



# EYFS Policy

# 2021

Member of staff responsible: Eve Oakley

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## **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through purposeful play and high quality interactions.

At St Joseph`s Catholic Primary School we provide Early Years Foundation Stage provision where children join us in nursery after they have reached their third birthday. They then begin full time school in the academic year where children have their fifth birthday. All children begin school with a wide range of experiences and learning. It is our responsibility to provide young children with an early year`s curriculum that builds upon prior learning and extends existing knowledge and skills.

## **Mission Statement**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential.

A child`s experiences in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Joseph`s we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

## **Philosophy**

At St Joseph`s Catholic Primary School we have developed a shared philosophy where we all believe young children`s experiences are crucial in developing confidence, health and wellbeing and laying a secure foundation for future learning and development.

## **Vision**

Our shared philosophy has enabled us to develop a strong vision where we all believe each child is unique and is a competent learner from birth. Every child can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We are committed to developing positive relationships so that all children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships. All children will be provided with an enabling learning environment that supports and extends interests, knowledge, understanding and skills. All children learn in different ways and at different rates. Our vision involves providing an Early Years curriculum that lays the

foundation for future learning. Children`s learning is led through a balance of adult led sessions and carefully planned continuous provision where children have the opportunity to investigate, apply their learning and build on knowledge, understanding and skills.

Our shared philosophy and strong vision provides us with a clearly defined aim that enables us to create principles that underpin our effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children.

### **Aims/Objectives**

At St Joseph`s Catholic Primary School 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 learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his / her full potential.

As outlined in the `Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage`:

***‘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.’***

### **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;
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

The four guiding EYFS themes and principles are underpinned in our practice and provision, we ensure a number of commitments and roles that enable them to be put into practice.

### **A Unique Child**

#### **Child Development:**

At St Joseph`s Catholic Primary School we recognise that young children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Every area of development is important. 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.

#### **Inclusive Practice**

The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No child or family is discriminated against. Our positive working ethos recognises the individuality of each child and values children`s unique qualities and characteristics. We provide children with every opportunity to achieve their best. We value our children`s ranges of life experiences and individual needs when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set

appropriate and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all children. Individual needs may involve meeting the needs of boys, girls, and children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children who require more support, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children and ensure an inclusive approach through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's skills, 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;
- planning and differentiating learning experiences, opportunities and teaching activities so individual needs are supported, learning is personalised and equality of opportunity is ensured.
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- providing appropriate resources that encourage and motivate learning, reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging and extending activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their peers;
- differentiating the role of the adult to ensure appropriate adult support and personalised learning;
- celebrating children's uniqueness, gifts and talents;
- allowing children to thrive and considering each child on an individual basis according to their needs;
- listening to children's voices and providing them with a sense of ownership in their learning;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary;
- providing children with an ethos that values, respects and treats everyone equally

### **Keeping Safe**

Young children are vulnerable and at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we recognise that children develop resilience when their physical and psychological wellbeing is protected. 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 independence and become autonomous learners. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy and Health and Safety Policy).

### **Health and Well being**

Children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual wellbeing and is supported by attention to these aspects. ***"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."***

### **Welfare**

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 2012. We understand that we are required to ensure and maintain a number of welfare requirements and we endeavour to meet all these requirements.

### **Equal Opportunities**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we aim to provide all children regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Equality, inclusion and diversity are all matters that are crucial to providing high quality care and education. At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we are aware that underlying inequality may occur through different policies, adult interactions, displays, planning and the curriculum. We have developed a strong awareness of how children are vulnerable and adults have the power to affect children's future actions, behaviour, intentions, learning outcomes and beliefs. Equality has enormous implications for inclusion and diversity. We have a firm awareness of how each child is entitled to practice and provision that reflects the unique characteristics, fascinations, enthusiasms and individual needs of all children. Inclusion is not optional; children have defined entitlements and settings have a legal responsibility. We value and celebrate diversity as we differentiate play as a tool for learning, the learning environment, resources, the role of the adult and activities effectively to support individuals, groups of learners, individuals with additional needs, individual with EAL and individuals from diverse social, cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

We adopt an inclusive approach aiming to support all children to reach their full potential and celebrate children's uniqueness, gifts and talents. In our practice, our principles allow children to thrive and each child is considered on an individual basis according to their needs. Inclusion also involves us listening to children's voices and giving them a sense of ownership in their learning.

### **Anti – bullying**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we believe that all children, staff, parents and governors have a right to learn and work in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. We promote positive behaviour and relationships. It is made clear that bullying is a form of anti – social behaviour. It is wrong and will not be tolerated (see Anti bullying policy).

### **Behaviour Management**

In order for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to be a happy and effective school we believe that the highest standards of behaviour must be expected of all our children. As a team we adopt positive behaviour management strategies. Positive recognition, descriptive praise, encouragement and modelling are important tools we use in the Foundation Stage to reinforce, reward or improve behaviour. We also implement a traffic light system. (see Behaviour Management policy).

### **Staffing and Organisation**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we provide an integrated Foundation Stage Setting. Within our setting there are two qualified teachers, one unqualified teacher and three full time teaching assistants. Every member of our staff is suitable and has appropriate qualifications. We are committed to continuous professional development.

### **Positive Relationships**

### **Respecting Each Other**

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

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. Parents and practitioners work together to have a positive impact on children's development and learning. Positive parental partnerships are crucial for providing the most effective teaching and learning strategies. Equally, they are vital for personalizing learning opportunities effectively. We aim to develop positive relationships with parents that enable us to share information about children's, interests and learning. This information is used to personalize learning opportunities and provide continuity and progression. We work together and support learning through warm and trusting relationships. The implications of this ensure knowledgeable adults support children's learning more effectively.

We develop positive parental partnerships that support learning when a child accesses our provision through:

- Home visits
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher and support staff before starting Nursery or Reception.
- We have a staggered transition into both Nursery and Reception classes. This ensures the needs of our children are met.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school, and sharing our transition process with them.

We continue to build and maintain positive parental relationships through;

- Holding information evenings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and at our home visits carried out each July;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys;
- Inviting parents into school
- Home school link books
- Parent Notice boards
- Newsletters / Feedback sheets
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term, highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Involving parents in the curriculum
- Inviting parents into school for 'parent phonics' sessions to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child;
- Providing parents with a termly report and an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile;

- We also 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 to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

### **Supporting Learning**

Positive adult support that is appropriate, sensitive and respectful is essential to support children's learning and development. At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School the role of the practitioner is crucial in supporting learning.

Our roles involve:

- facilitating learning e.g.; supporting children in their learning, extending skills and knowledge and creating a learning environment that offers experiences that are relevant and interesting.
- Scheduling and organising space / resources, selecting materials and interacting verbally and non-verbally.
- Demonstrating and describing e.g.; showing children new skills and introducing new language, ideas, concepts, objects, or events.
- Encouraging, praising and helping e.g.; reassuring and supporting children in developing new skills;
- Providing feedback e.g.; talking to children about what they have been doing and what they have achieved. Feedback will also provide children with clear and specific information about what they need to do next.
- Modelling e.g.; to teach to children new language, skills, knowledge, understanding and learning.
- Questioning e.g.; to encourage children's creative and critical thinking. Through appropriate questioning children are provided with learning experiences that develop their cognitive and language skills.
- Planning e.g.; to supply responsive learning experiences that actively embrace, support and foster the development of individual needs, learning, interests and fascinations.
- Observing e.g.; to plan a more appropriate curriculum that supports children's development according to individual needs.
- Critical analysing e.g.; to monitor and critically analyse practice and provision to enhance and create high quality early years education.

### **Key Person**

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen and value responses and contributions. Also all children in the EYFS are 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.

### **Children**

The child's voice is crucially valued throughout our Foundation Stage. We, as skilful practitioners, use skilful interactions to discuss children's thoughts and feelings. Nurture groups with the children's key person are regularly planned to identify children's thoughts, feelings and opinions. Information that is gathered is used to develop children's personal, social and emotional development, plan high quality learning experiences to support, extend and challenge learning. Enhancements to the learning environment are also made and opportunities organised to support continuity and progression.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. This begins by observing children, assessing their interests, development and learning and planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

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.
- 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.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Children are competent learners from birth; they learn and develop in a wide variety of ways. We value the uniqueness of each child and carefully consider their needs, interests and stages of development. As information is collected we plan a challenging, enabling environment that supports learning and development across all areas. We as practitioners are also able to plan a more appropriate curriculum that supports children's development according to individual needs. Observation is a key role in our everyday practice and we use observation as a tool to find out needs, interests, learning, development and progress. Another way that teaching and learning is personalized is through continually listening to children. Information is gathered and rich learning opportunities are planned to support, challenge and extend children's thinking. Evidence is also used to make accurate assessments and plan effective learning experiences that support progression.

Formative assessment is integrated into daily practice, time is allocated and they are conducted for the purpose of finding out what children know and can do. Information is evaluated and analysed to highlight children's achievements, skills, knowledge, interests or their need for further support. Parents are also involved as part of the ongoing observation and assessment process.

### **Methods of formative assessment include:**

Participant observation – Practitioner involved and playing with the children

Spontaneous observation – capturing significant moments

Planned observations (observation in action) – considering the whole child, focusing on some aspect of a child progress

All information that is gathered through the tools of observation is collated together in a learning journey to illustrate and celebrate children's learning achievements.

### **Assessment for Learning and Development**

Assessments are used to plan for further learning experiences and opportunities to support and extend learning and development. Assessment is one element of the cycle of observation, assessment and planning that identifies and provides for individual needs. At St Joseph's we



recognise assessment lays the foundations for quality teaching and learning. In our setting this ongoing cycle involves children engaging in learning experiences, practitioners observing, and using observations to make assessments and plan for next steps in children's learning and development. As we gather information through our tools of observation formative assessments are made daily, weekly and termly and all evidence is collated together in each child's learning journey.

Information and evidence gathered from formative assessments is used to complete summative records for each child. The summative records collate evidence together and illustrate progress, achievements and next steps for planning. This information feeds into providing children with opportunities and experiences that can be orientated towards extending children's development. Other summative assessment tools allow us to monitor and track children's progression in learning and development. Information that is gathered from formative assessments and summative records is used to make judgments about children's progression.

In Nursery and Reception children are assessed against the Development Matters. Baselines are part of the formal assessment at the beginning of each academic year and Reception class are assessed against the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception Class.

### **Positive Descriptive Feedback**

We are also aware of the value and importance of oral and written feedback. Experience of this reinforces learning, supports and challenges understanding, constructs ways forward and encourages learners to achieve. The impact of this positive feedback encourages engagement, enthusiasm and confidence. We aim to encourage the involvement of children in the assessment of their own learning.

### **Planning and Supporting Every Child**

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Planning is flexible and is often annotated to reflect spontaneous learning opportunities.

At St Joseph's purposeful planning is rooted in challenging and extending what children know and can do. Successful planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

We offer children well developed continuous provision that supports each area of learning in the learning environment. This provides children with continuous opportunities for highly stimulating learning experiences. Another tool we use to plan effective teaching and learning experiences and personalize learning is enhanced planning. This enables children's ideas, thoughts, interests and fascinations to be recorded and enhancements to be made. Learning may be personalized through the environment, the role of the adult, focus activities etc.

### **Long Term Planning**

In Nursery and Reception our long term planning consists of supporting each child throughout the developmental stages of development. In Reception long term planning also involves supporting each child to meet the early learning goals. Our long term planning is organised to provide us with topics to plan key experiences over the year and support the different areas of the curriculum laying foundations for future learning. We have organised our learning environment to provide continuous provision. Therefore, we have continuous provision plans for our enabling learning environment.

## **Medium Term Planning**

Our medium term planning is based on areas of supporting progression throughout the Development Matters using a gap analysis.

## **Short term Planning**

This is based on weekly planning detailing the structure and organisation for the week. We have continuous provision planning that is enhanced weekly to reflect the enhancements needed for the enabling learning environments. Enhancements are related to the topic, needs, skills, interests and learning opportunities needed to further support learning. Short term planning also includes our focus teaching activities and interventions.

## **Religious Education**

Throughout our practice and provision our Catholic vision also permeates our EYFS curriculum as we are a Christ Centred Community where all can work, learn and grow together guided by Jesus` teachings. Throughout our Catholic curriculum children develop a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, gospel values and good citizenship.

As our children grow and learn together in a faith school we aim to nurture and encourage them to become adults who can transform our world into a more just and loving society. Children are encouraged to become caring, responsible and compassionate individuals.

## **The Learning Environment**

***“A rich and varied environment supports children`s learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging indoor and outdoor spaces.”***

(Department for Children, Schools and Families:2007)

Within our setting we recognise that an enabling learning environment indoors and outdoors is vital to provide children with rich and stimulating experiences where learning can flourish. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment indoors and outdoors which will encourage children to explore, learn and investigate through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Our EYFS setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We develop and organise learning areas that are responsive to the curriculum and individual needs. Our EYFS learning environment consists of an indoor and outdoor learning environment that offers opportunities that support the characteristics of effective learning. Outdoor provision has a positive impact on children`s health and sense of wellbeing. It provides them with the freedom to explore, to be physically active and exuberant, to work on a larger scale and experience the natural world. Therefore children are provided with the opportunity to learn outside every day. The learning environment also provides children with secure emotional provision where learners can grow and flourish as confident and creative learners.

## **The Wider Context**

Meeting young children`s individual needs is part of our daily working ethos. This involves developing positive and respectful relationships and working in partnership with other settings, different professionals and with individuals and groups to support children`s development and progress.

## Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways. The EYFS framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Our practice and provision recognises the importance of how each theme identified above is needed to support and foster children's learning and development.

At St Joseph's we support children's learning and development by ensuring challenging, purposeful learning opportunities that support and foster the prime and specific areas of learning and development. The **prime** areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The **specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge.

The prime and specific areas of learning and development are supported by three characteristics of effective early learning:

Playing and exploring  
Active learning  
Creating and thinking critically

The characteristics of effective learning and the prime and specific areas of learning and development are all interconnected and underpin how young children learn. At St Joseph's we understand that the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

## Play and Exploration

*"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level".*

(Department for children, schools and families: 2007)

High quality play is fundamental for children's learning and development. Within our setting we have a critical awareness that key ingredients such as an enabling environment, appropriate adult support, responsive planning and positive relationships are required to encourage high quality play. Our extensive knowledge, understanding and experience of play as a tool for learning also equips us with information about how to use this vehicle to support learning and development.

Children are powerful learners and they actively explore and investigate the world around them making sense of experiences, people, objects and events. There are many different forms of play that help and support children to learn and to become confident learners for the future. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage our pedagogy of how children learn and develop informs our practice and provision.

We believe that young children need to experience rich and stimulating experiences with high quality early years education. Young children are competent learners from birth and develop in a wide variety of ways. Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage high quality play is valued as a vehicle for learning.

Throughout our daily routine play is used as a vehicle for learning in three different ways:

Child initiated play  
Adult initiated play

Focused Learning

### **Child Initiated Play**

Child initiated play is play initiated by the child but **supported** with an adult. Within this form of play there is sensitive interaction and intervention where the role of the adult is to support and facilitate the play.

### **Adult Initiated Play**

Adult initiated play involves play that is initiated and organised by the practitioner although it is not highly structured. The play will involve activities that are planned from children's ideas and interests. The role of the adult will involve supporting children's learning and building on existing skills, knowledge and understanding.

### **Focused Learning**

Focused learning involves using play to organise activities that are adult directed with a specific learning objective. Usually all children participate and activities are differentiated to meet individual needs.

### **Active Learning**

Children learn best by being provided with high quality learning experiences and opportunities that encourage active learning. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. In our Foundation Stage Setting we value the crucial importance of active learning for supporting and facilitating young children's development. Throughout our daily routine children are provided with continuous time to engage in active learning through play.

Active learning encourages young children to:

- Play
- Be with other people
- Be with adults
- Explore
- Talk
- Communicate
- Represent ideas and experiences
- Meet physical and mental challenges
- Model how to do things
- Practise, repeat and apply skills
- Have fun

### **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.”*

We recognise that creativity is fundamentally important to children's learning and development.

It involves;

- Imagination

- Originality (ability to come up with ideas and products)
- Productivity (ability to generate a variety of ideas through divergent thinking)
- Problem Solving
- Ability to produce an outcome of value and worth

At St Joseph's children are provided with the 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.

**Creativity allows children to:**

- Communicate their feelings in a non-verbal and preverbal way
- Express their thoughts, ideas and emotions
- Comprehend and represent their perceptions and understanding of the world
- Express cultural heritage
- Think about and create new meanings – This where imagination and originality can come into art
- Solve problems and gain mastery

The rich learning environment we provide to young children is an important factor in fostering creativity. It provides space, easy access to a wide variety of resources and materials and it allows children to be selective and make choices. The learning environment displays children's work; this creates an atmosphere that values and respects children's expressions. The environment motivates children and provides scaffolding that encourages freedom to explore creativity.

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, topics and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and (sometimes) exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

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

**Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:**

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.

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

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

### **Overview of the learning and development requirements**

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The **learning and development requirements** cover:

- the *areas of learning and development* which must shape activities and experiences (*educational programmes*) for children in all early years' settings;
- the *early learning goals* that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five); and
- *assessment arrangements* for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- the seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes (described below);
- the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year; and
- the assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers).

Children are competent learners from birth and develop and learn in a wide variety of ways. As practitioners we look carefully at the children in our care, consider their needs, their interests, and their stages of development and use all of this information to help plan a challenging and enjoyable experience across the areas of learning and development.

All areas of learning are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

### **Monitoring of the EYFS**

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared

with the Headteacher and the Early Years Foundation Stage staff as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our policy regarding teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2.

### **Features that relate to the EYFS are:**

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching; the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents.
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

### **Special Educational Needs**

All children are unique and learn in different ways and at different rates. At St Joseph's Primary School, it is the belief that all children have a right to a full and rounded education which will enable them to achieve their full potential. We use our best endeavours to secure special educational provision for pupils for whom this is required, that is 'additional to and different from' that provided within the differentiated curriculum to better respond to the four areas of need identified in the Code of Practice (2014):

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory/physical

(See SEND Policy)

### **TRANSITIONS**

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those

involved with the child and other settings. Children receive home visits and a one to one parent meeting. Introductory sessions are also provided and staff also visit outside settings to familiarise themselves with the children.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data is also sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a number of sessions towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom OR with the Year 1 teacher to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are prepared to begin Key Stage 1.

### **SAFETY INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE REQUIREMENTS**

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We 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;
- 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.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Safeguarding Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The EYFS team includes two Designated Safeguarding Leads, one of whom is the EYFS teacher. Robust systems are implemented for reporting information and record keeping. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.