EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School

"With Christ at our centre, we love, listen and learn."

Prepared by	C Ni Loingsigh and Elaine Wright
Approved by	Governing Body
Date	September 2026
Review date	September 2027
Linked policies	Safeguarding; SEND; Intimate Care; Admissions; Medical Conditions

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:14)

1. Introduction

At Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School, we recognise that the Early Years lays the foundations for future learning, wellbeing and success. Our ambitious EYFS curriculum is carefully designed in line with the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and supports every child to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become confident, independent and resilient learners. Our provision is rooted in our Catholic mission, ‘With Christ at our centre, we love, listen and learn’, and in Christ’s welcome to children: ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ (Matthew 19:14)

This policy applies to children in Nursery and Reception and should be read alongside the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, Admissions arrangements, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Intimate Care Policy.

2. Aims

- To provide a safe, happy, nurturing and faith-filled environment in which every child feels that they belong.
- To provide an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum based on the statutory EYFS framework and the needs, interests and starting points of our children.
- To develop strong foundations in communication and language, early reading, writing and mathematics.
- To provide purposeful play, direct teaching, exploration, investigation and problem-solving indoors and outdoors.
- To promote independence, self-regulation, positive relationships, resilience and curiosity.
- To work in close partnership with parents and carers, recognising them as children’s first and most enduring educators.
- To identify additional needs early and provide timely support and reasonable adjustments so that all children can succeed and thrive.
- To ensure children are well prepared for the next stage of their education, including transition into Year 1.
- To ensure children leave Reception as confident, capable and enthusiastic learners who are ready to achieve their God-given potential.

3. Admissions and Transition

Admissions to Nursery and Reception are managed in accordance with the school’s published admissions arrangements. Current information, application procedures, admissions criteria and relevant dates are available on the school’s Admissions page.

We currently have one Nursery class, offering both full-time and part-time places. Full-time places are available for children whose families are eligible for 30 hours of government-funded Nursery provision**,** while part-time places are available through the universal 15-hour entitlement**.** Part-time children currently attend Nursery for three full days each week, from Tuesday to Thursday**.** The Nursery operates within an open-plan environment with two ‘base’ carpet areas, enabling staff to provide whole-class experiences alongside smaller-group teaching and learning.

We have two Reception classes, which also operate within an open-plan unit with two 'base' carpet areas for whole-class and group teaching. Children are organised across the two Reception classes to create balanced cohorts, taking account of factors such as age and gender.

Attendance at our Nursery **does not provide an automatic right to a Reception place**. All parents and carers, including those whose children attend OLSJ Nursery, must make a separate application for Reception through the appropriate admissions process.

We recognise that starting Nursery or Reception is an important transition for children and their families. Staff work closely with parents and carers, previous settings and other professionals, where appropriate, to ensure that relevant information is shared and that each child is supported to settle confidently into school. Transition arrangements may include opportunities to visit the setting, transition activities and an appropriate settling-in period responsive to individual children's needs. Children who are already familiar with the setting and are ready for full-day attendance will not have their attendance unnecessarily reduced as part of the transition process.

Up-to-date information about admissions is published on the school's Admissions page, while further information about our provision, organisation and curriculum can be found on the Early Years page.

4. The EYFS Framework

The school implements the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The EYFS is underpinned by four guiding principles: every child is a unique child; children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships; children learn and develop well in enabling environments; and children develop and learn at different rates.

Our curriculum is organised through the seven areas of learning and development.

Prime areas

- Communication and Language: Listening, Attention and Understanding; Speaking.
- Physical Development: Gross Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self-Regulation; Managing Self; Building Relationships.

Specific areas

- Literacy: Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing.
- Mathematics: Number; Numerical Patterns.
- Understanding the World: Past and Present; People, Culture and Communities; The Natural World.
- Expressive Arts and Design: Creating with Materials; Being Imaginative and Expressive.

The areas are interconnected. Staff plan learning that builds knowledge and vocabulary over time, while recognising that young children learn through a combination of purposeful play, adult modelling, guided learning, direct teaching and meaningful first-hand experiences.

5. Curriculum and Pedagogy

Through a balance of adult-led teaching, purposeful play and high-quality interactions, children develop across all seven areas of learning. We place a particular emphasis on the prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Physical Development, as these provide the foundations upon which all future learning is built. Our curriculum promotes curiosity, creativity and exploration and is ambitious for all children, including disadvantaged pupils and children with SEND.

- Staff identify what children already know and can do and plan clear next steps.
- Communication, language and vocabulary development are prioritised across the curriculum.

- Adults model language, thinking, routines and learning behaviours and use high-quality interactions to extend children's understanding.
- Children have regular opportunities for sustained shared thinking, talk, story, rhyme, song, practical exploration and problem solving.
- Continuous provision is purposeful and supports children to revisit, practise and apply learning independently.
- Our outdoor provision is creatively and thoughtfully designed to extend learning across all areas of the curriculum. It provides rich opportunities for exploration, investigation, collaboration and physical development and is viewed as an extension of the classroom, where children can apply their learning, take appropriate risks, develop resilience and deepen their understanding through purposeful play.
- Learning is revisited and strengthened so that children build secure knowledge and are ready for the next stage.

6. Early Reading, Phonics and Literacy

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Children are immersed in high-quality texts, stories, rhymes and language-rich experiences from the moment they begin with us. Early reading and phonics are taught systematically through a structured systematic programme, ensuring children develop the knowledge and confidence needed to become fluent readers. We believe that reading is the key to unlocking the curriculum and opening the door to lifelong learning. Nursery provision develops listening, attention, oral language, sound discrimination, mark-making and early literacy, while Reception builds systematically on these foundations.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to support reading at home. Books and reading experiences are selected to build enjoyment, comprehension, vocabulary and increasing fluency. Writing develops from meaningful mark-making and oral composition into increasingly accurate letter formation, phonically plausible spelling and sentence writing as children are ready.

7. Mathematics

Mathematical understanding is developed through practical experiences and meaningful opportunities to count, compare, reason and problem solve throughout the day. We follow a mastery approach to mathematics, ensuring that children develop a deep and secure understanding of mathematical concepts rather than simply learning procedures. A strong emphasis is placed on number sense, including subitising, composition of number and flexibility with number through carefully planned teaching and purposeful play.

Through rich mathematical experiences, children learn to recognise patterns, make connections and explain their thinking, providing secure foundations for future success in mathematics. Children also develop understanding of shape, space, measure, comparison and positional language through concrete resources, representations, stories, songs, routines and carefully chosen problems.

8. Religious Education, Catholic Life and Mission

As a Catholic school, our faith and values are woven throughout every aspect of Early Years. We nurture children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development and encourage them to develop positive relationships, show kindness, respect others and understand their place within God's world. Religious Education is taught in accordance with the school's Catholic curriculum and the Religious Education Directory, To Know You More Clearly.

Children are encouraged to live out Gospel Values and Catholic Social Teaching through kindness, dignity, compassion, stewardship, service, fairness and care for others. They take part in the wider Catholic life of

the school in developmentally appropriate ways, including celebrations, assemblies, liturgies, Masses and seasonal events.

9. Other Faiths, Cultures and British Values

We are proud to be a Catholic school community made up of families from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds. Children learn to value the dignity of every person, recognise similarities and differences, and show respect and tolerance. Learning about other faiths and cultures is planned sensitively and supports children's understanding of the diverse community in which they live.

The EYFS also supports the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance through everyday routines, choices, turn-taking, listening to others, class expectations and learning about the wider community.

10. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Staff establish warm, consistent relationships and clear routines so that children feel secure and ready to learn. Children are taught to recognise and communicate feelings, build positive relationships, cooperate, share, take turns, manage conflict appropriately and develop increasing independence.

Self-regulation is explicitly supported through modelling, co-regulation, predictable routines and age-appropriate strategies. The school's wider approaches to wellbeing and emotional regulation are adapted appropriately for EYFS children.

11. Physical Development, Health and Safety

Children have frequent opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills through indoor and outdoor provision, physical activity, PE, movement, construction, manipulation and use of tools. Staff teach children how to use equipment safely and develop increasing control, coordination and independence.

Children learn about healthy routines, personal hygiene, handwashing, dressing and managing their own needs. Risk is managed appropriately so that children can develop confidence and independence while remaining safe.

12. Intimate Care and Toileting

The school's Intimate Care Policy applies fully within the EYFS. Intimate care is treated as a safeguarding activity and is always provided sensitively, respectfully and in a way that protects the child's dignity, privacy and wellbeing.

We expect children to be toilet trained before entering Reception wherever possible. Parents and carers are responsible for supporting toilet training before their child starts school; however, occasional accidents are recognised as a normal part of child development and transition. School staff are not expected to provide routine toilet training.

Parents and carers of children in Nursery and Reception are asked to provide at least one complete, clearly labelled change of clothing, including underwear and socks, in a named bag. Suitable wipes should also be provided where required. If spare clothing is used, parents and carers should replace it promptly.

Some children may require ongoing intimate care because of SEND, a medical condition, developmental delay or continence needs. The school will make reasonable adjustments so that children can access education safely and with dignity. Where appropriate, parents will meet with the SENDCo and relevant staff; an Individual Intimate Care Plan and risk assessment may be put in place; healthcare professionals may be involved; and staff will receive appropriate training.

During an accident, staff will reassure the child, protect privacy, encourage the child to do as much as possible independently, use appropriate PPE, assist only where necessary, bag soiled clothing securely and support thorough handwashing. Safeguarding concerns or unusual incidents will be reported and recorded in line with school procedures.

13. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in the Early Years and is used to ensure that every child makes the best possible progress from their individual starting points. Children's learning and development are assessed continually through staff observations, high-quality interactions, discussion and children's responses during independent play, adult-led learning and focused activities. The majority of assessment takes place naturally as part of everyday practice and is not experienced by children as a test.

Staff use their knowledge of each child to identify individual strengths, areas for development and appropriate next steps. Assessment informs future teaching, curriculum provision and learning experiences and is proportionate, ensuring that unnecessary paperwork does not take adults away from high-quality interactions with children.

In Nursery and Reception, teachers establish children's starting points through on-entry assessments during the autumn term**.** Reception children also complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the required period. Children's attainment and progress are reviewed regularly and termly assessment information is recorded and monitored through Sonar.

Children's learning is captured through their 'All About Me' learning journals and online Evidence Me profiles**,** alongside examples of their work and significant observations. Together, these provide a picture of each child's learning, development and achievements as they progress through the EYFS and work towards the Early Learning Goals. Evidence is purposeful and used to support professional knowledge of the child rather than creating unnecessary recording requirements.

Where assessment identifies that a child requires additional support, targeted interventions are carefully planned, implemented, monitored and reviewed. These focus particularly on strengthening the communication and language, literacy, mathematical, personal, social and emotional skills children need to access the curriculum successfully. Staff work closely with the SENDCo and other professionals, where appropriate, to identify barriers and ensure that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are in place.

Partnership with parents and carers is an important part of the assessment process. Staff regularly share information about children's learning and development, including through the parent-sharing function on Evidence Me. Parents and carers are also invited into school for Celebration Mornings and workshops, providing opportunities to participate in learning activities and share their child's learning journey. Formal Parent Consultations take place during the autumn and spring terms, when parents and carers meet with the class teacher or Key Person to discuss progress, achievements, areas for development and next steps.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS Profile against the Early Learning Goals**,** in accordance with statutory requirements. This information contributes to a clear picture of each child's attainment at the end of the EYFS and is shared with parents and carers. A written end-of-year report is provided during the summer term. Assessment information is also shared appropriately with Year 1 teachers to support continuity in learning, identify any ongoing areas for development or intervention, and ensure a successful transition into Key Stage 1.

14. Partnership with Parents and Carers

Partnership with parents is central to our EYFS provision. We work closely with families to ensure learning is celebrated and supported both at home and at school. Through regular communication, shared learning opportunities, workshops and home learning activities, we create strong foundations for every child to flourish. Parents and carers are recognised as children's first and most enduring educators.

- Parents and carers are encouraged to share relevant information about their child, including interests, development, medical needs and changes in circumstances.
- Formal parent consultations and written reports provide opportunities to discuss progress and next steps.
- Workshops and other school events support families with areas such as phonics, reading, early mathematics and wider development.
- Concerns are discussed sensitively and promptly, with appropriate support agreed in partnership.

15. Inclusion and SEND

Within the EYFS, OLSJ is committed to inclusive practice and the early identification of need. We recognise the importance of identifying potential barriers to learning and development at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support can be put in place quickly. Staff closely observe and assess children's development, using their knowledge of each child and ongoing assessment information to identify where a child may require additional support.

Where a concern or emerging need is identified, staff work closely with the SENDCo, families and external professionals, where appropriate, to understand the child's needs and agree appropriate provision. Children's progress is carefully monitored and reviewed, enabling staff to evaluate the impact of support and adapt provision in response to the child's progress and changing needs.

Where appropriate, targeted interventions are planned and implemented to address identified gaps and barriers to learning. These may focus on areas such as communication and language, early literacy and mathematics, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, attention and interaction. The impact of interventions is monitored regularly to ensure that they are effective and that children make progress from their individual starting points.

Provision within the EYFS is adapted so that children with SEND, medical needs, disabilities, developmental differences, English as an additional language or other vulnerabilities are able to participate fully in the curriculum and wider life of the school. Staff maintain high expectations for all children and focus on what each child needs to belong, succeed and thrive.

Reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. These may include appropriate scaffolding, communication support, sensory adaptations, adapted resources and environments, changes to routines or additional targeted support and intervention. Through a continuous cycle of early identification, assessment, planning, intervention, monitoring and review, we aim to ensure that needs are addressed promptly and that every child has the best possible opportunity to make strong progress and achieve their God-given potential.

16. Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. EYFS staff follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and statutory safeguarding requirements. Staff are alert to changes in children's presentation, behaviour, attendance, communication or physical wellbeing and report concerns immediately through the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school maintains appropriate supervision, safer recruitment, first aid, medication, accident, risk assessment, food hygiene and site-security procedures. Children are taught age-appropriate ways to keep themselves safe, including safe use of technology.

17. Transition to Year 1

We recognise that a successful transition into Year 1 is crucial in maintaining children's confidence, wellbeing and academic progress. Transition is carefully planned throughout the Reception year and becomes a particular focus during the summer term. Children are gradually introduced to increased independence, more structured learning opportunities and Year 1 routines so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to share information, moderate outcomes, align curriculum expectations and support every child academically, socially and emotionally. Through this carefully planned approach, combined with targeted intervention and support where needed, children move into Year 1 with confidence, enthusiasm and secure foundations for future success. By the end of Reception, our aim is that children leave the Early Years as confident, capable and enthusiastic learners, ready to achieve their God-given potential.

18. Leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation

The EYFS Phase Leader, working with senior leaders, is responsible for the quality and consistency of EYFS provision. Monitoring may include learning walks, review of provision and planning, assessment information, pupil and parent voice, professional dialogue, moderation and evaluation of outcomes.

Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate professional development and that improvement priorities are reflected in EYFS practice. Governors provide strategic oversight and hold leaders to account for the quality, safety and effectiveness of provision.

19. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are changes to statutory guidance, school organisation, admissions arrangements or related school policies. The most current admissions and EYFS information for families is published on the school website.

Related School Policies, Guidance and Useful Information

The following school policies, statutory guidance and supporting resources should be read alongside this policy.

School Information and Policies

- Admissions
- Early Years
- Intimate Care Policy and School Policies

Statutory Guidance and EYFS Resources

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework – Department for Education
- Development Matters – Department for Education
- Birth to 5 Matters
- Hungry Little Minds – Learning, Conversations and Telling Stories (3–5 years)
- Tower Hamlets EYFS Local Offer