

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"Following Jesus in all we do"

**GROWING CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER AND WORSHIP
SHOWING RESPECT, LOVE AND CARE FOR EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING
GIVING OF OUR BEST IN ALL THINGS
SHARING FULLY IN THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND BEYOND**

Review Date November 2021

Aim

At St Joseph's Catholic School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for each and every child by giving children opportunities to gain fundamental learning skills within the Early Years Foundation Stage. We value each child as a unique individual and children's interests are at the centre of our curriculum. This enables us to create a safe and happy environment which is stimulating and motivating for learners. We endeavour to work in partnership with parents to enable children to reach their full potential and ensure children become successful learners within the foundation stage and beyond.

There are four underpinning themes within children's learning and development during their time in the EYFS. Children learn in a variety of ways: watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. Play is the foundation of development and learning for young children and underpins our Early Years curriculum. We adhere to the four themes which are outlined in the EYFS framework:

- **A unique child** - every child is a competent learner from birth and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and carers.
- **Enabling environments** - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and Developing** - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum in EYFS across the seven areas of learning; using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support including children with special educational needs, for whom English is an additional language and those who have gaps in their development. We achieve this through skilled bilingual practitioners and the delivery of high quality speech language intervention.
- Work closely with outside agencies to ensure that both children and parents are offered effective support and guidance.
- Work co-operatively with parents and within the wider context to ensure there is excellent communication between school and home. This is promoted through our 'open door' approach to parent communications, website, parent text and Twitter.

- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observations, assessment and planning meetings with the children to gain an understanding of what they already know.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-led and child-initiated so that children can gain new knowledge and skills and have the opportunity to demonstrate these independently.
- Preschool use keyworker approach to develop close relationships with individual children; this is then fostered through Teacher and TA relationships with children as they move into Reception.
- Set individual next steps for children, which are shared with them so that they are appropriately challenged and can recognise their own progress. These are then facilitated by practitioners 'in the moment' to aid progression.
- Use building learning power characters to enable children to identify the types of learning skills they need to be successful learners in line with the characteristics of effective learning (see appendix 1).
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and outdoors to provide opportunities for children to manage their own risk and safety.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. Our curriculum is rooted in enabling a language rich environment, where traditional tales and stories are used as themes to scaffold learning. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

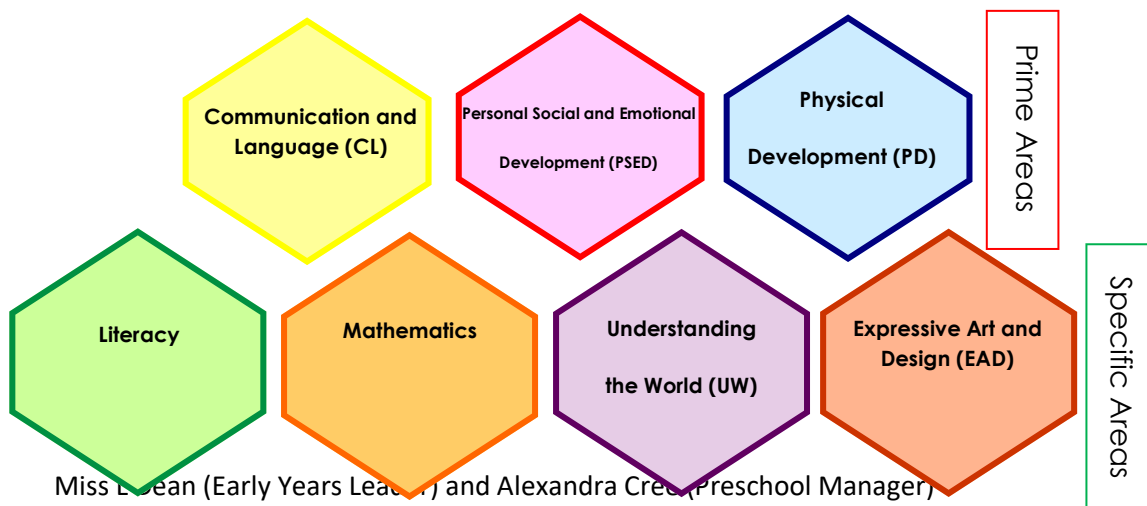
These three areas are the *prime* areas:

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

Children are also supported through the 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**



Miss Lillian (Early Years Leader) and Alexandra Creech (Preschool Manager)

St Joseph's Early Years Curriculum

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful, first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and nurture positive attitudes towards learning, independence, confidence, effective communication and physical development. These core skills are then strengthened by specific areas of learning and our balanced curriculum allows children to develop holistically.

Our curriculum:

- PSED - Children develop whole class rules which are established with their input, circle times, Marvellous Me, Adventure Ted, roleplay and the use of zone boards to enable children to take ownership of their behaviour.
- Communication and Language - through traditional tales, signalong, circle times, shared reading and a language rich environment children are encouraged to expressive themselves articulately.
- Physical Development – Children are encouraged to develop both fine and gross motor skills through Little Leaves, finger gym, dough-disco and discrete PD lessons such as; bike balanceability, mini yoga, gymnastics and dance.
- Literacy- Children experience listening activities, shared reading, roleplay, story mapping and Read Write Inc is utilised for discrete phonics sessions from preschool through to keystage 1.
- Maths- Children are provided with the opportunity to develop their maths skills including; counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures. This is underpinned by the White Rose scheme which develops mathematical language for reasoning and is rooted in a concrete, pictorial and abstract approach.
- Understanding the World- Children have the opportunity to explore the outdoors and frequently use our Little Leaves site to create awe and wonder to ignite children's natural curiosity. It is also developed through our RE curriculum, parish links, cultural experiences and super learning days such as Diwali and through the use of visitors and trips. Technology skills are fostered through their access to ipads, computers and the interactive whiteboard which is often linked to other areas of learning.
- Expressive Art and Design – Children explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Our curriculum in practice:

- Children have whole group and small group sessions which increase as they progress through the EYFS with dedicated time for a daily phonics session using 'Read, Write Inc', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy; including shared reading and writing.
- The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework and based on the children's interests teamed with staff's knowledge of children's next steps. Pupil progress meetings formalise this process to ensure the curriculum is meeting the children's needs.
- Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Adult led activities allow children to gain new knowledge, skills and understanding whilst child initiated opportunities are provided for children to demonstrate their own embedded skills and apply their knowledge.
- We aim to create a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults to

challenge them and ensure progression. During children's play, early years practitioners interact with children to stretch and challenge children further when appropriate through 'in the moment planning'.

- We reflect upon observations and adult led activities to inform planning, ensuring we create an enabling environment for all learners.
- Observations are utilised to create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place as a team to move the children's learning forwards and identify misconceptions and gaps in their development. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey using the ipads, which are shared with parents using Tapestry. Children also have exercise books where physical evidence of their achievements are kept.

Parental Involvement

- Preschool offer stay and play sessions for parents to gain an understanding of the daily preschool routine and the expectation for them and their children. For parents new to Reception there is a meeting in June to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and give them all necessary information.
- During the academic year, there are two parents meetings in which their child's developmental progress is shared and next steps are discussed. The first meeting is focused on how their child has settled and is an opportunity for parents to talk about any issues or concerns they may have. Later in the year, the discussion focuses more on the children's attitude to learning and their development with the foundation stage.
- At the end of the year, parents are informed of their children's progress and attainment. In Preschool this done through parent meetings and in Reception parents receive an end year report. The Reception report is a summative judgement against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school or Preschool.
- Parents can keep up to date with their child's learning through Tapestry where they view and contribute towards their child's learning journey. This is also done through 'wow moments'.
- Curriculum letters are sent home periodically to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in school or accompany children on school visits.
- All parents are invited to join the Friends of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, which exists to facilitate social occasions so that families can get to know one another and feel part of the school, to raise money to provide extras that enhance the education of all children in school.

Transitions

Into Preschool

Transition into Pre-school is through Stay and Play sessions, these are flexible and parents can choose to stay or leave their child depending on previous experience. Staff meet with parents to complete an All About Me questionnaire to gain understanding of the child's likes and dislikes and home background. Parents support our baseline process by completing their own based on their child's ability at home and in their own language. We liaise with previous settings and where children do split placements to ensure a smooth transition. All children receive a booklet with pictures of the learning environment and staff which can be used at home.

Into Reception

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child including nurseries, pre-schools, child-minders and any other settings. We have a strong link with our Pre-school at Joseph's and throughout the year we plan joint learning opportunities which enables the pre-school children to become familiar with the reception environment and staff. Parents are welcomed to an introductory meeting in the term summer before their child starts in September to inform them of important information they need to ensure their children has the best start at St Joseph's. Children attend two introductory sessions in the summer term in the Reception environment to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. This allows us to get to know your child and place them in a suitable classroom base. All children also receive a small booklet containing photos, which they can revisit over the summer break.

Reception to Year 1

In the final term of Reception the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition into Year 1. Teachers come together to discuss any movement of children between classes to ensure that there is positive balance between classes and that pupils are placed in a class that will best support their needs. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. We also have moving up days for reception to experience what year 1 will be like and give them an opportunity to form a positive relationship with their new class teacher. The year 1 class teacher also visits Reception frequently in their last term in Reception to be involved in their play, read them a story and get know the children individually.

This transition is further supported using the Nurture Room, which enables the Nurture HLTA and the new class teacher to build a relationship with any students who struggle with change, in a neutral and relaxed environment. We acknowledge that the transition to KS1 is also an unsettling time for parents, so a transition evening is used to inform parents of the expectations of Year 1. At this meeting they have to opportunity to meet their child's new teacher, ask questions and find out which class their child will be in when they enter Year 1.

Characteristics of effective learning

The ways in which children engage with other people and their environment (playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically) underpin learning and development across all areas and help children become effective and motivated learners. These are the characteristics of effective learning outlined by the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework:

Playing and exploring (engagement)

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Be willing to 'have a go'

Active Learning (motivation)

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoy achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

At St Joseph's we promote these essential learning skills with our Building Learning Power Characters.



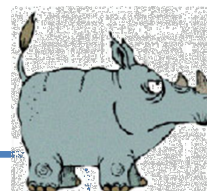
Have a Go Hare



Bradley Bat (Listening)



Busy Beaver (resourceful)



Resilient Rhino



Tom Tortoise (reflection)



Team Ant