



Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Date reviewed	Next review
March 2025	March 2027
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
<i>Margaret McAleese</i>	

Our Lady's School is founded on faith in Jesus Christ and the life of the school community is centred on His presence.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Statement

At Our Lady's Primary School, our high quality Early Years Foundation Stage provision ensures children enjoy coming to school, feel successful and know they are in a happy secure environment where they are able to work towards their full potential.

At Our Lady's, we believe that young children learn best when play has a fundamental and pivotal role in their learning. It allows children to practice, explore, observe, investigate, repeat, copy, problem solve and represent over time. It also allows children to come to terms about themselves, other people and the world around them. We strive to foster an environment where children have a positive image of themselves and feel successful and confident in what they do. Young children need to be actively involved in their learning and understand the purpose of what they are doing. They will learn best through first hand experiences.

Children bring to school considerable knowledge and experience and this should be the starting point of their learning. Therefore, at Our Lady's the learning environment and activities will be relevant to the children's own experiences, reflecting their heritage background. The staff are supportive and sympathetic, viewing the children as individuals; this leads to the children feeling confident and valued.

The children learn best when they are in an environment that provides the opportunity to follow through their own learning and interests through sustained high-level play. This approach, facilitated by our staff, help them develop as autonomous independent learners. As a staff, we have high expectations and believe that the children should be encouraged to share these expectations for their own learning. We believe that the learning environment should be well organised, attractive and stimulating so that each child can learn in a happy relaxed atmosphere. The learning environment should reflect the rich cultural diversity of the children in our school. All children will learn best when there is a good partnership between all the adults working with them. At Our Lady's, we value the support of parents and carers, as they are the children's first educators.

Young children entering formal education (Reception class aged 4 or 5 years old) are in the final year of the EYFS Key Stage and have many years ahead of them in school. At Our Lady's, we believe it is therefore important to begin this process in a sensitive and caring manner. By settling into school with eagerness and enjoyment, the beginning of a love for lifelong learning can be developed.

At Our Lady's, we endeavor to make the transition from home or pre-school to full-time education as smooth as possible by:

- providing a secure and caring environment in which children are happy and eager to learn;
- developing a working partnership between home and school;
- enabling each child to develop his or her full potential;
- supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- enabling children to develop confidence and increasing independence.

You can find out more about the Early Years Foundation Stage via the following websites:

- <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk>

- <https://www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage>

Early Years Foundation Stage Intent

In the EYFS at Our Lady's, the curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning from previous settings and their experiences at home, provide first hand learning experiences, whilst allowing the children to build resilience, ambition and integrity.

Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we celebrate and welcome differences within our school community.

The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that our first experiences of school should be happy and positive, enabling us to develop a lifelong love of learning. Community involvement is an essential part of our curriculum as we celebrate local traditions, learning new skills to enable the children to take an active role in events throughout the year.

Throughout their time in EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to our school community, ready to transition to Year 1 the following academic year. They have the confidence and skills to make decisions and self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners. We intend to work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points.

We understand and follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure children meet their next steps. The indoor and outdoor learning environments support learning and prepare children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage and ensure children make at least good progress from their starting points.

Early Years Foundation Stage Implementation

At Our Lady's, we believe in involving parents of new children in their child's education as fully as possible. This begins in the term prior to the one in which a child starts school, when parents are invited to a new parents evening. On this occasion the parents are introduced to their child's teacher, key members of the staff and the classroom in which their child will be based. They are introduced to the EYFS curriculum and the seven areas of learning with an opportunity to discuss any queries or issues they may have. Parents are introduced to our policies on developing early reading and writing and how this is undertaken during the first few terms of school.

Parents will be given a Welcome Pack detailing day-to-day procedures of the school and relevant, practical information for preparing their child for school. They have the opportunity to meet their teacher and the learning support assistants who work within the class and are invited to discuss any specific worries or concerns they or their child may have.

Parents are invited to attend several parent workshops throughout the year, including Child Initiated Activities (CIA), reading, mathematics and Sounds-Write phonic sessions that further strengthens the relationship between home and school.

Home and Pre-school Visits

During term 1 (before they begin school full time), the class teacher and Teaching Assistants visit the children and parents at their homes to discuss any worries or questions. These home visits are invaluable for building trust and a fuller picture of the child. The teacher or teaching assistants will also visit the child at their pre-school and speak to their key worker to gain further insight in the child's starting point and experiences to date.

Familiarisation Sessions

Children are split into three age-based groups and then invited to attend three morning sessions at the beginning of Term 1 before they start school. The parents are invited to stay on the third day of the session to become familiar with the class routine and learn how to best help to prepare their child for the start of their journey at Our Lady's. The children are able to become familiar with the staff, organisation of the classroom and its essential areas such as cloakroom, toilets and outside classroom. They will participate in simple activities e.g. craft activities, role play, construction activities, music and story time.

Throughout the EYFS at Our Lady's, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, updated September 2021, by the DfE. This framework specifies the requirement for learning and development in the Early Years and provides prime and specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum.

We have a curriculum that is child-centred and that is based upon experiences and topics which engage the children. We encourage active learning to ensure the children are motivated and interested. We take time to get to know children's likes and interests to support learning. The staff plan daily for the indoors and outside environments. This is largely based on the children's interests, rhythms of the year and significant events and experiences. Our children are able to free flow between both classrooms; indoor and outdoor areas of the EYFS.

The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development,
- Communication and Language,
- Literacy,
- Mathematics,
- Understanding the World,
- Expressive Arts and Design

Prime Areas of Learning

Personal Social and Emotional Development

- Sound emotional development will only take place in a relaxed and secure atmosphere and consideration is given to providing this. Children are helped to form stable relationships and encouraged in developing a sense of responsibility, consideration for others, self-confidence, independence and self-control. This is in keeping with the whole school behaviour policy. We believe that a child's self-esteem will grow through an awareness of their special place in the community – family, school, church and local area.

Communication and Language

- At Our Lady's we believe that children should be encouraged to value their own language and culture thus helping them to value the language and culture of others. Spoken language has a central role in the social, intellectual and emotional development of the young child. Each child's contribution must be valued. This area covers listening, attention, speaking in full complex sentences and understanding a range of language.

Physical Development

- At Our Lady's we recognise that young children enjoy physical activity and need opportunities to interact and co-operate with each other, their environment and a variety of equipment and apparatus. They also need to develop personal skills such as self-organisation and independence. Physical development opportunities are offered through a variety of means – play in the classroom, PE lessons (encompassing games skills, gym, musical movement and dance and large apparatus) in the hall and outside. This area covers fine and gross motor skills as well as health and self-care.

Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy

- Children should view themselves as readers and want to read. We actively encourage home school links to support each child's reading. Children have a reading book and a library book to take home and a contact book for the parents to sign. We want children to view themselves as writers and be given opportunities for purposeful writing and purposeful mark making. All writing that children produce should be valued at all stages of development from mark making through letter strings and phonetic spelling to conventional spelling.

Mathematics

- Young children's experiences provide a ready basis for learning mathematical ideas. We encourage an investigative approach to mathematics, through practical activities, problem solving and making simple predictions. Children need to develop and extend their use of mathematical language, number recognition, simple mathematical operations, mental maths, shape, space and measures.

Understanding the World

- This area of development leads into later work in science, history, geography and computing. Reception children learn by experimentation, exploration and play. Play that is well planned allows children to be creative, to explore and investigate materials, to experiment and to draw and test conclusions. Encouraging children to seek answers to their own questions supports their natural curiosity about their environment. Teachers' open-ended questions should encourage further exploration, taking advantage of events that capture interest. We aim to provide a range of materials, tools and techniques to experiment with. Children are also encouraged to respect and learn about their own culture and that of others through festivals and celebrations throughout the year.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Art, design, construction, music, drama and imaginative play promote the development of young children's imagination and their ability to use media and materials creatively and to have a sense

of awe and wonder. Children at Our Lady's are offered a variety of opportunities to develop their creative skills. The value of much of young children's creative and aesthetic experiences may be seen in the process rather than in the final finished result.

Religious Education (RE)

- As a Catholic school, Religious Education is at the heart of all we do. 'Come and See' is the religious education programme followed throughout the school. In Reception, the approach is very much based on the child's own experiences. All children attend collective worship through assemblies and school Masses. Reception children are gradually introduced to these and do not attend all the assemblies at first.

These 7 areas are used to plan children's learning and activities. Planning for this curriculum is designed to be flexible so that a child's unique interests are supported. A vital aspect in the development of essential knowledge and skills is the use of continuous provision. This means that children are using and developing taught skills throughout the year on a daily basis. Continuous provision, practise and principles begin in EYFS and support children to develop key life skills such as independence, innovation, creativity, enquiry, analysis and problem solving. During the school day, children will have an opportunity to work independently, work collaboratively with their friends and with members of staff.

Daily guided activities are also planned to cover different areas of the EYFS curriculum and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. Through observation and discussion, areas of need and next steps are identified for all children to ensure good progress is made. There are also a range of stimulating and engaging activities which the children can access independently and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play.

In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practise. Staff in the EYFS make regular observations of the children's learning to ensure their next steps are met. These are collected in each child's online learning journey. We regularly assess where the children are, using 'Development Matters' and then ensure our planning, adult interaction and learning environment; including continuous provision, support children to reach their next steps. We will include interventions for groups or individuals if and when necessary.

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

These are known as the 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.

We keep parents informed and we meet regularly with them to ensure children's transition into school and throughout the EYFS is happy and allows them to reach their potential with the support needed. This includes, but is not exclusive to, reports and parent consultations as well as more frequent informal communication to suit individual families. We also support the transition into Key Stage 1 for both child

and parents. We prepare children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher, joint activities and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of EYFS and the start of Year 1. These aim to support the transition for all.

Impact and Assessment

In accordance with regulations, Outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage is used to record all children's progress against the Early Learning Goals (Appendix A). Information received from Pre-School settings on the Kent Early Years Transfer Record contributes to these profiles. Parents and the pupils themselves also evaluate progress through discussion with the class teacher at Parents' Evenings. The school uses Evidence Me to record observations against the Early Learning Goals and parents also have access to this software to allow them to view the observations and also add their own from home.

Careful assessment and record keeping based on observations are key elements in enabling the EYFS team to plan a curriculum that meets the needs of individual children and ensures effective continuity and progression.

We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be at least in line with National Expectations. Evidence in children's learning journeys support all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

The impact of our curriculum is monitored by the subject leader (Mrs Michelle Minchin) and supportive interventions are put in place if and when needed. The staff use observations to make formative assessments, which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace.

Summative assessment compares children's attainment to age related expectations. This is tracked using iTrack to ensure rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups. Our assessment judgements have been moderated both in school and externally with local schools. We also partake in local authority moderation which has validated our school judgements.

Leadership and Management

The Subject Leader will:

- with the Headteacher regularly monitor and evaluate planning, standards of attainment, teaching and learning in the EYFS;
- support and guide staff by encouraging the sharing of ideas; preparing, organising and leading INSET and staff meetings;
- co-ordinate assessment procedures and record keeping so as to facilitate progression and development throughout the EYFS and be involved in analysing test results;
- ensure staff are familiar with EYFS Curriculum and assist planning where necessary;
- encourage and support staff in the implementation of the EYFS Curriculum and ensure consistency of approach and progression by classroom observations;
- to be enthusiastic and demonstrate good practice, led by example in the way they teach;
- take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources for the EYFS Curriculum and environments;

- keep up-to-date with developments in the EYFS Curriculum and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

The staff at Our Lady's are committed to providing all children with equal access to the EYFS provision. When planning, activities are adapted to cater for the needs of all children whatever their ability.

At Our Lady's, we are committed to the policy of inclusion. We plan for individual needs, differentiating to allow all to achieve, building self-esteem and fulfilling our aim to give all pupils the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

Regardless of their ethnic group, gender or ability, all children at Our Lady's have equal access to the EYFS Curriculum. Positive images in terms of such groups are promoted throughout the school, both in the use of language and in the provision of resources.

Health and Safety

Guidelines in the Health and Safety Policy will apply with regard to the use of resources for all school based and out of school activities relating to the EYFS Curriculum.

Appendix A

Early Learning Goals

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Communication and Language

Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Literacy

Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Understanding the World

Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.