

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspiring everyone to **REACH** through Faith, Hope, Love

At St Joseph's, we strive for academic excellence through encouraging resilience, empathy, aspiration and challenge. We have high expectations for ALL so that we can be 'The best we can be.' With Faith, Hope and Love at the heart of our school family, our children feel safe, secure and supported.



## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

St Joseph's is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

<b>Link Governor:</b>	Syd Gwyer
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<b>Other relevant policies:</b>	Health & Safety, Safeguarding

## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Joseph's Primary School, children 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.

We endeavour to ensure that children start their school life with a positive and meaningful attitude to "learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through providing children "the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- A Unique Child - developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive Relationships - supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling Environments - where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and Developing - An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

### **A Unique Child**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, empathetic, aspirational, confident and have high expectations "REACH". 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 Need and Disabilities (SEND)**

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 appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's inclusion policy for SEND.

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.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We aim to develop a strong relationship with families by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions;
- parents are offered a 1:1 meeting at school with the class teacher before their child starts school;
- support children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with the children attending part time during the first couple of weeks of school. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- 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 to talk (after school or via an appointment) to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private

with the teacher. Parents 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: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies, school visits, productions, parent readers;
- providing parents with the opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision;
- ensuring all parents know that their child's teacher and teaching assistant are their key workers
- by providing a quiet and confidential area where parents are able to discuss any concerns.
- by providing parents with 'learning targets' to help support their child's learning at home when their child is in focus.

### **Learning and Development**

At St Joseph's School, we know that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape the educational provision in Early Years Settings. These are divided into prime and specific areas. The three prime areas are important in developing children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

#### **The prime areas are:**

Communication and language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Physical development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

Personal, social and emotional development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

The other four areas are called specific areas. Through these, the prime areas are strengthened further.

#### **The specific areas are:**

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

## Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

## Understanding the World

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

## Expressive arts and design

- Creating with Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and all depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiate activities. Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, 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.

## **The Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Planning and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At St Joseph's we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

### **Playing and exploring**

Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'; Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They explore the outdoor area, looking after their environment and showing care and concern for the plants.

### **Active learning**

Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements. Children are taught and encouraged to be resilient. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some

independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### **Creating and thinking critically**

We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Joseph's Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a fundamental role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging, but achievable, activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outside, where children feel confident and secure and challenged.

Our Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet or rest. The classroom is set up in 'stations', where children are able to locate equipment and resources independently through continuous provision. Children select and return equipment to these areas, though have the freedom to choose where they wish to continue their learning during their "independent learning time".

Outdoor play is seen as an integral part of our provision in Early Years. Just like the indoor environment, the outdoor environment supports all of the EYFS Prime and Specific areas of learning. These include: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World, Expressive Arts and Design, Physical, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language - so that whether a child chooses to explore the indoors or outdoors they will be able to access all areas of the curriculum.

The Reception class has a shared enclosed outdoor area which provides a very positive effect on children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers children the chance to explore, use their senses, develop their language and be physically active. We plan activities and resources, both indoors and outdoors, that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own

learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. These planning opportunities come from close observations on specific focus children.

The provision and planning for outdoor play; just as indoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children and allow opportunities for **risky play** in a safe, managed environment. At St Joseph's we want to children to be resilient, empathetic, aspirational, confident and have high expectations - "REACH" and this can be achieved in the outdoor environment. The outcomes for the children in our care are enhanced by an exciting and stimulating outdoor provision to enable the children to develop their dispositional profile.

### **Risk**

Taking risks can have positive implications on the development of children's personal, social and emotional development as well as their overall health. By providing children with the opportunity to experience and to manage their own risk within a controlled environment we will help them develop vital skills for adulthood and to be able to face the unpredictable nature of the world.

By depriving children of all risk, we are depriving them of the opportunity to build vital life skills; such as the ability to cope with stressful situations, the ability to manage risk and the ability to develop good social skills. Children's involvement in 'deep play' which brings them into contact with risk is important for children to push their limits and to make progress. At St Joseph's we encourage children to REACH and staff promote a '**Be the best you can be**' attitude which will help develop resilience, empathy, aspirations, confidence and high expectations.

The outdoor area at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has been carefully considered to encourage learning outside all year round. It comprises of two parts and provides for:

#### Enclosed EYFS only area:

- Risky, challenging and exciting play;
- Covered area under the outside shelter;
- A flowering bed that is regularly planted with seasonal fruit and vegetables throughout the year;
- A 'Bug Hotel' and nature area with natural materials and shrubs to attract insects and to provide opportunities for finding mini-beasts;
- A sandpit that is covered at the end of each day to protect the sand from animals. The sandpit is also changed every school year with the old sand taken out and new sand put in;
- A mud kitchen;

- A water area and water wall which is emptied and refreshed regularly (where practical, by the children);
- A quiet area for stories, chat and reflection;
- A large area for large scale construction and development of gross motor skills;
- Large and small whiteboards providing opportunities for mark making;
- Guttering/planks/logs/tyres to encourage problem solving and gross motor development.
- Tarmac area with road markings to encourage gross motor skills during 'Wheelie Wednesday'.

Larger enclosed playground, shared with whole school:

- A large log trail to develop gross motor, balance skills and turn taking;
- A large tarmac covered area and grass field providing opportunity to develop gross motor and balance skills.

**The role of the adult**

Adults should be **actively** involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role.

Adults should be:

- Talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating);
- Helping children to find solutions to their problem;
- Extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas;
- Providing a range of natural resources and materials for the children to explore wherever possible;
- Initiating/modelling games and activities;
- Joining in games and activities when invited by children;
- Observing, assessing and recording;
- Being aware of balancing risk against benefit to allow the children to explore in a risky, yet safe way;
- Being aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability;
- Evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources, experiences and possible lines of development (PLD).

In these ways, adults are making positive contributions to the children's play and setting up challenging, stimulating, risky experiences for children.



### **Managing risk in the outdoor area**

- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must look out for and remove any hazards e.g. mushrooms, broken toys, animal waste, etc.
- Staff must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and ensure that children who are outside are visible.
- If only one member of staff is in class, the children will have access to the EYFS outdoor environment and the adult in charge should position themselves so as to have the best view of indoor and outdoor area
- Hot liquids should not be consumed in any learning areas whilst children are present, unless the container has a lid. Hot liquids should not be left unattended
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day. The outdoor area should be tidy at the end of each day. Particular attention should be paid to equipment left in a position when water could collect in it overnight
- Children should be encouraged to help to tidy up; including picking up litter, stray toys and folding materials to be stored for the following day
- If a child is injured, and there is only one adult in class, all children should be brought inside, so as to ensure supervision, and one child sent to the office to get help. Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the accident book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment at the end of the day. If it is a serious injury a decision should be made to call the parents/carers to collect the child early.

### **Welfare**

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 Children Policy)

"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."

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.

- 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.

### **Health and Safety**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, an annual risk assessment is conducted of the EYFS (see EYFS risk assessment) and in the staff handbook, safeguarding and child protection policies, there is detailed information and procedures to ensure the safety of the children. The EYFS risk assessment must be read in conjunction with other relevant whole school policies (see EYFS risk assessment).

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2021, at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer." At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School a written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day." (Statutory framework for EYFS 2021)
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- Each classroom has a snack and sink area that can provide healthy snacks and drinks. The children are provided with daily fruit and milk.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury policy). All EYFS staff and teaching assistants are paediatric first aid trained.

- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- A safeguarding policy 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. Ipad's used for photographs are not to be removed from the school site.
- Appropriate clothing, in particular in relation to the wearing of heels (stilettos or a heel that comes to a point). 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.

### **Transition**

At St Joseph's we recognise that starting school has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. From this, we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are confident and secure throughout the process.

### **From Pre-school /Feeder settings**

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition from preschool settings:

- Members of staff from St Joseph's make visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting.
- Parents are invited to an induction meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and any concerns they may want to express.
- During the summer term parents are encouraged to complete an "all about me" booklet. It is used during the Autumn term to support transition and to inform planning.
- Children at St Joseph's Pre School (main feeder setting) will have visits with their key workers into school where they get an opportunity to engage with the current Reception children. This includes eating lunch in the hall, attending KS1 Assemblies in the hall and participating in weekly 'story and singing' time in the Reception class.
- Children are given the opportunity to spend time in their new classroom, with their teachers before starting school during transition afternoons.

## **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report. The EYFS teacher and Year 1 teacher have a transition meeting to be informed on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.

### **Planning**

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

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document.

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 as well as their identified needs. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. We record each children's level of development to be well-below, just below, on-track or above within the Early Years framework. This is in line with the rest of the school. At the end of the final term in Reception, we send a summary of these assessments to the Local Authority for analysis.

### **Focus Children**

Within Reception we use a 'Focus Children' approach during observations when the children are on their Independent learning. Through close observations, each child is set personalised targets to work on during their focus week. The class teacher and teaching assistant look out for these targets and work with each child during their observations.

This has been shown to increase children's learning and development through observations and questioning.

Each week, several children are in focus and as such have an increased level of focused input on a range of targets that have been identified through close observation and assessment for learning. Adults bring targeted teaching into the interactions that they have with the children in a way that encourages purposeful learning through activities that interest the children. Obviously, we do not ignore the other children, who continue to be taught in the usual manner, with quality interactions throughout the day. The purpose of having children in focus is to provide an additional boost in key areas that have been identified.