



St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Miss V Maher

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2022 – 2023

At St Philomena's School, we believe that every child deserves the very best. We offer a stimulating, exciting and challenging curriculum, which promotes independent learning and curiosity to develop skills to explore the wider world. Children become confident and capable learners, who, by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are ready for Year 1 and the next stage of their education. Our priority is that children are happy, healthy, safe and successful.

Statutory Framework of EYFS

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

The Learning Environment

The Reception environment is designed to ensure all areas of the EYFS curriculum can be nurtured and developed. Children are given the freedom to explore their surroundings and engage in play and investigation in a free flow environment. The classroom is attractive, welcoming and stimulating, which encourages children to explore, investigate and learn through 'hands on' experiences. Children are encouraged to ask questions, find answers and feed their natural curiosity. Staff plan indoor and outdoor activities which are based on the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

EYFS Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning. These areas are subdivided into Prime and Specific areas. At the end of the EYFS children will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals in the seven areas of learning. Overall, there are 17 Early Learning Goals. At the end of the Reception year, children will either be 'emerging' or 'expected' against the ELGs.

The Prime areas are those most essential for healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the Prime areas will help them to develop skills in the specific areas:

- Communication and language
 - Physical development
 - Personal, social and emotional development
-
- Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the world
 - Expressive arts and design

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. These are known as the 'Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning'. Staff use these concepts when planning activities and enhancing environments to ensure all children have access to the curriculum. Staff observe, interact, and extend children's knowledge and understanding, adapting environments and activities based on the children's interests.

Interventions are put in place for children who require additional support and additional time to develop skills to ensure they succeed and achieve. Adults also provide additional support 'in the moment', using opportunities throughout the day to further develop understanding and skills.

Sticky Knowledge

Reception curriculum is 'knowledge-rich' because we have:

- Identified skills as the by-product of the knowledge, not its purpose;
- Chosen 'invaluable knowledge' that we want pupils to know as the content of our curriculum;
- Learning is defined as an alteration in long-term memory.
- Progress means knowing more and remembering more;
- Knowledge is generative or 'sticky';
- Vocabulary is carefully planned for and taught and recognised as key to academic success

To ensure knowledge and vocabulary is embedded, we use a star approach, to ensure teachers:

- **Select** the really useful knowledge that is core to the topic
- **Teach** the selected knowledge in a structured manner
- **Activate** the meaning by knowledge in context
- **Review** knowledge to ensure it is retained

Parents as Partners

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home, therefore we work very closely with our parents/carers to ensure they have the necessary tools to be actively involved in their child's education. We value our parents as the child's first educator and their input is of high importance. We endeavor to establish positive relationships with families and encourage parents to support their child's learning at home and be an active part of their education

We ensure that parents/ carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, through online learning journeys and parents' evenings. We utilise Evidence Me and Class Dojo to share positive experiences and achievements and offer support in home learning. Parents use the platforms to share evidence of achievements at home. We understand the importance of parents/carers views, so provide

opportunities for feedback throughout the school year. We offer workshops to provide parents with an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years Curriculum, detailing ways in which they can support their child's learning at home

Assessment

On going formative assessment is at the heart of outstanding EYFS practice. Teachers aim to engage and be involved with children during their play- based activity, across all areas of learning. Through this, we can gather a clear picture of where children are in their learning and any gaps they may have. We provide effective and focused intervention for children who find learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. This is provided in an inclusive way and support from parents is also enlisted at an early stage to ensure that the children have every chance to achieve the Early Learning Goals. We use the Evidence Me online learning journal to record and share the children's learning with parents. Staff meet daily to discuss observations made and use them to plan the next steps in learning. In addition to the learning opportunities outlined in the long- term planning, we use the outcomes from observational assessment to inform planning for children, acknowledging their interests and facilitating their next steps in learning. At the end of each half term, teachers use Target Tracker to record if children are on track or not.

Throughout EYFS, children are assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). In order to say whether a child has achieved a good level of development at the end of EYFS, they must achieve at least an 'expected' level of development for 12 of the 17 early learning goals (identified in the table below with the letters 'GLD').

Early Learning Goals (ELGs)	Prime Areas							Specific Areas								
	Speaking (GLD)	Listening, Attention and Understanding (GLD)	Gross Motor Skills (GLD)	Fine Motor Skills (GLD)	Self-Regulation (GLD)	Managing Self (GLD)	Building Relationships (GLD)	Comprehension (GLD)	Word Reading (GLD)	Writing (GLD)	Number (GLD)	Numerical Patterns (GLD)	Past and Present	People, Culture and Communities	The Natural World	Creating With Materials

Parents are informed of their child's progress throughout the school year, however they also receive an official report at the end of the academic year stipulating whether their child has achieved GLD or not and in which areas.

Safeguarding and Welfare

The safety and welfare of our children is at the heart of our provision and we follow whole school procedures and policies. 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. We educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We have robust school policies and procedures in place to ensure safety and comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.

- Promote good health including oral health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe, and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS and there are school designated safeguarding leads.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We ensure that children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential. 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/carers and outside agencies. We make use of a resource base, 'The Nurture Room', to provide targeted educational support for children not yet able to access the curriculum, and involve specialists to ensure children receive a high level of support enabling progress.

Cultural Capital

Trips, experiences, and visitors are invaluable to the children, ensuring children gain cultural capital to prepare for future success . Throughout the academic year, children in EYFS have many opportunities to go on visits as well as inviting people into school to help the children learn more about the world around them. Our curriculum is broad, balanced, reflects the diversity in our community and includes a wide range of cultural experiences including art, literature and drama. Storytelling is used as a tool to promote cultural capital by introducing the children to various cultures and traditions. Children have opportunities to explore their own cultural heritage and identity by incorporating cultural events, festivals and celebrations into class activity. This helps children develop a sense of belonging, pride, respect and appreciation of diversity.

Intent, Implementation and Impact

Rationale:

In the Early Years at St. Philomena's CP Primary School, we believe that every pupil is unique. We ensure all children have the opportunity to develop and learn in a safe and nurturing environment where play and learning is combined. Through practical learning experiences, we strive to equip children with a love of learning and a natural curiosity. We are committed to giving our pupils the best possible start to their school life, teaching them skills that ensure their wellbeing now and success in the future.

Our intent is to:

- Establish an environment that is nurturing, eco -friendly, ambitious and inspiring.
- Respond to children's interests and use these to inform planning
- Deliver a curriculum based on entitlement for all, that considers each child's existing knowledge and experiences, and where the children can engage in first hand experiences
- Give children opportunities to learn, practise, revise and extend knowledge and skills
- Enable children to develop characteristics of effective learning, which will enable them to become independent, resourceful and resilient learners now and throughout their education.

Our curriculum is designed to develop the characteristics of effective learning:

- **Creating and thinking critically** – pupils have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things
- **Active learning** – pupils keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements
- **Playing and exploring** – pupils investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Implementation

In order to implement our intent, we have:

- A curriculum which is broad and balanced and which builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils, from individual starting points.
- A curriculum that uses a combination of 'in the moment' planning, topic themes and enrichment opportunities.
- Meaningful learning experiences, developing each pupil's characteristics of learning.
- High quality interactions with adults that demonstrate and impact on the progress of all pupils.
- Careful assessment opportunities through observations, some of which are recorded on 2Simple and shared with parents. These are used to inform the next steps of learning and meet individual needs. PITA are recorded on Target Tracker at the end of each half term.
- Developed an effective and engaging environment that is set up so that pupils can access all areas of learning both inside and outside at any one time.
- Home learning opportunities that allow children to build on their school experiences at home.
- Daily differentiated phonics lessons, continuous provision where phonics activities are available for children to consolidate and extend phonic skills and knowledge.
- Ensured that staff are equipped with the necessary professional development to deliver our curriculum.
- An Early Years lead who monitors teaching and learning to improve standards and outcomes.
- Governors who liaise with the SLT in order to monitor and improve standards.
- A curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils (including SEND)
- Opportunities for parents to attend 'Stay and Play' sessions to support learning at home and be involved in school life.

Impact

Through implementing the above

- Children's progress is excellent from their varied starting points.
- Most children reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.
- Evidence of children's achievements are recorded in Online Learning Journeys
- Class teachers make formative assessments which inform in the moment or future planning and ensure that all pupils build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace.
- Judgements are moderated both in school and externally with local schools with The Umbrella Trust.
- Children are ready to transition from the Early Years curriculum to the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- Children demonstrate curiosity, independence, resilience and other characteristics of effective learning.

