

St. Clare's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



Member of staff responsible: Mrs Clack
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Mission Statement

St Clare's is a Christ-centred family where everyone is valued and respected. We learn and grow, whilst strengthening our relationship with God and one another. Together in His love, we can achieve our full potential.

Play, learn and grow together with Christ.

Introduction

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children within our Preschool (Little Saplings) and Reception Class (Rowan), at St. Clare's Catholic Primary School. The EYFS provides every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The EYFS within our school is the foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills needed for later school life.

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best possible start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experience in early years 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 fulfil their potential."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Education (September 2021, updated 2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_-_based_providers.pdf

In both our Preschool and Reception, our EYFS environment consists of inside and outdoor areas.

They provide the following areas:

- Small world area
- Role play area
- Construction area
- Sand and water areas
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Mark making / writing table with a range of writing resources

- Creative area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Interactive touch screen
- Malleable and fine motor resources
- Musical area
- Maths games and equipment
- Gross motor equipment, such as trikes and balance bikes

Children bring in wellington boots and have puddle suits, so they can make full use of outside learning areas, the school field and forest school area.

Statement of Intent

At St Clare's, through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Catholic values and ensure all children are ready for their next steps through school and through life.

It is our intent to ensure that every child has access to a balanced, and ambitious EYFS curriculum which prepares our children for now and for the future, in terms of opportunities and experiences. At St. Clare's, following personal interests and individual needs in the EYFS allows us to plan and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support skills, knowledge and development and achieve their next steps.

It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a lifelong love of learning.

At St. Clare's, we create a learning environment which fosters supportive relationships to enhance and invite a child's curiosity, confidence, and individual competence; allowing them to flourish and soar as individuals regardless of background, circumstance or need. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners, who thrive and reach their full potential.

Our EYFS curriculum aims to enable our children to be:

- Competent and creative learners, who are curious to learn about the world around them
- Secure, confident, and independent, who enjoy coming to school and learning new skills and knowledge and understanding, building on their existing learning.
- Skilful communicators, who connect with others through language and play, ensuring that they play in a vocabulary rich environment.

The Early Years at St. Clare's is based around the needs of our community, whilst following the principles of the EYFS. Our curriculum is designed around a language rich environment and aims to develop the foundations for excellent communication skills. Our curriculum intent is to provide the children with both a range of familiar topics, linked to their experiences, as well as unfamiliar topics, to spark their interest and exploration of the wider world, we do this by exploring a plethora of books, trips and inviting visitors into school.

In doing this, we provide a curriculum and environment where the children feel safe and secure when developing their knowledge, understanding and skills, yet they are challenged and exposed to new learning. We have a particular emphasis on relationships and development of the characteristics of effective learning.

The EYFS framework is organised into **seven areas** of learning and development. **Three prime areas**, which are particularly important for learning and forming relationships and build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas. These are the prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

A further **four specific areas**, will help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The EYFS Religious Education (RE) curriculum and the teaching of Catholic values underpin all areas of learning. At our school, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is rooted in the values of the RED Catholic curriculum, ensuring Religious Education is not treated as a standalone subject but as a living, breathing part of everything we do. We believe that every moment is a chance to encounter Christ and so RE is thoughtfully woven into the fabric of daily learning—through stories, prayer, play, exploration, and interactions. Children are nurtured in an environment of love, respect, and awe for God's creation, with gospel values shaping our routines, relationships, and responses. This holistic approach fosters a deep spiritual awareness from the very beginning of a child's learning journey at St Clare's.

Our RE provision is carefully structured around the six branches of the RED curriculum: *Creation and Covenant*, *Prophecy and Promise*, *Galilee to Jerusalem*, *Desert to Garden*, *To the Ends of the Earth*, and *Dialogue and Encounter*. Each branch offers a lens through which children can explore faith, scripture, and Christian living in ways that are developmentally appropriate and spiritually meaningful. Through these interconnected themes, our youngest children in school come to see God's presence in all areas of life and learning.

Religious Education in the EYFS consists of curriculum learning delivered through the 'Majister' Scheme of Work, together with regular opportunities for prayer and individual spiritual growth. Right from the EYFS, pupils at St. Clare's learn about care for the common good and care for our common home and EYFS pupils play a key part in participating in whole school events and perform their own Christmas nativity.

Implementation

Induction

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

We have a tried and tested induction programme which includes:

- An induction evening held in the summer term to welcome parents/carers. The Headteacher and EYFS team share procedures, curriculum and routines with parents at this meeting. Parents/carers are given a school pack, which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.
- The Reception teacher and the Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) attend home visits to spend time with the child and family.
- Reception children begin the autumn term with half day sessions, so their introduction to school is gradual and not overwhelming.
- Messages between home and school can be sent easily via the Arbor communication system which is set up prior to the children starting school.
- On starting school, each child will have a Year 5 or Year 6 buddy who will take special care of them during lunch play times and in the dinner hall.

Three Prime Areas:

Communication and Language – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – we encourage children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; forming positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities

The Four Specific Areas

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

We have developed our curriculum giving **communication and language** skills a high priority. This is in line with Development Matters 2023:

“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children’s language effectively.”

Staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas.

A high priority is also given to the teaching of **reading**. We aim to teach children to read and develop a love of books as soon as they start with us. High quality books are used to teach topics and to enhance our whole curriculum. We follow a systematic approach to Phonics using the Red Rose Phonics Scheme through the EYFS. We teach this as full class with extra nurture groups on top of whole class teaching to support any gaps in learning.

We underpin our curriculum with the Personal Social and Emotional Development of all our children. We strive to enable children to be safe, happy, confident individuals. We also encourage self-regulation as much as possible and introduce rules and boundaries through modelling good behaviour and through our school mission statement and values.

Children benefit from meaningful learning across the curriculum and staff plan resourcefully for opportunities for communication, sustained shared thinking and physical challenge to build on existing skills considering the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

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

Our curriculum promotes and supports children’s emotional security and development of their character enabling children to take risks in a safe and secure environment. Supporting children to be active and to develop physically including giving clear messages to children why it is important to maintain oral hygiene, eat healthily, drink and exercise as well as being kind and respecting others.

Impact

The impact of our EYFS curriculum is measured through the monitoring cycle in school alongside our assessment procedures. This includes:

- Discussions with class teachers and EYFS staff
- Discussions with children
- Book monitoring
- Learning walks

- Moderation

Monitoring and assessment information is used to measure whether:

- There is a clear progression of children's work.
- Children's work shows a range of topics and evidence of the EYFS curriculum coverage.
- Children are becoming increasingly curious in their questioning and thinking.
- Feedback from teachers has an impact on our pupils, often with next step questions to push learning on.
- All learners are making progress, including EAL, SEND and disadvantaged learners.
- Children can demonstrate that they know more and are remembering more.
- Children are being asked to 'do more' with their knowledge as they move through their EYFS year to set the foundations for the transition to KS1.

Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and teachers work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge, and expertise.

We are proud of our parental partnership at St Clare's; we promote this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to parents/carers during the new parents' meeting in June, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information or support from us.
- Arbor is set up prior to their child starting with us. We use Arbor to update parents on current learning and as a communication tool.
- When children have settled into classes, parents are invited to phonic sessions and stay and play sessions.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and to view children's work.
- Sharing learning on our school webpage and school social media.
- In the Autumn term, there is a "meet the teacher" event for parents where we further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved. There are other "meet the teacher" events throughout the academic year.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an interim report in the Autumn, Spring term and an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress throughout the year. At the end of Reception, children will be assessed against the early learning goals for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCO) for the school.

Language and Literacy Support

Children in the EYFS are immersed in Phonics from the very beginning of their journey to develop the skills required for accurate word reading. We recognise the vital link between the development of communication and language skills and reading. This prime area of the EYFS curriculum underpins all our early years learning and we believe that this is paramount for developing life-long readers. A range of texts and genres have been carefully selected to ensure that our children are exposed to a rich variety of literature beyond the children's current reading ability and allowing us to make purposeful cross-curricular links. There is also the freedom for children to develop their own reading interests and teachers have the flexibility to incorporate these interests within their planning. High-quality stories, poetry, rhymes, songs, and information is shared with the children daily and children are motivated to talk and re-enact their encounters with texts during child-initiated play.

Promoting a Love of Reading

Teachers prepare for story reading so that they can capture the children's attention and imagination. This involves dramatisation with the children and repetition, helping children to develop expressive language and oracy skills. In EYFS, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting the children's reading development.

We aim to create attractive, welcoming, and stimulating learning areas, both inside and outside the classroom, which are rich with texts, encouraging children to explore and select books independently. Children feel safe, secure, and confident to read for pleasure during independent learning time. From their earliest starting points, children are excited about reading and we feel this creates a strong foundation for a life-long love of reading.

- The first books that children bring home to share with parents/carers will be picture books and then books with words in line with their phonics knowledge.
- Each week, children will take home independent reading books in line with their phonics knowledge and a library book to read with an adult to promote reading for pleasure.
- Each week, phonics/tricky words linked to current teaching are sent home.
- To support reading at home, parents are invited into school for phonics and reading workshops.

Assessment, Reporting and Tracking Progress

Assessment in EYFS starts with careful observations and meaningful interactions with children which are then used to inform planning. Learning and teaching are effective when children feel a sense of belonging, curiosity and competence showing resilience and tenacity.

EYFS staff attend external meetings and training to ensure that we moderate our judgements. By using monitoring assessment procedures regularly, we can effectively demonstrate what learning is taking place and how each child is progressing in all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum. Progress toward the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) will ensure a positive disposition to learn.

Summative

EYFS staff make summative judgments on a termly basis. The data is analysed by the EYFS team, by Subject Leaders and by Senior Leaders at termly pupil progress meetings. EYFS teachers utilise the information to make strategic choices about next steps in learning.

Formative

Due to the nature of EYFS, formative assessment is the most significant method which practitioners use. Using the Development Matters guidance, teachers make judgements about the learners' progress through target questioning, quality interaction and through discussions about learning with the whole team. During the first term, the teacher forms judgements of each child using a mixture of teacher baselines and observations and in Reception the statutory government baseline Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

Regular monitoring and evaluation of children's progress enables us to continually adjust our provision in response to any areas of underachievement that may be identified, or if further challenge is needed. Assessment is a fundamental part of the planning process. To help us decide what to provide we observe children in their play in a range of situations.

"On-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice." (Revised Development Matters in the EYFS)

Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher, teaching assistants, parents, and children, as appropriate. We record each child's level of development throughout the year, and record whether each child is on track or not on track to meet a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the year.

Children in Reception will be judged at either **working towards an expected level** or **working at the expected level** in each early learning goal. This information is also shared with the child's next teacher who uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers detailed comments on each child's holistic progress across all areas of learning. It highlights the child's strengths, next steps and gives details of the child's progress during their time in the EYFS. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

The Learning Environment

At St. Clare's, we create a learning environment which fosters supportive relationships to enhance and invite a child's curiosity, confidence, and individual competency; allowing them to flourish and soar as individuals regardless of background, circumstance or need.

We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing

physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a lifelong love of learning.

We aim to create an attractive, enabling and stimulating learning environment which encourages children to explore, investigate, develop skills, and learn through first hand experiences. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence skills. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation through play.

Recording of Work

In EYFS we take a balanced approach to how children demonstrate their understanding. As well as recording work in class floor books, we also look to promote oracy throughout the curriculum. This may include children verbally presenting work or adult scribing - where appropriate- this also supports children to articulate their knowledge whilst removing a barrier of writing for those who require it.

SEND and Aiming High

All children will receive quality first teaching daily and activities will be adapted accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention 'nurture' programmes will be implemented. Practitioners plan programmes together and, where needed, with liaison with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

English as an Additional Language

We 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 Key Stage 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 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.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

"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." (EYFS Framework)

It is important to us that all children 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 help children to self-regulate and manage their emotions appropriately and Personal Social and Emotional Education is at the heart of everything we do. Children should be allowed to take calculated 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. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers. We want to teach children to keep themselves safe, fit, healthy and well – both physically and mentally.

In the EYFS, we do this through our learning environment and the HRSE curriculum. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policies, which have been written in accordance with **‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024’** and the local Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership.

Any concerns go through a secure online recording system called CPOMS. Mrs. Wroblewski (Headteacher) is the Designated Senior Leader for Safeguarding (DSL), and Mr. Parkinson, Mrs. Clack and Mrs. Clayton are Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL). All members of staff undergo annual safeguarding training and refresher courses. Members of staff in the EYFS setting have a recognised paediatric first aid qualification in line with the EYFS framework.

Supervision

Working in-line with statutory guidance, St. Clare’s EYFS staff take part in planned, regular opportunities to meet for individual supervision. The purpose of the supervision meetings is to discuss the development and well-being of individuals, to review current practice and, to plan and to discuss any need arising because of any assessments. Staff are aware if there are any concerns regarding children they can speak directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In addition to this, both support staff and class teachers receive an annual appraisal or professional development meeting, which identifies any professional development opportunities or training needs.

Food

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit for under-fives scheme. For our Preschool and Reception children, we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with our school kitchen. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. St Clare’s is a nut free school. We make sure that children with allergies or other dietary requirements are catered for in conjunction with our catering providers. Fresh water is readily available for all children, and we encourage children to bring in water bottles so they can stay hydrated.

Other relevant policies

Safeguarding Policy
Admissions Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Attendance Policy
Behaviour Policy
Health and Safety Policy
HRSE Policy

Medicine in School
Online Safety
SEND Policy
Uniform Policy

Resources and links

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_-_based_providers.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2/development-matters>

<https://birthto5matters.org.uk/characteristics-of-effective-learning/>

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lpds/teaching-and-learning/primary/english-and-literacy/lpdsrrls/>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

<https://lancshiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/safeguarding-children>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6705184530536cb927482dd6/Early_years_foundation_stage_safeguarding_reforms_-_response.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations-for>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-pract>