



## EYFS Policy

2025 - 2026

<b>Date written:</b>	September 2025
<b>Date to review:</b>	Annually

### 'The Love of Christ Shines Here'

Our School is Christ-centred where Gospel values permeate our daily lives.

We extend our hand of friendship to the wider community in the spirit of love, peace and justice.

We create opportunities to celebrate the uniqueness of every child and nurture them through a stimulating and enriching curriculum.



## EYFS Policy

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Nursery and Reception classes.

### **Aim**

At Our Lady & St Philomena's we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS '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.'

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applicable to group and school-based providers, currently effective from 1 November 2024 (as updated). We will also amend this policy in line with the further EYFS changes due to take effect in September 2025.

### **Structure of EYFS**

We have a 26-place morning nursery.

We have one Reception class with 30 places full time school hours.

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 and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

### **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
- 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 within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

### **Curriculum – Implementation**

Our early years setting follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support pupils' personal development, prepare pupils for their next stage of education and develop the whole child.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. 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 4 **specific areas**:

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

These are also underpinned by the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, as detailed in the framework.

Children will play and explore their environment showing engagement by:

- finding out and exploring
- play with what they know
- be willing to 'have a go'

Children will be **active learners**, showing motivation by:

- being involved and concentrating
- keeping on trying
- enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Children will be **creators** and **think critically** by:

- having their own ideas
- making links
- choosing ways to do things

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

#### **PERSONAL. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children's centres and places of worship in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

#### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources.

#### **COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE**

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills.

Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.



## **LITERACY**

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills.

Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence.

We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given many opportunities to listen to stories told by the staff.

## **MATHEMATICS**

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Pre-number work is covered through nursery rhymes and number activities.

Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD**

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment.

They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

## **EXPRESSIVE ARTS and DESIGN**

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Our ongoing observations of children inform our weekly planning, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Our Lady & St Philomena's and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

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 shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.



### **Planning**

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively across all areas of learning, as well as offering them opportunities to develop their cultural capital. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. They also show ambitious intent for all children.

Staff are expected to develop a strong continuous provision, and then plan enhanced provision and additional adult directed activities to support this. As children progress through the early years foundation stage, key group work, adult-directed and whole class work will be planned, as appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils

### **Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for their next stage of education.

Timetables are set for each year group and are adapted based on the needs of each cohort and the age of pupils within the setting.

### **IMPACT - Observation and Assessment (also see Assessment, Observation and Planning Policy)**

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning and next steps for the individual. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

All practitioners are expected to show an understanding of what the pupils know and can do and what their next steps in learning are. They are regularly expected to discuss this with leaders to ensure we meet the needs of all pupils within the setting and we adapt timetables, the environment and planning to ensure we continue to be ambitious for all pupils.

When a child joins our nursery setting Staff ask parents to share progress check carried out. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance and our own in school curriculum documents) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

### **Photographs / Videos**

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed/videoed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual record books, school display, Class Dojo, X and on the school website.

### **Snack times**

Children access continuous snack both in Nursery and Reception. We see snack time as a social event, a time where the children enjoy a drink of milk, piece of fruit and/or a light snack together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation



with their peers as they sit together. It also develops independence as the children are encouraged to serve themselves and tidy up their own things.

### **Allergies**

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept and all adults involved are informed.

### **Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

We comply with the strengthened safeguarding and safer recruitment requirements introduced from September 2025, including obtaining references, verifying emergency contact details, following up prolonged absences, and ensuring privacy in toileting while maintaining safeguarding oversight.

We promote good oral health by educating children on healthy eating and toothbrushing practices. While we do not currently require supervised brushing by policy, we will consider implementation based on local authority guidance or oral health initiatives. We ensure **adequate supervision** while children eat, being within sight and hearing of staff at all times.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through our curriculum, for example by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We also teach E-safety across our EYFS in age appropriate ways.

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at Our Lady & St Philomena'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 support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. 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. All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator. (Please refer to the 'Special Needs Policy' for greater detail).

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider context**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also

helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. Each term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening and reports are given termly as well as full school report at end of the school year.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.



### **Transitions**

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 and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive a small booklet containing photos and complete an 'All about me' booklet.

In the final term in 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. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

This policy will be reviewed before the start of each academic year and will evolve to incorporate the views of all staff concerned.

**M.Southern**