

The Early Years Foundation Stage at St Oswald's Catholic Primary School



Information for parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Schools and early years providers have to follow a structure of learning, development and care for children from birth to five years old. This is called the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and it enables your child to learn through a range of activities.

Four guiding principles shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Areas of the Learning

The Foundation stage is delivered through 7 areas of learning. 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. These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

In addition, there are four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.



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. They will have the opportunity to listen and respond to stories, non-fiction, poems and rhymes. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development and children will be provided with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts. This will include role play situations and during play. This will also provide valuable opportunities to support their growing ability to express a wide range of feelings.



Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Children will undertake a range of activities both outdoors and indoors to develop both fine and gross motor skills, co-ordination and balance, traveling skills etc. Threading beads, working with play dough, pouring sand and water, all help to strengthen fingers and develop control. Children will also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and healthy choices linked to food and oral health.



Personal, social and emotional development 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. It promotes independence and encourages children to develop positive attitudes to their learning. We encourage the children to: try new activities, dress and undress independently, use the toilet and wash their hands independently, take turns, share and play alongside other children, listen to others and respect their point of view and to tidy away after activities.



Literacy development involves developing language comprehension, encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Writing involves spelling, handwriting and composition. We support composition by modelling the 'think, say, write' process. Children will be introduced to the letter sounds, shapes and names through 'Jolly Phonics' and 'Letters and Sounds' materials (A government initiative), which adopts a multi-sensory approach to learning. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to develop a life-long love of reading. Each class has a quiet area where children can look at books (stories and non-fiction), read stories or listen to a story. There are opportunities for sharing books in larger groups during carpet sessions. We have writing areas, and provide writing materials throughout other areas to encourage children to write or make marks to represent writing during play.



Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. They will engage with a range of activities to build and apply this understanding using manipulatives, including objects such as pebbles, shells, counters and tens frames for organising counting. Through songs, number rhymes and practical activities, children will learn to recognise numbers, count groups of objects and begin to use



addition and subtraction methods in basic calculations. They have the opportunity to build models using bricks and junk materials to develop their awareness of space and shape. Language development is crucial in developing mathematical skills and children are encouraged to talk to adults and peers about what they notice, developing their reasoning skills without fear of making mistakes.

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, technology and the environment. Children will develop a sense of time and place, and the language associated with these concepts. They will be encouraged to ask questions about why things happen and how things work and will be given opportunities to explore and investigate objects, materials and living things. Children will have access a wide range of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to enhance their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.



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, role-play, and design and technology. Children will explore colour, shape and texture both in 3D and 2D. In the Foundation Stage, the focus is more on the process of how something is created, not necessarily the product. We offer a wide range of creative activities throughout the week, both indoors and out.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In addition to thinking about what children learn there will be a focus on **how** children learn - the *characteristics for effective learning*. These are:

Playing and exploring (**engagement**)– children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’

Active learning (**motivation**)– children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and thinking critically (**thinking**)– children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Learning through play

The best outcomes for children’s learning occur where most of the activity within a child’s day is a mixture of:

- child-initiated play, actively supported by adults
- focused learning, with adults guiding the learning through playful, rich experiential activities.

Many of the activities the children will be carrying out will be practical and play based. Play in the Early Years classroom is essential and contributes to the development of the whole child. Below are just some of the reasons that make learning through play so important.

- Encourages children to think for themselves

- Gives children a chance to practice skills
- Can improve concentration
- Gives children confidence
- Children learn to take turns and co-operate with others
- It develops their language
- It develops mathematical and problem-solving skills
- Children have a chance to explore and investigate



Learning outdoors



Outdoor learning complements indoor learning and is equally important. Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. The curriculum requires the children to have daily access to the outdoor environment. This will take place in all types of weather.

Outdoor learning is important because:

- being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors;
- it gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world;
- outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active;
- promotes a sense of confidence and well-being;
- provides opportunities for developing harmonious relationships with others, through negotiation, taking turns and co-operation;
- supports those children who learn best through activity or movement;
- supports children's developing creativity and problem-solving skills;
- provides rich opportunities for imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness;
- children have the chance to increase their balance and agility;