

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Intent

Our curriculum starting point is to focus on children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings to provide the best possible start at St James Catholic Primary School, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points.

The curriculum has been designed to enable children to succeed through cooperative and collaborative learning principles. As such, there is a strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language.

Our enabling environments and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking. We following children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school. By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years learning and teaching at St James Catholic Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that Parents/carers, support staff and the reception teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best 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 experiences 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential." Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Education, July 2025.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- A safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Assessment of what each child can do, their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Mission Statement

At St. James Catholic Primary School, we aim to provide a variety of lessons for every child in a happy, caring and welcoming school. Every member of our school is a gift from God and we want everyone to do their best. As a Catholic School, we care for each other, and treat each other as Jesus teaches us, in all areas of school life.

Implementation

Each half term we introduce a new theme to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching during the day.

The timetable changes throughout the year to take into consideration the changing needs of the children. These sessions are followed by focused group work. This means the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for both inside and outside the classroom and importance is given to learning in both areas.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Start Date:	Review Date:	Adopted:
September 2025	July 2027	September 2025