Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

"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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right."
Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, Department for Education 2021

Approved by:	Y.Wilkins	**Date:** 02 September 2024
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Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The EYFS is statutory and is detailed under the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* and the *Practical Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*.

We follow the statutory framework and guidance detailed in the EYFS using our extensive experience we observe, plan and teach children in early years.

Our Intent

Within Early Years at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we aim to;

- ✓ Give each child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to their school life within a safe and secure environment.
- ✓ Establish solid foundations and foster a love of learning by developing enquiring minds.
- ✓ We aim to instil the Characteristics of Effective Learning such as independence, resilience and confidence.
- ✓ Give children access to an ambitious, broad, balanced and language rich curriculum that gives them a range of secure foundational knowledge, vocabulary and skills needed to progress through school and life.
    - based on first hand experiences and purposeful interactions
    - through 'in the moment planning' opportunities and carefully planned adult or child-initiated activities
    - whilst having a regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage One curriculum will demand
- ✓ Provide quality, consistent teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress from their starting points.
- ✓ Enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in order to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world.
- ✓ Offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- ✓ Encourage children to develop independence within a nurturing and supportive atmosphere.
- ✓ Support children to build positive relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and turn taking.
- ✓ Promote emotional well-being; helping each child recognise their own strengths and achievements, celebrate success and developing confidence to work towards personal goals.
- ✓ Build positive working relationships and a partnership between staff, families (recognising that parents are their child's first and foremost educator), carers and professionals to enable all children to SHINE to be the best that they can be.
- ✓ Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Implementation

Teaching and Learning style
Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning throughout our school. These features equally apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS.

Within the EYFS the development of a holistic learner is recognised based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion.

Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years for their final stage of EYFS. In our school we have one full time Reception class (Donaldson Class) which is fed from predominantly St Joseph's Nursery but also from other local nurseries within Devizes and the surrounding villages.
Our Reception class has a teacher and a teaching assistant.

The Curriculum
Our Reception class follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This framework defines what we teach and we use the Development Matters guidance to support our curriculum. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected.

Three of the areas are referred to as the Prime areas. These are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving (Early Years Framework 2021)

The prime areas are;

Communication and language	Listening, Attention and Understanding Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-regulation Managing Self Building Relationships
Physical Development	Fine Motor Gross Motor

The Prime areas are strengthened and applied through the further four areas which are referred to as the Specific areas:

Literacy	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers Numerical patterns
Understanding the World	Past and present People, culture and communities
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with materials Being imaginative and expressive

'It is the role of the setting to help children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.' Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook, May 2019

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play. Through this we ensure there is a balance of child- initiated learning through continuous provision, planned, progressive enhanced provision based on ongoing assessments and adult led activities to teach, rehearse and consolidate foundational skills and knowledge. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential. The adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete a task with them; at other times they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible. We see our Early Years team as "co-adventurers".

Teaching in the EYFS:

- Has a carefully planned curriculum which aims for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS and to provide opportunities to develop pre-requisite skills and foundational knowledge in preparation for the KS1 curriculum.
- Involves creating adult and child-initiated opportunities that will encourage children to explore, create, investigate, rehearse, practise, repeat and discover
- Involves developing Characteristics of Effective Learning
- Uses a multi-sensory, fun play-based approach
- Shows awareness of the different ways and rates by which children develop and learn; that there are many factors affecting achievement including ability, emotional state, age and maturity, and how this informs teaching strategies.
- Has a high expectation of children's behaviour and attainment.
- Recognises the importance of emotional well-being.
- Is outside as much as possible ensuring children take ownership of their learning.

We enhance our Curriculum with our 'Enhancing and Enriching' extra-curricular opportunities available to the children. These include: special events and celebrations, variety of after school clubs, memorable experiences, themes selected to drive the curriculum, a variety of roles and responsibilities, visits and visitors, and an embedded PSHE and Wellbeing curriculum.

Our teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics is through the comprehensive Sounds~Write programme and our teaching of mathematics is guided by the NCETM Mastering Number programme alongside NumberSense to develop number fluency and spatial reasoning. Based on a significant increase of Speech and language need we are also active participants in a research-based project 'Cracking Communication' with Wiltshire County Council and EEF to support our children's language and vocabulary development to ensure they do not fall behind their peers.

There are set routines that we follow each day. There are designated times when the children come together to be taught and we focus on maths, literacy, phonics, stories, RE, PE, PSHE and topic work. These times provide the opportunity for children to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, to take turns, to answer and concentrate. 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 year 1 and the KS1 curriculum.

Whole class reading and story time are valued, important parts of the day. We want our children to develop of lifelong love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We imitate, innovate and invent stories through a 'Drawing club' approach with many opportunities for oral story-telling and story mapping through our use of Literacy Shed and Talk for Stories schemes. We want our children to leave the EYFS knowing stories, both traditional and modern well. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous

provision. In Reception every child is provided with their own book bag and will receive a 'reading' book once a week. In school they will share this book with an adult either on a one to one basis or in a group.

To build our children's fine motor skills and muscle memory for early writing and mark making we provide many opportunities in the environment to exercise these through specifically planned 'funky fingers' tasks, regular handwriting opportunities using our school scheme 'Kinetic Letters' as well as early morning Gross Motor activities where the children use balance, music and movement that becomes more refined and focussed from gross motor to fine motor control.

Characteristic of Effective Learning
The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;
- **Playing and Exploring**- children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning**- children concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Play
We highly value play and the learning it brings in itself. Anyone who has observed play for any length of time will recognise that, for young children, play is a tool for learning. Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn.
Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules thereby developing emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Children have the opportunity to think creatively and problem solve alongside others. They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations as well as re-enact positive experiences building self-awareness and self-esteem.

Our Continuous and enhanced provision provides children with stimulating, active play to encourage creative and critical thinking alongside other children, as well as on their own. Children are able to practice skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interest, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through quality interactions: observing, modelling and questioning. They teach and extend play whilst developing skills and language.

We understand that outdoor play is of equal importance as indoor play and that the outdoor classroom offers children 'bigger', 'louder' and 'messier' experiences. We therefore aim to offer free flow access to our outdoor learning areas throughout the school day.

Planning
The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the basis for planning. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are supported by the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. Our planning is based upon themes with discrete lessons in phonics, reading, writing, RE, PE, Topic (UTW) and maths using previously mentioned, progressive schemes.

We select themes according to children's interests, experiences and prior learning. Progress and curriculum coverage are monitored half-termly. Each learning area in the indoor and outdoor classrooms have provision plans, which identify learning opportunities and suggested enhancements. Staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. They also respond to children's social and emotional needs as well as their academic achievement. Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively based on ongoing assessments and observations.

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, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Inclusion in the EYFS

In consultation with and by working collaboratively with parents/guardians, the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) will lead on provision for children who may experience barriers to their learning, which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development in line with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2014) and the school's SEN/Inclusion Policy.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by: -

- Setting realistic and challenging expectations. We aim for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by planning for different learning styles, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities or medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds as well as children with diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued.
- Using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping which all children have equal access to.
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary, within the resources available to the school. This may include a phased transition programme dependant on a child's specific SEN needs.
- Providing specific targets detailed in Support Plans (MSP) and following external therapy or support programmes of work such as Speech and Language
- Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Parent Support Advisor.

Assessment
At St Joseph's ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. We observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations and assessments are recorded in our 'Donaldson Diary' and online learning journal (Tapestry) which parents can access.
Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

Formative assessment in the Foundation Stage is continuous and takes the form of observations, examples of child-initiated work and samples of dated work from books and photographs. The teachers and teaching assistants keep observational records and use these to record examples of each child's work. These are kept in a Learning Journey folder for each child and are available to parents and carers at all times. These records are passed onto Year One teachers to ensure a smooth transition.

We have regular termly parents' meetings take place to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and next steps in learning. In F2, in addition to parents' meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms, parents receive an annual report that offers detailed comments on each child's progress in each area of learning and their Characteristics of Effective Learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs. The children are also given opportunity to comment on areas they would like to improve.

At the end of the EYFS (end of Reception), practitioners complete the EYFS profile (Statutory requirement) for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 16 early learning goals, indicating whether they are;

- 'Expected' - meeting expected levels of development
- 'Emerging'- not yet reaching the expected levels of development

Children's development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.
The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance and Exemplification materials) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Parent Partnership
We believe that education is a shared responsibility between school and home and recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We therefore strive to ensure that parents/carers are involved in their child's education through regular communications and providing them with a weekly newsletter detailing what we are learning and how they can support their child at home.

We ensure that parents/ carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, through their online Donaldson Diary and parent's evenings. We understand the importance of parents/carers views, so provide opportunities for feedback throughout the school year during our open classrooms as well as opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's profile of development by adding observations and photos to their child's online Donaldson Diary (Tapestry) and sharing 'WOW' certificates of progress milestones at home.

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

Safeguarding
It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.
We educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We teach the children how to recognise and manage risks in a supervised learning environment (please refer to the school Wellbeing and Behaviour policy for further information). We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children.
The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Please refer to our school's policies: Safeguarding and Wellbeing and Behaviour for further information.

Monitoring Arrangements
This policy will be reviewed by the Governing body every two years.

Impact

We recognise that every child is unique and that they develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates. We want all of our children to develop a positive attitude to learning and therefore we strive for our children to become curious, resilient, aspirational and self-assured in order to prepare them for the next stage of education, laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

We aim for:

- The majority of children in Reception reach the ELG by the end of Summer
- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning which helps them through the rest of school
- Children develop the ability to manage risks
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and their learning
- 100% of parents are happy with their child's progress
- Parents feel part of the school community
- Practise is improved year on year
- Everyone is included
- Children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement