

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**

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 learning. 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 is vital within our curriculum in reception. 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, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- We 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 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.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observations, assessment and planning meetings with the children.
- 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
- Have a keyworker approach to develop close relationships with individual children

- We set individual next steps for children which are shared with them so that they are appropriately challenged and can recognise their own progress
- Allocate time for reflection in which the children set their own targets so that they actively take ownership of their learning and challenge themselves in line with their own aspirations
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out and provide opportunities for children to manage their own risk and safety
- Use building learning power characters to enable children to identify the types of learning skills they need to be success learners in line with the characteristics of effective learning (see appendix 1)

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation 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. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

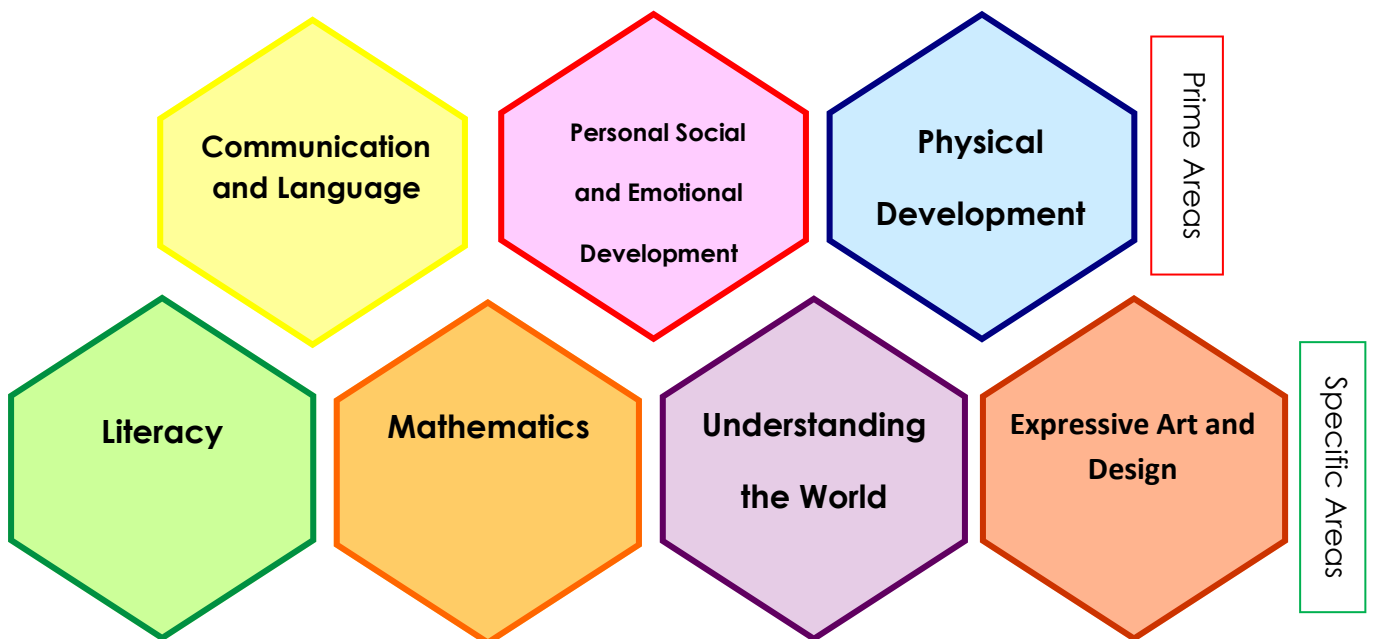
These three areas are the *prime* areas:

- 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**



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.

Within our curriculum:

- Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Read, Write Inc, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including guided reading and writing.
- The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS and based on the children's interests and staff's knowledge of children's next steps
- 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 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 to stretch and challenge children further when appropriate.
- In planning and adult led activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and use this knowledge to plan engaging activities and ensure the environment is enabling.
- We 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 of their adult led and child initiated achievements are kept as appropriate.

In the autumn term drop in sessions are available to parents to discuss how their child has settled in to reception and talk about any issues or concerns they may have. In the spring term parents are invited to discuss their and child's attitude for learning and progress made so far and to share their next steps. In the Summer term parent drops are organised to reflect upon their child's progress against their previous targets and talk about their successes within the EYFS curriculum and predicted readiness for year 1. Reports are written three times a year, the first two record progress and next steps. The final report is a summative judgement against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the reception teacher in preparation for year 1.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Joseph's, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that our children achieve academically and socially. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Transitions

Into Reception

Transitions are carefully planned for and time 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 and other settings, including nurseries, pre-schools and child-minders. 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 reception 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 to Year 1. Towards the end of the year Early Years and 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.

Appendix 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'

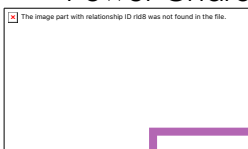
Active Learning (motivation)

- 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)

Miss L Dean (Early Years Leader)

2018

Busy Beaver (resourceful)

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