St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pudsey

EYFS Policy

Mission Statement

As a family, we journey together with Christ,
to learn, help, play and pray with love,
compassion and humility.

Policy date- March 2024

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS reforms September 2021.

Aims

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. St Joseph's Primary School greatly values the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

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, children join us at the beginning of the school year have the opportunity to join us in our Nursery class and start in our Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they will turn five.

The EYFS practice is shaped by four overarching principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Joseph's we recognise that every child is constantly learning and we want all our children to be able to develop the skills to 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

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St Joseph's are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and 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.

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 preferences;
- 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, involving external support agencies as necessary.

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.

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."

At St Joseph's 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:

- provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health, including oral health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;

- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

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

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We value and greatly enjoy the relationships we establish with parents of children in our care. We believe that a partnership between parents/carers and the adults involved in the child's learning are crucial. We build on what children already know and parents are often our first port of call for this crucial information. We believe in creating an atmosphere, which is welcoming to parents, which makes them feel appreciated and encourages an all-important two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this (where possible) through:

- Inviting parents to an information evening during the summer term where they receive the Reception information pack which gives them key information about our school.
- Asking parents to complete admission forms, give information about medical needs, and any other information they feel it is essential for school to know in order to provide the best care for their children.
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend time in Reception, before starting school, during taster sessions in the term before they start school.
- Giving the children a 'Welcome pack' to use over the Summer holidays. This includes photographs of the EYFS staff and images or the classroom, as well as some learning opportunities and a story book.
- EYFS staff make home visits to children before they start at our school. This is either before they start attending our Nursery class or prior to the start of the Reception year for children who attended other nurseries.
- Making parents aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through letters, newsletters, and through uploading updates to Tapestry.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class, soon after the induction period, in the late Autumn Term, and in the Spring Term.

- Parents who have children on our SEND register have termly updates about the attainment and achievements of their child.
- Parents receive an end of year report which highlights progress and achievements.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: mission day, secret reader, local area walks, Tapestry challenges, achievement assemblies, Sports Day etc.
- Giving parents have access to all their children's observations via 'Tapestry', our online observation and assessment tool, parents can also contribute to this which provides opportunities for them to inform school of specific achievements or 'Wow 'moments shared at home.

Some of our children come to us from other nursery/day care settings. Phone calls and where appropriate, visits are made to discuss children with professionals who already know them. Pre-School children are invited to events in school (Stay and Play sessions.)

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key 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.

Planning

At St Josephs' we run a 2-year cycle of long term plans. This is to ensure that children starting with us in Nursery are given new learning opportunities in Reception. These are regularly reviewed and updated but aways ensure full coverage of the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage document. Long term plans are adapted for reasons including interests of the cohort, identified next steps in learning, cultural capital, and events outside school including times of historical and social significance.

Assessment

At St Josephs' we make regular assessments of the children's learning and we use this to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Each child's level of development at the end of Reception will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The three characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning will be used to ascertain each child's skills and abilities.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's books, and in their individual 'Learning Journal' on 'Tapestry'. Tapestry also contains information and observations provided by parents. We record baseline and termly assessment judgments on to an electronic tracking system in school.

All practitioners within the setting are aware of how their interactions, playing alongside and questions are part of moving learning on for children within the early years.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up into learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Early Years Foundation Stage has its own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We offer a free flow system where for the majority of the time the children can move freely between indoor and outdoor activities.

Children learn through exploring the environment around them. They absorb skills, knowledge and understanding needed for a particular task, but social, emotional, physical and cognitive learning is taking place at the same time. For children first-hand experiences are essential to learning. The physical doing leads to abstract thinking. Children need a stimulating environment in which to formulate and experiment with ideas. Challenges need to be offered in a context that is relevant to the child, and which fits in with the child's understanding and experience.

Learning and Development

At St Joseph's we recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We aim to guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in our care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them. We aim to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, to build their capacity to learn and to form relationships.

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. 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 express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. There are three prime areas and four specific areas of learning

Prime areas -

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Physical Development

Specific areas -

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. There are 17 ELG's in total. To achieve A good level of development, children need to meet the ELG's in all the prime areas, as well as in literacy and mathematics.

Each area of learning and development will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated activity.

'If foundations prove inadequate, it is very, very expensive to underpin them later on'.

(Julie Fisher 'Early Education')

It is our goal that all children leave the Foundation Stage with increased confidence and independence, an inquisitive mind, a good understanding of core skills, a sense of achievement and of where they need to go next, some good friends and some fantastic memories.

Curriculum

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.

We use 'White Rose Maths' with a maths mastery approach to ensure our children are exposed to a range of active experiences to develop the depth of their mathematical understanding. We follow the Read, Write, Inc scheme to teach phonics across school. Where possible, topics are chosen around children's interests and the intended vocabulary and knowledge we wish for our children to leave the Reception year with. The topics we choose are always driven through books and high quality texts. Vocabulary acquisition is planned for in all areas of the curriculum and time given to teaching children new vocabulary in meaningful/play based contexts.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years.