

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Our Lady and St. Gerard's Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We also believe 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.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in EYFS to take on the task of building on that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and carers, support staff and the teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

The intentions of the policy

That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life

Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind

A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers

Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Legislation:

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2025.

Aims and objectives

At Our Lady and St. Gerard's RC Primary 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. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence

- work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

Learning and development

Practitioners will:

- Plan activities based on first hand experiences that encourage exploration, experimentation observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision making and discussion (CoEL)
- Talk to children and engage them as partners in learning
- Provide opportunities for children to work individually, in small groups and as part of a larger group and ensure a balance of child-initiated/adult led experiences.
- Plan activities that promote emotional, moral, spiritual and social development together with intellectual development.
- Provide experiences that help children to develop autonomy and a disposition to learn.
- Give sufficient time for children to use a range of equipment to persist in activities, practising new and existing skills and learning from their mistakes.
- Introduce appropriate vocabulary to children, alongside their actions.
- Give children accurate information which challenges cultural, racial, social and gender stereotypes.
- Plan to the 7 areas of learning.

The Prime Areas

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The Specific areas

Literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance and role-play.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the Statutory Framework will be 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. All practitioners who work in reception at Our Lady and St. Gerard's are involved in this process. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six half terms and the Early Learning Goals and Development Matters documents are used to support and guide the planning process. Reception and Nursery do this overall planning together.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests, informed by on-going observational assessments.

Staffing and Organisation

The admission number for the school is 50. Each child will have an allocated key worker who will ensure that every child's learning and care meets their individual needs. The key worker will also liaise with the parents.

The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the custom built EYFS outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistant, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. They also liaise with the pre-school/ nursery on a regular basis.

The Nursery class can hold up to 26 children per session, morning and afternoon. Overall, nursery can have 52 children and parents are able to use their 15/30 hours free sessions flexibly over the week and pay for other sessions separately. The nursery classroom has their own outdoor environment which the children can access throughout their free-flow play alongside structured activities. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistant, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. The nursery staff are also involved in local cluster group training sessions.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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 follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

For children aged 3 and over:

[For maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools:]

- We have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children

[For reception classes in maintained schools and academies:]

- We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

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

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

We have clear whistleblowing procedures in place, as required by the 2025 EYFS framework, to ensure staff can report concerns confidentially and appropriately.

Safeguarding training for all staff is updated annually and includes content specified in Annex C of the EYFS framework.

We follow updated safer eating practices including allergy management, weaning guidance, and choking prevention. Staff are trained in these procedures and our Safer Eating Policy is available for reference.

We ensure privacy during toileting and nappy changing while maintaining safeguarding standards. Procedures are reviewed regularly to balance dignity and safety.

We monitor prolonged absences and follow up with families. We collect and maintain at least two emergency contact details for each child.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Our Lady and St. Gerard's we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress.

This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

It is a statutory requirement to assess the children with the new EYFS framework published in 2025. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) will be administered by schools within the first 6 weeks after children enter Reception, and will be used as the baseline for measuring the progress primary schools make. This will enable the department, for the first time, to create 'end to end' school-level progress measures for primary schools, showing the progress made from Reception until the end of key stage 2 (KS2). The new reception baseline assessment will provide a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school, enabling a new starting point to measure the progress that they make by the end of Year 6.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, videos and information from parents.

Summative assessment

In the Summer term in the year in which the child reaches 5 years old the EYFS Profile is finalised for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. The results of the Profile will be shared with parents at the end of the year. A copy of the school's EYFS results will be sent to the Local Authority.

Learning through play

At Our Lady and St. Gerard's we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves.

The indoor and outdoor environment (Nursery and Reception)

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn safely. There are areas where the children can be active and can be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find, locate equipment and use the resources independently.

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experiences. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

We believe that children benefit enormously from outdoor play. The experiences offered contribute to the development of children's confidence and independence. In a natural environment, where children, are given time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships, they develop understanding of the world and the environment through the use of emotions, imagination and their senses.

Liaising with pre-school settings and induction

Nursery class:

For those children starting at Our Lady and St Gerard's nursery, children will be asked to visit on taster sessions held in the Summer Term. Parents/carers are also able to bring their children at any time to help their child become familiar with the environment and staff.

These sessions will give you and your child a chance to meet the nursery teacher and teaching assistant, to see the nursery classroom and outdoor learning area. There is also the opportunity to have a home visit at the start of the Autumn Term so children can meet relevant staff.

Transition from nursery to Reception

The nursery teacher at Our Lady and St Gerard's will fill out a transition document and will inform the Reception teacher about the child's progress and assessment. Children moving onto other schools will also receive this information.

Reception class:

At Our Lady and St. Gerard's we have close links with the local pre-school providers. We look at ways to integrate the activities of the pre-school and reception classes e.g. through outdoor play. During the Summer Term all prospective children have the opportunity to visit the school on a number of occasions. Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. In September an informal meeting is held by the EYFS teachers to introduce parents/carers to the school, reception procedures and curriculum.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and year 1 staff work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Our Lady and St. Gerard's:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Small group guided reading sessions are introduced during the Autumn term so that children are confident with this approach when they move into Year 1. All children will also have 1:1 reading support.
- Reception children meet year 1 teachers during assembly and other whole-school activities during the reception year.
- Assessments and the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning are passed onto the year 1 staff. This is used to inform planning as they enter year 1
- Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Reception children visit their new year 1 class and teacher for sessions in July.
- The Bug Club phonics is continued from Reception into year 1 and 2 (and beyond if appropriate).
- There is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into year 1.
- Where possible, the year 1 children continue to enjoy some practical learning experiences which gradually becomes more formalised.

Parental Partnership

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- The early years long term plans and topic outlines are available to view on the school website and these are sent home to parents. There are also links to websites and activities which could be undertaken at home to support the children with their learning.
- Organising 'drop in' sessions.
Prospective parents Open Evening within the Autumn term.
Using 'Dojo' application to communicate with parents, share information and pictures.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in other classes in the school
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary (see diary for example).
- Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g. maths games and library books, and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school.
- Discussing individual targets with parents/carers at Parents' Evening during the Autumn and Spring Terms.
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals.
- Holding child/parent open days and workshops to enable parents to work alongside their children.
- Outlining the reception curriculum to parents/carers during the new parents meeting in May, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home. The 'What to expect when' booklet shared on the website and is shared over the year.

Inclusion

At Our Lady and St. Gerard's we aim to provide all pupils, 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. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

British Values

We endeavour to provide our children with opportunities throughout the curriculum to develop and understanding of British Values so that they learn to understand and practise:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

Children with an identified special educational need or disability will be given support as appropriate, to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This will be through a SSPs (School Support Plan) developed in partnership with parents and any other involved agencies.

The SENCO monitors the progress of all children with SEND to ensure that they are learning with their peers and that the curriculum is appropriately adapted to suit their needs; enabling them to feel safe and secure, and to learn effectively. Where children with SEND are making poor progress, further assessment is undertaken, or support sought.

Our school Special Educational Needs Coordinator is Mrs Cowell.

School Support Plans identify targets for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's policy. See Special Educational Needs Policy and SEND Information Report for further information.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed annually.

Dated – September 2025

Date to be reviewed – September 2026

Reviewed by – Mrs R. Cowell (Deputy Headteacher/SENCO/EYFS Lead)

Additional updates made to reflect the 2025 EYFS statutory framework including:

- Reference updates to the 2025 framework
- Safer recruitment practices requiring references from current employers or training providers
- Monitoring of child absences and emergency contact requirements
- Safeguarding training frequency and content
- Whistleblowing procedures

- Safer eating practices
- Privacy during intimate care
- Experience-Based Route (EBR) staff qualification recognition

To be reviewed by Governors Autumn 2025