



# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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## **1. Our Mission Statement**

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to reach their full potential academically, emotionally and socially. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. We work for our school to be a happy place where all children enjoy their educational journey.

## **2. Aims**

At Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Primary School we aim:

- To make children's first experience of school is happy, positive and fun.
- To ensure that all children feel secure and valued.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum by well planned activities covering all areas of learning and development that is inspired by the Gospel values..
- To provide a rich and varied indoor and outdoor learning environment.
- To provide a balance of adult led, adult directed and self-initiated child led activities.
- To establish positive relationships with parents.
- To make careful observations and develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) of next step targets to support and extend the children's learning and ensure progress.
- To ensure the children's individual special educational needs are identified and receive appropriate support.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to the end of the reception year. The EYFS profile is an inclusive assessment, capable of capturing a wide range of children's learning and development outcomes.

## **3. Key themes**

The EYFS is based upon four themes:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

These themes are all important as they all combine to ensure young children make good, strong progress in their earliest years. This stage in life is the most important as children's mind and bodies grow and develop most from birth to age 5.

At Our Lady of the Angels Primary School the Foundation Stage comprises of one Reception class. The class is led by two teachers across the week, supported by a Learning Support Assistant. Staff are fully qualified, have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating children with a range of additional needs.

In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises. Our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn. Our activities provide first hand experiences through play and discussion; children are encouraged to interact with others, to move about and to explore a variety of learning situations. There are well planned areas of provision in the wide range of activities, resources and materials available. Opportunities are provided for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen activities. It is important to us that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

#### **4. EYFS Areas Of Learning**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate on the three characteristics of learning and the seven areas of learning.

##### **The Characteristics of Effective Learning:**

- Play and exploring (engagement) – finding out and exploring, using what they know in their play, being willing to have a go.
- Active learning (motivation) – being involved and concentrating, keeping on trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- Creative and critical thinking – having their own ideas, using what they know, choosing ways to do things and finding new ways.

Playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically support children's learning across all areas.

##### **The seven areas of learning and development:**

###### **Prime:**

- 1) Personal Social and Emotional Development
- 2) Physical Development

###### **Specific:**

- 1) Literacy
- 2) Mathematics

### 3) Communication and Language

### 3) Understanding of World

### 4) Expressive Art and Design

At Our Lady of the Angels School we believe these 7 areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all of these areas through planned purposeful play, with a balance of adult and child initiated activities. We set realistic yet challenging expectations to meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all ability groups, boys and girls, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

#### Personal Social And Emotional Development

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: making relationships, self-confidence and self-awareness and managing feelings and behaviour. PSED involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relations with staff and children, to develop social skills and learn how to show a range of emotions and to manage their feelings and behaviour. The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school and nurseries in order to make links stronger. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and to co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and to make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs.

#### Physical Development

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: Moving and Handling and Health and Self-Care. PD involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control and movement. Appropriate equipment will be provided to allow each child to access and range of physical activities. Some children (depending on their statement) will have the opportunities to go to hydrotherapy or to take part in rebound therapy. Children who have physiotherapy plans will have regular opportunities to carry out their exercises both in class and during individual physiotherapy sessions. Children are also encouraged to develop their fine and gross motor skills. This is done in both indoor and outdoor environments and by working with a wide range of resources.

#### Communication And Language

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: Listen and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. CL involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment – this could be through signing, symbols, PEC's, switches or any individual ways that children may use to communicate. It also involves allowing children to develop their confidence and skills in expressing

themselves; and to communicate and to listen in a range of situations. We aim to enrich the children's language and communication through story time, rhymes and role-play.

## Literacy

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: Reading and Writing.

Involves encouraging children to explore sounds, letters and various ways of mark making; this can include in sensory materials such as sand or shaving foam.

## Mathematics

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: Number and Shape, Space and Measure.

Involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in number, daily routines, object permanence, shape, colour and water play.

## Understanding the World

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: People and Communities, The World and Technology.

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

## Being Creative

This area of learning is broken down into the following sub categories: Exploring and Using Media and Materials, Being Imaginative.

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, role-play and design and technology.

## 5. Outdoor Learning

The Reception class has both a fully equipped outdoor area and a Forest School provision. The area is split into focussed learning areas; where more adult led learning activities can take place. Outdoor learning and exploration is essential in the Early Years. We have all weather clothing and ask for parents to send in wellie boots so children are protected. The outside area is an extension to the classroom and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In this area EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as give opportunities for the children to make their own choices and to explore the range of great equipment and resources available to them.

## 6. Planning

Planning for the EYFS is based around the key interests of children in this age group. We really value the importance of children enjoying their learning.

- Long term planning: there are long term and continuous provision plans linked to the Stages of Development and Early Learning Goals which form the broad framework of learning objectives for the EYFS. This includes a range of activities and experiences which offer a balance of learning across the seven areas of learning.
- Medium term planning: half termly themes are planned based around children's interests, as well as incorporating the characteristics of effective learning and the seven areas of learning and development. Activities are linked to learning objectives based on individual needs.
- Short term planning: weekly plans link activities to learning objectives and targets in the seven areas, focussing on day to day teaching; allowing for revision and modification of learning activities informed by on-going assessments and observations. These plans show how adults are deployed to focus on targeted groups or individual children for guided differentiated teaching, and how independent learning activities can be managed. These plans will link to the medium term plans.
- Individual learning plan (ILP): each child will have an ILP identifying next step targets in each of the seven areas of learning and development (and linked to their statement of Special Education Need where appropriate). Targets will be linked to descriptors in the EYFS stages of development which will focus on developing their play/learning skills across the seven areas of learning and linked to the three characteristics of learning.

Where appropriate planning with the Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist will ensure children's individual needs are being met

through direct therapy and integrated work in the classroom. Programmes will be planned in conjunction with teachers, parents and staff.

## **7. Baseline Assessment**

As directed by the Department for Education for all primary schools, all children participate in the reception baseline assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of starting in the Reception class.

The purpose of the assessment is to provide the starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between reception and year 6.

The RBA is a short, interactive and practical assessment of a child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school, using materials that most children in this age group will be familiar with. It became statutory for all schools from September 2021.

The RBA is not about judging or labelling children or putting them under any pressure. They cannot 'pass' or 'fail' the assessment. Its main purpose is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. The activities undertaken are fun, simple in design, short and age-appropriate.

The RBA provides opportunities for all children to have valuable one-to-one time with their teacher at an early stage, so the teacher can get to know the children well. It provides a helpful snapshot of where children are working when they enter reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way.

For each child the school will receive a set of statements, which provide a narrative description of how each child performed in the assessment. We will provide these to parents on their request.

When children reach year 6, the end of key stage 2, it will be possible to see how well the school has supported the year group overall in their time at primary school, compared to other schools nationally.

Data from this assessment will be shared with the Department for Education.

## **8. Assessment**

After the Baseline assessment has been completed, further observations and informal assessments become an integral part of teaching as they inform future planning for children's needs and enable staff to set and review targets. The



assessment system is based on the Development matters curriculum written by the Department for Education.

Children's progress and targets are shared with parents/carers. We review ILP targets each half term and the next steps of learning plans according to the child's individual needs.

Each child is unique and learning will take place with the child at the centre. Each child will have an online learning journal which will include information about their learning and development; this is shared between parents, professionals and staff.

As each child enters the Foundation Stage we use our professional judgement to assess the age band children are working within across the EYFS 17 areas of learning.

#### Summative data:

At the end of a child's reception year, we will assess the children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are emerging, expecting or exceeding levels of development. Children that reach the expected level in the prime areas of Personal, Social & Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development along with the Specific Areas of Literacy and maths will be deemed as reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD). These results are sent to Torbay Local Authority and parents receive a written report summing up their child's learning and development against the three characteristics of effective learning.

## 9. Parents/carers as Partners

It is vital that communication between all professionals and parents and carers is strong so that a clear picture is gained of the child's learning and development. Children learn best when there are strong links between home and school, and the importance of parental involvement is recognised, valued and developed. Parents at Our Lady of the Angels are included in their child's online learning journey through the opportunity to contribute 'wow' moments.. Parents are also able to view their child's learning journal through the Tapestry app.

At Our Lady of the Angels we really do value the involvement of parents and carers in the school. Involvement begins even before children start in our Reception class, with a visit to see the school, meet the teacher and other staff. Once a place has been confirmed the early year's class teacher will arrange a transition day where the children and parents will come for a "stay and play" session. This is a great opportunity for parents/keyworkers to discuss the child's needs in more detail, see the setting and meet other children and parents.

Parent consultation meetings are held in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms, in which parents/carers are invited to discuss their child's ongoing progress.

Parents are kept informed about all happenings of the school by weekly newsletters, letters home, the Tapestry app and via the school website and Facebook page.

## **10. Lunch and Snack Times**

Healthy snack items such as fruit and raisins are supplied by the school for snack, along with milk or water to drink. We understand that some children have a limited diet or may not like some or all of the snacks we offer, therefore parents are welcome to send in snack for their child in these cases. All Reception aged children stay for lunch. They have a choice of bringing a packed lunch to school or having a school dinner. All Reception aged children are entitled to a universal free school dinner if they choose but this must be pre-ordered via the ParentPay app. All staff in the Early Years Team will know about each child's specific dietary needs and requirements.

## **11. Photographs**

Prior to children starting here at Our Lady of the Angels, parents/carers are asked to give their permission for their child to be photographed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, on the school newsletter and website. Separate permission will also need to be given for children to have their image used on our school Facebook page.

## **12. Medical Needs**

A number of staff in the school hold a paediatric first aid qualification. The early years team will be aware of the children's medical needs and requirements and will receive training, if necessary, to be confident with dealing with any medical needs.

## **13. Transition**

We believe that the best early years practice sees learning as a continuum and that our role is to smooth the way between the child's home experience, EYFS curriculum and stages; ensuring that the curriculum we provide in key stage one reflects our understanding of the children as learners.

At Our Lady of the Angels we are committed to the EYFS and we believe it is essential that children who enter Reception receive their full entitlement to the EYFS. The Foundation Stage provides the firm foundations upon which all subsequent learning builds. Transition is managed in a thoughtful and planned way, taking account of the needs of the young learner.

We aim to provide reassuring transition experiences for all children both into and out of the Reception class. Teachers meet with colleagues from Holy Angels or other Nurseries in the summer term to discuss the children they will be 'handing over'. Teachers will request information about the child's academic abilities, specific needs and any other relevant information.

Children who are new to the Reception class will be invited for a taster session in the summer term to spend some time in their new class and to meet the teaching staff. Parents will also be invited to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher and Early Years Leader prior to their child starting.

Our children are our number one priority and their best interests are always taken into consideration.

During the Autumn term, the children transitioning into Year 1, will continue to follow the EYFS and teaching and learning strategies for at least the first 6 weeks.

#### **14. Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Head Teacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.