responsibility of Curriculum & Standards Committee

Approved by the Full Governing Body at it's meeting on	/	/
Chair of Governors signature	
Date	/	/
Review date	/	