# St. Joseph's

# Catholic Primary School

# EYFS Policy

Last Reviewed Date – March 2024
Reviewed September 2024

# EYFS Policy

## Our Vision:

Our curriculum is integral to the fulfilment of our school vision:
Our vision is At St. Joseph's is that each individual will **learn, grow and thrive** together with love and faith in Jesus. We will embrace our gospel values and enable all children to **achieve their full potential** in a safe, welcoming and happy learning environment. We will strive to **create responsible citizens** who are **independent, confident, life-long learners** and are equipped to meet the challenges of a changing future **– the people who God calls them to be.**

## 'We will learn, grow and thrive together with love and faith in Jesus to achieve their full potential….'

St. Joseph's vision for the children, is that they leave St. Joseph's having achieved their full potential in all areas and have the necessary skills and knowledge to flourish to their next phase of education and life. As children learn and grow, we want them experience a deep sense of joy in everyday life and to feel happy, confident and full-filled, having enjoyed an enriching curriculum at St. Joseph's. We want us to approach our curriculum with enthusiasm and a thirst for knowledge. Through a broad, diverse curriculum and for children to develop new interests and passions. Children need a world class education which enables them to grow in wisdom, knowledge and a skills so that they may have a transformational impact upon society. We want children to receive an exceptional curriculum by inspirational, knowledgeable teachers who deliver academic excellence for all. We want our curriculum to enable long-term learning.

## 'Create Responsible Citizens who are independent, confident, life-long learners who are equipped to meet the challenges of a changing future…'

We want our children to grow up to be responsible citizens and good people. We want them to learn to feel, think and act with respect for themselves and for other people. We want them to feel confident and to develop a strong character whilst providing them with the necessary skills to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.
We want our children to leave St. Joseph's with the knowledge, skills and desires to contribute to a fairer and more sustainable world - To help build God's Kingdom. We want them to be successful global learners: As Pope Francis said,

***'We are a single family living in a common home. We have a responsibility as stewards of God's earth***

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## Context

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children within our Reception Class.

The Reception year provides every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage within our school is the foundation of knowledge and skills needed for later school life.

*"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, September 2021.

## Aims

*This policy aims to ensure:*

- That children access a balanced and ambitious curriculum that gives children the 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.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- That the school complies with national statutory requirements.

*What this looks like in practice:*

- Practitioners at St. Joseph's ensure that all children feel included, secure, and valued.
- We provide a ambitious and balanced curriculum with opportunities that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children guide or initiate themselves. Practitioners consider the individual needs and interests of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking, listening and communication skills.
- Practitioners create safe learning environments that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.

- We form a close working partnership between parents and/or carers.

## Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) published 8 December 2023. Effective: 4 January 2024

## The Structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage at St. Joseph's

The organisation of the EYFS learning environment at St. Joseph's reflects the importance of children learning through play, developing, and promoting independence skills and allowing children to flourish and soar in a safe environment.

Our EYFS unit consist of a Reception class with outdoor provision.

*Our Reception class provides the following areas:*

- Small world area for retelling stories
- Role play area
- Large and small construction
- Sand and water trays
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Mark making/ writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Tabletop and small world toys
- Computers
- Interactive touch screen
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative equipment
- Maths games and equipment
- Self-serve playdough area
- Outside provision and classroom – a safe, fenced area including a marquee (Reception)
- Sand pit
- Outdoor easel
- Gross motor equipment, such as trikes and balance bikes

Children in reception bring in wellington boots to make full use of the outside classroom, school field and wooded area. Waterproof overalls are provided by school to make full use of outdoor learning.

## Statement of Intent

**Through a positive caring environment, at St. Joseph's we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace our Catholic values and ensure all children are ready for their next steps though 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. Following personal interests and individual needs in the EYFS at St. Joseph's allows us to plan and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support skills, knowledge and development and achieve their next steps.

At St. Joseph'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.

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 building on their existing learning.
- Skilful communicators, who connect with others through language and play, ensuring that they play in a vocabulary rich environment.

It is our intent to ensure that all children receive high-quality teaching of early reading through FFT phonics to learn to read words and simple sentences in line with their phonics knowledge by the end of Reception.

The Early Years at St. Joseph's is based strongly 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 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 and skills yet are challenged and are exposed to new learning. We have a particular emphasis on relationships and development of the characteristics of effective learning.

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework.

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 four specific areas:

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

## Implementation

## Induction into Reception

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the 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:

- The Reception teacher will visit Nursery schools to meet the children and play alongside them indoors and outdoors in their pre-school setting. This begins in early June.
- A transition meeting is held between the leader of St. Joseph's and other Nursery Schools and the Reception teacher. The reception teacher also holds a one-to-one parent consultation meeting to gather information about the child before starting school.
- Several stay and play sessions are arranged for all nursery children during the Summer Term. The number of children attending, and the length of visit increases each time so by the end of the summer term, new children will have come for a session with their parents, and then stayed for a session on their own.
- We then invite all new children into school. This ensures children have a confident and established start to their Reception Year.
- A meeting is held by the Headteacher and Reception teacher to introduce parents/carers to the school. Reception procedures, curriculum and routines are shared with parents at this meeting. Parents/carers are given a school prospectus which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a document pack to be completed and returned to school.
- Messages between home and school can be sent easily via the Class Dojo communication system which is set up prior to the children starting school.
- New children are given a transition (social story) booklet to read with families over the summer break.
- On starting school in Reception, each child will have a Year 6 buddy who will take special care of them during lunch play time 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 –** *We follow White Rose maths scheme of learning.*

**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 2021: "*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 3 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 FFT accredited 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 vision 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.

## Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners 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. Joseph's, we promote this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in July, 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.
- Class DoJo is set up prior to their child starting with us. We use DoJo to update parents on current learning and as a communication tool.
- When children have settled into the Reception class parents are invited to 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 Facebook.
- In the Autumn term, there will be an evening meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an interim report in the Spring term and an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals. EYFSP.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.

## Language and Literacy Supporting the Reception Child

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 practitioners 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, we use Talk 4 Writing concepts to support this. 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 is sent home.
- To support reading at home, parents are invited into school for a phonics and reading workshop held by the EYFS team.

## Assessment, Reporting and Tracking Progress

### Summative

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 ELGs will ensure a positive disposition to learn. In addition, EYFS Staff make summative judgments on a termly basis. The data is analysed by the EYFS team, by Subject Leaders and by Senior Leaders. EYFS practitioners 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 is challenge 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 EYF, p.3)** 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 in nursery and Reception, 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 Reception year in July. Children in Reception will be judged at either an emerging level or an expected level in each early learning goal. The exceeding judgement no longer applies. 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. Joseph'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 and in individual Writing exercise books in Reception, we also look to promote oracy throughout the curriculum. This may include learners 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 Greater Depth

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. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

## 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 in the school 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 thorough our learning environment and the PHSE curriculum.

We have trained KidSafe providers who teach the EYFS children how to keep themselves safe, this is taught in addition to our PSHE scheme.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our suite of safeguarding policies which have been written in accordance with '**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021**' and the local Lancashire Safeguarding Board.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit for under-fives scheme. For our 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. 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.

Any concerns go through CPOMS for Reception children. Mrs Katie Cunliffe is the Designated Senior Leader for Safeguarding and with Mrs Amy Wilkinson Deputy DSL.

**All Level 3 members of staff in the setting has a recognised paediatric first aid qualification in line with the EYFS framework.**

## Supervision

Working in-line with statutory guidance, St. Joseph'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 as a result 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.

## 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 practitioners
- Discussions with children
- Lesson observations
- Book monitoring
- Learning walks

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 and SEND 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

## Roles and Responsibilities beyond the Class Teacher

### Teaching Assistant (TA)

In Reception an Early Years Teaching Assistant is assigned to work with the class. It is the Teaching Assistant's role to assist and support the Reception teacher as fully as possible. The TA will work with individuals and groups of children under the direction of the Reception teacher. The TA will be proactive in encouraging development in all areas of learning as well as aiding assessment, administration and enhancing the work space. Input and feedback to the Reception teacher is seen as a vital element in the education of the children.

### Head Teacher/ Senior Leadership Team

The Head teacher's and Senior Leader's roles are to support and challenge the class teachers strategically and as managers in order to secure the highest quality education to the children.

### Governors

The governor's role is to support and challenge the school strategically to secure the highest quality education to the children.