Growing and Achieving Excellence, Inspired by Faith

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved:	**Autumn 2025**
Review Date:	**Autumn 2026**
Signed: (Headteacher)	**Lorraine Flower**
Signed: (Chair of Governors)	**Eniola Sanwo/Ryan Kuruvilla**

Overall Aim at St Joseph's

To provide high quality early years education and care and lay the foundations upon which later learning and success can be built.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy.

Aims

- To make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
- To value parents as partners with the school in the education of their children.
- To develop home/school links and develop relationships with the wider community in order to ease the transition from home to school.
- To promote their spiritual growth and social development so they can interact effectively and positively with the people around them.
- To value each child's culture and help them to make connections between experiences at home, the setting and the wider community.
- To ensure that all children feel valued and secure in the Foundation Stage setting with positive relationships between carers and staff.
- To develop school readiness by ensuring a breadth of balance in the curriculum and giving children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.
- To identify and meet each child's individual needs and provide a curriculum which is firmly based on active learning to meet the needs of the individual child.
- To develop and use communication skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes and be supported in developing confidence and disposition to do so.
- To foster a love of learning, curiosity and the ability to discuss, adapt and negotiate
- To develop independence and resilience and to respect the feelings, needs, culture and abilities of others.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, there are 2 published intakes to Nursery, one in September and one in January. Children start the term after they are 3, they join the Reception class in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

"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 EYFS 2025)**

Overarching Principles -

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four key principles. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships.**

- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools Inclusion manager is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEN.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;

- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare

"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 2025**

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. Children should be allowed to take 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 (see Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025.
Providers must have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children and ensure all staff working with children receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Promote good health, including oral health of the children in our school.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

- Follow the attendance policy and ensure that absences are reported and monitored.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Each child will be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

Parents as Partners/Transition

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Making home visits or telephone consultations and talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their parents/carers attending a 'taster' session, before starting school during transition sessions. This is also to support staff and parents/carers in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- Supporting children through the transition from Nursery to Reception with the children spending time in the Summer term getting to know their new teacher and classroom through story swaps, teacher swaps and playing in their new playground.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the first half term of the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics.
- Encouraging parents/carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents/carers three times a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- Using 'Tapestry' software to engage parents in their child's learning and share special moments between home and school. In Reception, home learning may be set on Tapestry.
- Providing parents/carers an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision.
- Parents/carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, school visits and parent and child sessions.
- Class email boxes are set up to allow parents/carers to confidentially communicate any concerns or queries with their child's teacher.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to indoor and outdoor environments that are set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journeys.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development - Our curriculum

Teachers, Nursery Nurses and teaching assistants work together to deliver a broad curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes. Class sizes are up to 26 children in Nursery and 30 children in Reception.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas are: -

Literacy

- Mathematics

- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents/carers and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the Inclusion manager in order to access Special Educational Needs support.

Teachers consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in our setting, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning.

Religious Education is a key part of our school curriculum and is considered a 'core' curriculum area across the school. It is also taught in Early Years in accordance with Southwark Diocese guidelines.
As a school, we are committed to embedding the Catholic ethos and core values into our curriculum through a range of activities and learning experiences. We believe that our shared values make us part of the wider community.

We also ensure that children are well prepared for life in modern society through underpinning the British values in our practice. These are: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Assessment in the Early Years :

Initial assessments:

- When children start in Nursery or Reception, their teachers will spend the first 6 weeks getting to know them through a **baseline assessment**. The baseline assessment builds a 'picture' of the child looking at: well-being, characteristics of effective learning, prime areas and specific areas (see above).
- Further to this, in a child's first 6 weeks in Reception they will participate in the statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** which provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school.

Ongoing assessment:

- Children in Early Years will be assessed formatively with ongoing observations and monitoring. This allows teachers to plan for their next steps, provide feedback and ensure they are progressing towards the Early Learning Goals.
- The children are also assessed through summative assessments which gives teachers an indication of where they are on their journey and what their individual needs and targets are.
- We use 'Tapestry' as our main observation tool which then contributes to their learning journals over their time with us.

At the end of Reception:

- Each child's level of development must be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting 'expected' levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.
- Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Nursery, Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the effective planning of activities in Year 1.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning -

At St Joseph's we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

These are;

- **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 achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2025)

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Health and Safety

At St Joseph's there are clear procedures for assessing risk including regular health and safety checks and risk assessments for trips and school events.

The EYFS Lead will make sure that:

- Each child in the EYFS is assigned a key person.
- There are correct adult to child ratios at all times.
- Ensure there are suitable hygienic changing facilities for children in nappies. When changing nappies and toileting, children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs. We must also ensure an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes, and any other necessary items.
- Outdoor activities are planned on a daily basis (unless circumstances make this inappropriate). At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate (meeting the criteria set out in Annex A) will be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings. PFA training must be renewed every three years.
- Risks, both collective and individual, have been assessed carefully before carrying out any practical activities or trips.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required. ***We are a no nuts school.***
- Where children are provided with meals, snacks, and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious, in line with the 'Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance'.
- Fresh drinking water must always be available and accessible to children.

- Children should always be seated where they can be seen and heard by a member of staff when eating.
- Whilst children are eating, there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- Snacks are prepared in a safe and secure way to avoid choking hazards.
- During lunch periods, children are supervised and seated safely to support a positive mealtime experience.
- Adults follow the staff code of conduct at all times and wear appropriate clothing. Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in getting to a child's level and playing and engaging with children at floor level.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2025 we undertake to have the following in place and regularly reviewed:

- **Nappy and changing policy.**
- **Whole school medicines policy** - Our Whole School Medicines Policy outlines that prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Staff must receive training if the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Written permission from the parent/carer for that particular medicine must be obtained for both prescription and non-prescription medicines.
- **A relational Approach to Behaviour Policy.**
- **Inclusion policies** and work alongside the SENCo to ensure all children are able to access the school curriculum in a safe and supportive way.
- **Health and safety policy** - procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- **Fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy** with regular fire drills.
- **Safeguarding policy** which includes stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- **Attendance Policy -** absences must be reported by parents and carers in a timely manner and monitored by school staff.
- **EYFS settling in procedure**.

Success Criteria

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage children:

- Are happy, feel valued, motivated ,and secure enabling them to become independent and enthusiastic learners as they progress through the school;
- Understand and are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others;
- Enjoy experimenting with and learning language;
- Experience a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1;
- Continue to make good progress and the quality and pace of learning is maintained; ● Every child makes the best progress possible according to their individual talents.