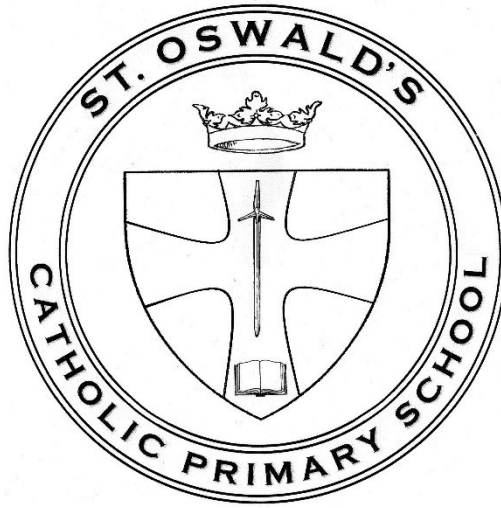


# St Oswald's Catholic Primary School



## EYFS Policy 2025-2026

Approved by:	Approval date	Renewal date
Standards Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2025	Autumn 2026

## **Mission Statement**

This is the Early Years Foundation Stage policy for St Oswald's Catholic Primary school and is set within the context of the whole school aims and Mission Statement –



*Together with Jesus,  
We will Learn and Grow in Faith*

## **Early Foundation Stage Policy**

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'*  
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021)

## **Aims**

At St Oswald's Primary school, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We understand that children develop quickly in the early years and a child's early experiences have a major impact on their future life chances. This is a crucial time for developing their enjoyment of learning, their engagement and motivation.

This policy sets out how we aim to provide:

- A broad and balanced curriculum which builds on children's interests and experiences, giving them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Close partnership with parents/carers, valuing their contributions.

## **Legislation**

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

## **Curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children usually join us, part time, in Nursery following their third birthday. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year. Children start Reception full time in September of the school-year they will be five.

### **Overarching Principles**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four distinct but complementary principles that shape practice in early years. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

### **A Unique Child**

At St Oswald's Primary school, we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs and Disability – We believe that all our children matter and we value the diversity of individuals within the school. We believe that equality of opportunities for all those in our care is paramount and all our policies, procedures and practice will reflect the rights of all children and adults including those with special educational needs or a disability, all ethnic and cultural groups and those with English as an additional language. We have a zero tolerance attitude towards any form of discrimination and will challenge any inappropriate attitudes and practices.

At St Oswald's we recognise the importance of early intervention in supporting a child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural development. Early intervention can take different forms, from supporting parents, school-based programs to improve children's social and emotional skills and additional support at school from appropriate staff (Teachers and support assistants). We make differentiated provision for all ability levels within school and, if deemed appropriate after discussion with parents/carers, support from outside agencies. The class teacher will be responsible for identifying and planning for individual needs with help from the SENDCO if applicable.

## **Positive Relationships**

At St Oswald's Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children and we value being partners with them in their child's education. We do this by:

- Using Class Dojo as a communication tool between teachers and families. Enabling Parents and family members have a window to their child's learning. The built-in translation tool on class Dojo and Arbor is used to help overcome language barriers for those who do not have English as their first language.
- Inviting parents to an induction meeting prior to children starting school;
- Talking to parents about their child during the first few days of starting school and asking them to complete a questionnaire about their child (family, celebrations, interests, personal and social skills);
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time with staff in their new classroom before starting school;
- Holding termly meetings for parents, during which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and next steps for learning;
- Sharing planning on the school website or through Class Dojo, about learning taking place each half term;
- Suggesting activities that can be done at home to support learning;
- Providing Children with homework and topic related activities to complete;
- Sending home phonetically decodable reading books and library books and encouraging parents to make comments in their child's reading record.
- Providing support videos linked to specific areas of learning to help parents working with their child at home;
- Having stay and play sessions in Nursery;
- Operating a lending library where families can lend resources, such as story sacks and games;
- Providing end of year reports which outline the progress and achievement made by each child;
- Celebrating children's achievements with their parents;
- Weekly homework sheets in Reception based on our learning in phonics, maths and topic work for further practise at home.
- Parents are also encouraged to contribute by sharing learning from home through Class Dojo and commenting on observations about learning in school;
- Holding meetings to explain how parents/carers can support their children with areas such as early reading, communication skills, writing, mathematics or personal/social development;

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Each child also has a key person who ensures, along with the class teacher, that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

*"When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning"*

## **Enabling Environments**

At St Oswald's Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The environment in our EYFS classrooms regularly changes to match the needs and interests of our cohorts. These changes happen in response to information gathered from observing the children and assessing their ongoing needs and development. Carefully selected resources are regularly added to areas of continuous provision, inside and outdoors, to further develop and extend a theme or topic and in response to children's interests. These resources are described as Enhanced Provision and are outlined in planning.

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas, for example: role-play, quiet reading, writing, numeracy, music, creative, malleable, sand, water, construction and small world. The children also have daily access to the outdoor learning environment. Access to the indoor and outdoor learning environments has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. It provides opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors and allows children greater space to be physically active and exuberant.

Effective learning builds on and extends prior learning and follows children's interests. We begin by observing the children to find out about their individual needs, interests, stage of development and learning needs. We then use this information to plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

## **Learning and Development**

At St Oswald's we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand they are inter-connected. We strive to provide a tailor made, thematic curriculum that engages and inspires our children, providing them with memorable experiences which prepare them for their next stage of learning. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early year's settings. The children will cover all seven areas of the curriculum through everyday activities. All the areas 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. These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

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

Staff will also support children in 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.

We support parents by providing them with a welcome booklet prior to their child starting school, outlining each of the areas of learning. This is built upon throughout the year through sharing planning and other information as set out in the Positive Relationships section.

We deliver learning for all of the areas through, planned purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We believe that play in the Early Years classroom is essential and contributes to the development of the whole child. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Through practice they build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

### The characteristics of effective learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, adults working with the children reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. In planning children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and how they organise their own play. Consideration is given to creating opportunities for the children to demonstrate three characteristics of effective learning:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

### The role of the adult

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. Learning should be personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- Demonstrate/model and work alongside children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support, reassure and encourage
- Encourage children to be problem solvers and investigators
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning

- Provide feedback to child / other adult / parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure

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

Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Adults working in Nursery with the youngest children ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

The Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning and feed into weekly planning. However, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations and discussions with children then lead the direction of the planning.

The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are guided by the EYFS supporting document Development Matters (2021). The planning is based upon the themes with discrete RE, phonics, maths and literacy directed teaching. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. The Reception and Nursery teachers work closely with all adults in the EYFS to plan for progression. All staff are involved in evaluating provision and planning changes or enhancements to support or extend children's learning.

Children in Nursery and Reception take part in whole class and small group sessions which are tailored to meet their age and stages of development. These group activities include, phonics, literacy and maths sessions. Story and rhyme times take place daily. Children in Reception also take part in weekly PE, RSHE, Topic and Computing sessions. Nursery participate in regular dough gym sessions.

### **Assessment and recording systems**

Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process at St Oswald's. It involves practitioners knowing children's stages of progress, achievements and interests, in order to shape teaching and learning experiences for each child. Children are observed in all areas of the curriculum and significant observations are recorded showing personal achievements. Each child has an online portfolio created on Class Dojo and this is shared with parents/carers. Assessment at St Oswald's does not involve prolonged breaks from interaction with children and does not require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether a child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own professional judgement against age related expectations.

**Statutory Assessments** - Children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of joining Reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language, that is delivered in English. It is clearly linked to the learning and

development requirements of the EYFS. The purpose of the RBA is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.

On entry to Nursery and Reception classes, the teachers and Early Years practitioners use their professional judgement, based on observations of individuals, to record the starting points for the children's level of development. Children are assessed across the seven areas of learning using the Development Matters age and stage of development bands.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30th June in that term, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child.

Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) across the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Each child's level of development is recorded as Emerging or Expected against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Additional information on assessment and recording procedures is set out in the school Assessment Policy.

### **Safety and Welfare –**

At St Oswald's 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 understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in section three of the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2021) and have regard to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance and the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements and staff receive annual safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge of the safeguarding requirements are up to date. Our full safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the schools Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies. An annual audit is completed to ensure systems are in place to cover all aspects outlined in section three of the Statutory Framework.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system. This policy will be reviewed at the start of each academic year and will incorporate the views of all staff concerned. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.