



# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**2024-25**

**Review Date: Sept 2025**

# **St Teresa of Lisieux Catholic Primary School**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### **Intent**

At St Teresa of Lisieux, through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Christian values and ensure all children are ready for their next steps. We believe that children love, learn and grow together.

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Teresa of Lisieux, children may join the Nursery class at the age of three or one of the two Reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. See whole school Admissions Policy for further details.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Teresa of Lisieux we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the school will support each child to achieve to their full potential.

### **Aims & Objectives**

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At St Teresa of Lisieux, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, rigorous, engaging and authentic curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and

development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning, natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills, including language and vocabulary acquisition.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

This is underpinned and shaped by the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- 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.
- Children learn and develop at different rates and recognises the importance of **learning and development** for all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). See whole school *SEND Policy* for further details.

# Implementation

## A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Practitioners;

- understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps
- support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- identify any need for additional support
- keep children safe
- value and respect all children and families equally

## Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against any child. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. We value every child and family in our school. We believe that all children matter.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls; children with special educational needs; children who are more able; children with disabilities; children from all social and cultural backgrounds; children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence:
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs:
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively:
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued:
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping:
- planning opportunities for children to develop language and communication skills including language and vocabulary acquisition:
- planning challenging activities for children if necessary whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and

communication skills:

- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop this important life skill and promote self-regulation.

Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. See *Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy*

## **Welfare**

*"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."*

**Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024**

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health (including oral hygiene), preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that all adults who look after the children or have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution that they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children we do this through:

- inviting parents into our Nursery or Reception class to look around and ask questions before enrolling their child in the school;
- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in the school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Come and Join in' afternoons and Transfer morning (subject to current government guidance);
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school (subject to current government guidance);
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes.
- encouraging all parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a meeting for parents each term during which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the EYFS;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Stay and Play sessions, Class assemblies, Sports Day etc.;
- sharing our approach to the teaching of phonics and reading;
- sharing our curriculum aims each term and providing some suggestions for parents to engage with at home;
- inviting parents to our 'Stay and Play' sessions.

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

We encourage parents to talk to the child's key person or class teacher, if there are any concerns.

## **Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classroom is curated and organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely.

A visual timetable shows children and parents a typical day's experience.

There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest.

The classroom is set up in learning areas, where the children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The setting uses Common Play Behaviours to plan out continuous provision, this carefully maps out provision across Nursery and reception for the year, ensuring that the environment adapts to provide adequate support and challenge in line with our progressive curriculum.

The Nursery and Reception each have their own outdoor learning environment which acts as an extension to the classroom into the natural world. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

These outdoor learning environments are extensions of the indoor classrooms and we plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

We also draw on the expertise of our outdoor learning/forest school teacher Mrs. Gillin - who provides challenges and activities for the children in the edible playground

### **Observations, Assessment and Planning**

Planning in our EYFS follows the school's designed EYFS curriculum.

Individual needs and children's interests are identified and planned for with a balance of planned adult led and a range of child-initiated activities.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Teachers assess in the moment and provide next steps as appropriate.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's. We give parents the opportunity to discuss these judgments with the EYFS teacher.

## **Learning and Development**

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

## **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS. These features are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children to achieve in all areas of the EYFS Framework and prepare children for KS1;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for the children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support of learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of the children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

## Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at the highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children - fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practise and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practise and build up ideas learning 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.

High-quality play is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning which all practitioners promote, support and develop.

We ensure that children's play is progressive through developing Common Play Behaviours over time.

## The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

This is process over outcome. Children do not move through the characteristics in a linear fashion, a well rounded learner will embody each characteristic within different play based experiences.

The characteristics of effective learning are:

### Playing and exploring

- how children engage with their learning:
  - finding out and exploring:
  - using what they know in their play:
  - being willing to have a go:

### Active Learning

- how children are motivated to learn:
  - being involved and concentrating:
  - keeping trying:
  - enjoying and achieving what they set out to do:

### Creating and thinking critically:

- how children are thinking:
  - having their own ideas:
  - using what they already know to learn new things:

- choosing ways to do things and finding new ways:

We provide a copy of these characteristics to parents and inform them of where to find more information on the EYFS.

## **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

*The prime areas are:*

- communication and language:
- physical development:
- personal, social and emotional development:

*The specific areas are:*

- literacy:
- mathematics:
- understanding the world:
- expressive arts and design:

The prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As they grow, these skills will support the child as they extend their development in the specific areas. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities and are developed through play in an environment designed carefully to promote progress and development over time.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We promote these values through our school mission statement, aims and values, our curriculum and enrichment activities.

Educational Programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning. (See Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021 for Educational Programme descriptors)

## **Additional Policies**

Further information pertaining to the EYFS at St Teresa of Lisieux Catholic Primary school can be found in whole school policies including;

- Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Data Protection Policy

All relevant policies are available on the school website or are available by request from the school office.

## Appendix i

# **EYFS Assessment Policy**

### **Intent**

Assessing children in the Nursery and Reception classes at St Teresa of Lisieux comes through 3 processes;

1. **Day to day formative assessment** – this is based on our interactions with the children in our care. Through engaging with children in their play, practitioners are able to assess and model next steps relative to each child.
2. **In setting summative assessment** – this is based on using formative assessment to complete a Gap and Strength Analysis (GSA) of Pupil Progress at set points throughout the year and identify areas for development. This considers children's progress against acquisition of skills and knowledge over time (see Curriculum Planning Docs).
3. **National summative assessment** – this is based on completing the EYFSP using the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception year.

### **Implementation**

#### **1. Day to Day Formative Assessment**

Quality interactions between practitioners and children are a vital part of education in the Early Years. It is through these interactions that practitioners are able to support and facilitate children's play, model good language and introduce next steps. By spending time with the children in child-initiated play, practitioners are able to really get to know their children and support them on an individual basis constantly assessing their progress and identifying areas for development to inform future planning.

As well as supporting and facilitating play, practitioners may capture "wow" moments.

It is important to note that this capturing of observations is secondary to spending time with the child – the quantity of observations should not place unnecessary pressure on workload or remove the adult from supporting and facilitating play.

Formative assessment through quality interactions is vital to ongoing progress, it is a daily occurrence and part of practitioner's general practice whilst facilitating child-initiated play.

## **2. In-Setting Summative Assessment**

Throughout the year practitioners reflect upon the progress that the children have made. Using their formative assessment as a guide and by knowing the children's strengths and weaknesses, practitioners use their teacher judgement to assess whether a child is accessing the curriculum at an age appropriate level. The EYFS curriculum at St Teresa of Lisieux is broad and balanced but also progressive and ambitious – meaning that children who are able to access the curriculum at an age appropriate level are making progress as the curriculum itself is progressive.

During each term practitioners reflect on the curriculum delivery and planning using formative assessment information to review pupils progress across the seven areas of learning using the school's EYFS Overall Progress Tracker – this highlights for each child whether or not they are accessing the curriculum to an age appropriate level in each of the seven areas of; Communication & Language; Personal, Social & Emotional Development; Physical Development; Literacy; Maths; Understand the World; and Expressive Arts & Design. We call these Curriculum Review Points.

Practitioners then transfer this information to the school's EYFS Curriculum Review sheets and produce a Gap and Strength Analysis (GSA). Practitioners reflect upon what the curriculum looks like, referring to the school's EYFS Progression of Skills documents and identify children who are unable to access this to an age appropriate level and begin a conversation about how they can help and support these children by adapting the curriculum and the opportunities provided in order to narrow the gap.

It is important to note that this does not and must not mean narrowing the curriculum - this must remain broad, balanced, ambitious and progressive.

Practitioners then hold Curriculum Review meetings with SLT and discuss the progress of the children and how they are planning to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the children.

Before practitioners look to take children "out" of their child-initiated play or the learning environment (for specific interventions) they first look at what they can put "in" to their child-initiated play and the learning environment.

A Learning Environment based on assessment –

*"Our entire space should be based on assessment. I am not talking about what we have put on the shelves in the areas that we create. I am talking*

*about the areas themselves. How your space looks should bear a direct correlation to the strengths and areas for development that you have identified through summative assessment”*

**Alistair Bryce-Clegg, Continuous Provision - The Skills.**

By reflecting upon the progression of skills documents and through a good working knowledge of the children's developmental progress, practitioners adapt their environment to meet the needs of the children. Practitioners ensure that this is reflective and responsive to their formative assessment as well as the GSA. Practitioner's shape their environment to support and nurture the children providing resources to promote and support the progress of specific skills. Practitioners then plan Skill Focuses for the coming term.

Practitioners then consider what they themselves can contribute to the learning environment – seeing themselves as the key resource to develop and extend play; thus, ensuring progress through the curriculum. Practitioners use information from the GSA to plan Adult Focuses for the coming term.

It is important to note that this does not mean Adult Led Activity, rather an idea and focus that practitioners will carry with them and entwine into children's learning through their interactions with them in play.

Finally, practitioners consider if targeted intervention is required to meet any specific areas for development, bearing in mind the importance of keeping both children and adults engaged in play in the learning environment as much as possible. Any time away from child-initiated play is depriving children of the opportunity to discover awe and wonder through their own exploration.

Practitioners constantly reflect upon these actions through their ongoing formative assessment, making adaptations where necessary before reviewing again at the next In Setting Summative Assessment point.

### **3. National Summative Assessment**

St Teresa of Lisieux complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for all children in the Reception Year.

This takes place during the summer term - where practitioners use their knowledge of the children and evidence gathered across their time in the EYFS to assess children against the 17 Early Learning Goals;

Listening, Attention & Understanding; Speaking; Self-Regulation; Managing Self; Building Relationships; Gross Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills; Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing; Number; Numerical Patterns; Past and Present; People Culture

and Communities; The Natural World; Creating with Materials; and Being Imaginative and Expressive.

This process is in line with government guidelines.

## Appendix ii

# Tapestry Use Policy

### Intent

The EYFS Statutory Framework 2024 sets out clearly the expectations of formative assessment in the EYFS.

*2.2 Assessment should not involve long breaks from interaction with children or require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Practitioners are not required to prove this through collection of any physical evidence.*

*2.5 Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners understanding children's interests and what they know and can do, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should make and act on their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share. However, there is no requirement to keep written records in relation to this.*

As such, the school has no expectations for teachers to keep individual Learning Journeys for each child. This does not mean that practitioners do not assess children's progress and identify next steps. Following the EYFS reforms - practitioners assess more but record less. There is no expectation for staff to keep tick lists using Development Matters or similar documents to evidence learning.

This is supported within Development Matters 2023

*This guidance sets out the pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages. The actual learning of young children is not so neat and orderly. For that reason, accurate and proportionate assessment is vital. It helps you to make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next. It is not designed to be used as a tick list for generating lots of data.*

- Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.
- Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.
- Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.
- Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.
- Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

See EYFS Policy - Appendix 1 – Assessment for further guidance.

## **Implementation**

The school uses Tapestry Journal as an online floor book to track and evidence curriculum coverage.

- Staff plan learning in line with the school's EYFS Curriculum.
- Staff must document this learning through weekly observations by taking photographs/ videos directly on the Tapestry App or which are uploaded to Tapestry.
- Staff should outline an overview of what learning is taking place, including key vocab which has been reinforced.
- Staff do not link statements from Development Matters to this evidence.
- Staff 'Flag' the observations with the EYFS Areas of Learning and also make links to subjects from the KS1/2 Curriculum.

Individual Foundation subjects such as Geography, History, Science, Art etc. are not taught in isolation as individual subjects within EYFS, these form part of a broad and balanced EYFS Curriculum under Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

EYFS staff 'Flag' these subjects purely to support curriculum leads to quickly find evidence for their subject.

**Title** – linked to the area of the curriculum that the evidence supports  
e.g.

# Signs of Winter

**Photographs** – evidencing the learning that has taken place



**Notes** – outlining the learning that has taken place and linking to the curriculum. Key Vocabulary should also be included.

e.g.

This week, children have been exploring weather patterns associated with winter – we discussed how the temperature is colder in winter, sometimes we see frost or snow, but not always.

We looked at books and videos and talked about the different weather, how we dress to keep warm, how the world around us changes and how animals behave. Some animals hibernate, others migrate, some grow additional fur etc.

We also addressed some misconceptions about arctic animals. We will learn more about this next week.

Children enjoyed exploring the Edible Playground for signs of winter. They noticed frost on the different surfaces and how puddles had frozen. There were no leaves on the trees and no flowers.

**Key vocabulary** - winter, temperature, hot, warm, cold, weather, snow, ice, fog, frost, mist, icicle, freeze, frozen, melt, hibernate

**Flags** – linked to the EYFS Areas of Learning and relevant KS1/2 Foundation Subjects

Communication and language

Understanding the world

Geography

Science