

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



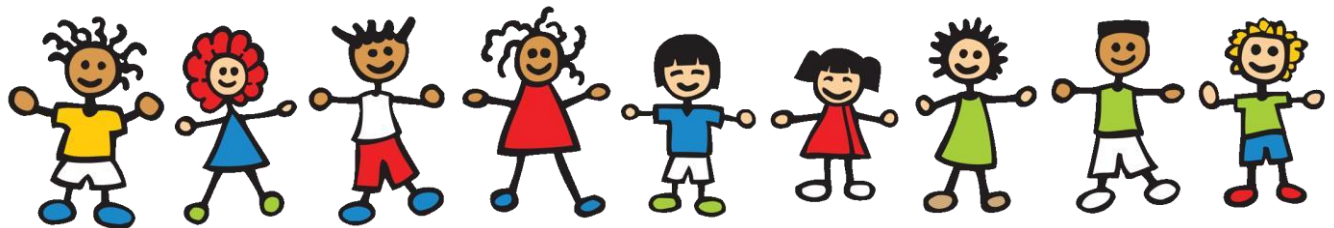
Our Mission Statement

“You are precious in MY eyes”

We are here to support all members of St. Joseph's family as individuals and children of God to become the best each one of us can be.

We want to share our gifts, celebrate each other's differences and respect the diversity, customs and beliefs of our family so that we can all have life and have it to the fullest, according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Early Years Policy



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Early Years 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.’

EYFS Framework

“Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them to catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support. When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.”

EYFS Development Matters 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, 2021) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school this includes Nursery and Reception classes.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we believe that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Practitioners in our setting are committed to:

- Understanding and observing each child's development and learning, assessing their progress and planning opportunities to enable them to achieve their next steps
- Supporting children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- Identifying any need for additional support and knowing what to do to support these needs
- Keeping children safe
- Valuing and respecting all children and families equally

Positive Relationships

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from a base of strong and loving relationships with parents and / or key person. All practitioners strive to ensure that children have the experiences to build positive relationships through:

- Creating a warm and loving environment, and fostering a sense of belonging
- Being sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests

- Being supportive of the child's own efforts and independence and celebrating their achievements.
- Consistently setting clear and high standards across the setting.
- Developing good relationships with our families and supporting them as needed.

Enabling Environments

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we understand that children learn and develop well in enabling environments (both indoors and outdoors), in which their experiences respond to their individual needs.

Our learning environment offers:

- Stimulating resources relevant to all the children's cultures and communities.
- Rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching.
- Support for children to take risks and explore.
- Opportunities to develop critical thinking and develop independent learning.

Our environments are planned to develop specific skills, identified through observation that children need to encounter, practice and consolidate, and to challenge children's learning. Where possible, opportunities to develop in all areas of learning are provided in the continuous provision to support the development of the whole child.

Outdoor learning and play is a pivotal aspect of our learning environment and all practitioners understand the positive impact that it has on children's wellbeing, enjoyment, attainment, social skills and language development. All children are able to access the outdoor environment with adult supervision at designated times throughout the day.

Learning and Development

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we understand that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. The Early Years Framework (2021) states that 'Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.' All practitioners in our setting have a thorough understanding of each child and their individual level of development and provide opportunities to enable them to achieve to their full potential, through structured play and child-led exploration, as well as child and adult initiated learning.

Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging and playful opportunities are provided across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They foster the characteristics of effective early learning:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We use the EYFS Development Matters guidance to help us support each child's learning and development, by closely matching what we provide to a child's current needs. Initial baseline assessment, alongside practitioner observations and parental feedback is used to ensure that our baseline is accurate and provides us with opportunities to ensure a good starting point for our learners. In our Reception classes, we use the Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of a child joining. In Nursery we do ongoing assessment through tapestry observations.

On-going formative assessment is at the heart of the practice in our setting. Our practitioners:

- Observe children as they interact in their play and adult-led activities to show their development and highlight their next steps
- Use Tapestry observations and individual learning journeys to record children's development. Each parent is given the opportunity to log in and access their child's observations with the tapestry app. An email is sent to each parent when their child is added to tapestry. Tapestry is used in Nursery and Reception throughout the year, but as the children go through the Reception year, the children begin to record more and therefore Tapestry is used less.
- Plan learning opportunities which will enable children achieve their identified next steps and make good progress throughout the early years.
- Intervene in child-initiated learning to support them with their individual next steps to allow them to achieve to their full potential.

Summative Assessment

The EYFS requires early years practitioners to review children's progress and share a summary with parents at the end of Reception. Development Matters is used throughout our EYFS as a guide to make judgements about whether a child is emerging or expected within each area of learning. Summative assessment supports us in sharing information with parents, colleagues and other settings.

Long Term Planning

Planning within our EYFS is based on our long-term plans, but is also flexible and based on Assessment for Learning.

In our Reception and Nursery classes, weekly plans include specific adult directed activities based on previous observations and adult directed activities to ensure coverage of skills and development in line with the EYFS. In both classes, areas of continuous provision are enhanced to meet the individual needs of all children through their continued interests and to reinforce adult directed activities.

[Nursery Long Term Plan](#)

[Reception Long Term Plan](#)

Nursery Additional Information

At St Joseph's we provide 15 hours of Nursery education and childcare per week. A small number of pupils, who are eligible, will be able to apply for 30 hour per week, depending on school readiness and circumstances of the household. We also provide Nursery places for those children who are due to begin Nursery in the term after they turn 3.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Characteristics of Effective Learning
<u>Playing and Exploring- engaging</u> • Finding out and exploring • Playing with what they know • Being willing to 'have a go'
<u>Active Learning</u> • Being involved and concentrating • Keep trying • Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
<u>Creating and thinking critically</u> • Having their own ideas • Making links • Choosing ways to do things

These characteristics of effective learning are central to the learning environment and learning opportunities within our early years setting.

Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development, which are all inter-connected.

The Prime Areas are:

- Communication and Language (listening, attention and understanding, and speaking)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (self-regulation, managing self, and building relationships)
- Physical Development (gross motor skills and fine motor skills)

The Specific Areas are:

- Literacy (including comprehension, word reading and writing)
- Mathematics (including numbers and numerical patterns)
- Understanding the World* (teaching children about past and present, people, culture and communities, and the natural world)
- Expressive Arts and Design (creating with materials and being imaginative and expressive)

*within Understanding the World, we also include some elements of IT and Digital Literacy, as we believe it is good practice to equip our students with the knowledge and understanding of technology in the world today.

Outdoor Learning

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we believe that all children have the right to experience and enjoy the essential and special nature of being outdoors. Furthermore, children thrive and their minds and bodies develop best when they have access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences.

We believe that the outdoor environment is a rich, dynamic and natural space for learning and development in children of all ages. Its value as an essential learning resource has been recognised by many pieces of research and more recently within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), particularly within the principle of 'Enabling Environments'.

The role of the adult outside should be much the same as the role of the adult inside; to scaffold learning, observe and record. Children should be encouraged to make their own choices and lead their own learning with appropriate support from an understanding adult. Through observation, adults should have a deep understanding of how individual children learn best, their interests and personal motivations and are therefore able to offer appropriate individualised support to them. All staff are responsible for setting up and clearing away equipment and must all be aware of the children's safety. A security and safety check of the outdoor play area must be completed before children go out.

If staff deem the weather to be inappropriate or unsafe for the children to be outside, then the outdoor area will remain closed to the children until the weather permits children to be outside in a safe environment to learn and explore.

Early Learning Goals

Each area of learning has an Early Learning Goal (ELG) that sets out the expected level of attainment for children at the end of Reception.

[EYFS Early Learning Goals](#)

Key Person

Each child in Nursery is allocated a Key Worker. The Key Worker system enables all children to have a named person who is a main point of contact for parents, and will help each child to feel safe, happy and settled in the environment. The Key Person will also take responsibility for the child's welfare, care, development and learning. They will also record and track children's progress, sharing this with parents through Tapestry and parent/teacher stay and play sessions.

During the week, each Key Worker spends time with their key children every day sharing stories, songs and rhymes in order to establish and promote positive relationships and learning.

As the children move into Reception, the class teacher and teaching assistants work collaboratively to assess and keep records using the school tracking system and Tapestry.

Parental Involvement

We actively support and encourage parental involvement in their children's learning as we recognise parents' role as their child's first educators and role models.

Our Nursery staff host a 'meet and greet' visit for the parents. This provides a chance for the parents to see the environment and talk to the staff about what their children will be learning throughout the year.

In Reception, parents are invited into school to meet their class teacher in the Autumn term and they are invited to attend a 'Stay and Play' each term. This enables them to have a look at the learning environment, speak with their child's class teacher and look at their child's work. In October, they will also receive a settling in report to let them know how their child has settled in to school life.

Parents can contact class teachers through the Class Dojo app.

Risk assessments

All areas of provision are risk assessed and checked frequently by staff. Children are taught how to become 'risk aware' and are trained on how to observe for hazards and follow safety rules.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS leader and the Foundation Stage practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head Teacher and Subject Leaders carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

All quotations and references included in this document are taken from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE) 2021 and Development Matters

Approved by	Quality of Education Committee
Date	January 2025
Review	January 2027