



**OLSJ**  
OUR LADY + ST JOSEPH  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## **EARLY YEARS POLICY 2020**

**Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

At Our Lady & St Joseph's we believe that Early Years education should be one that is appropriate to the emotional, social, physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of all the children in Nursery and Reception. It represents the first step in a continuous and progressive programme of education that is offered to the children in our care.

## **AIMS**

- We aim to provide a warm, secure, happy Catholic atmosphere to foster the development of each child.
- To support children during the admission period, enabling them to make an effective transition from home or pre-school to school and to work with parents and carers to support children's learning.
- To provide a broad and balanced early years curriculum with a stimulating environment where children can explore and learn by direct experiences, investigations and problem-solving opportunities both inside and in the outside environment.
- To foster independence by providing access to materials that are clearly labelled and available for children to use.

## **STAFFING**

At Our Lady & St Joseph's we have two Nursery classes and two Reception classes.

Each Nursery class is staffed with one teacher. The children are also supported by two nursery nurses, one teaching assistant, and one part-time teaching assistant.

Each Reception class is staffed with one teacher. The children are also supported by one nursery nurse, one teaching assistant, and two part-time teaching assistants.

## **THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

We have two classes for children in the Nursery. The class groups are an even mixture of age and gender. The Nursery classrooms are in one open plan unit with two 'base' carpets for whole class teaching.

All Nursery parents have to re-apply for a place for their child in Reception. In the two parallel Reception classes the children are also divided equally by age and gender.

We have two classes for children in Reception, the Reception classrooms are in one open plan unit with two 'base' carpets for whole class teaching.

## **RESOURCES**

The Nursery & Reception classes have a large stock of equipment for the open plan classrooms. The classrooms are organised with a reading area, home-corner, understanding of the world area, water and sand play, creative area, construction area, mark making/writing area, music area, malleable area, and a maths area.

Nursery & Reception children share the Outdoor area. The outside equipment is used to develop independence, and skills across the areas of learning. The outdoor area and is set out in defined areas of learning. Nursery & Reception half termly topics are reflected inside

the classroom and in the outdoor area.

## **THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

Since September 2008, it has been a legal requirement for all Early Years Providers to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS). The documents set the standards for the learning, development and care for children from birth to five. A new revised, simpler framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was implemented in 2012.

### **The EYFS seeks to provide:**

Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;

- a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- a partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The aim of the EYFS is to:

- set Standards for learning development and care that a child should experience when they are outside the family home
- provide Equal Opportunities so that no child is disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability
- create Partnership between professionals, parents and all settings attended by each child
- improve quality and consistency by providing a set of standards which apply to all settings which will be used as a basis for inspection
- lay a secure foundation for future learning through learning and development which is planned around individual needs and interests of children.

## **EARLY LEARNING GOALS**

The Early Learning Goals emphasise early literacy, numeracy and the development of personal and social skills as they contribute to the children's knowledge, understanding and skills in other areas.

### **Prime Areas:**

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Making relationships, Self-confidence and self-awareness and Managing feelings and behaviour.
2. Physical Development: Moving and handling and Health and self-care.

3. Communication and Language: Listening and attention, Understanding and Speaking

**Specific Areas:**

4. Literacy: Reading and Writing
5. Mathematics: Numbers and Shape, space and measure
6. Understanding the World: People and communities, the world and Technology
7. Expressive Arts and Design: Exploring and using media and materials and Being imaginative.

These headings are the basis for our curriculum planning, topics and our weekly planning.

**ASSESSMENT, RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTS**

The children's learning and development is continually assessed through an ongoing process of staff observations and records of the children's independent and teacher led play & focused activities.

These observations alongside the children's work is kept in the children's 'All About Me' books and their online 2simple profiles, which work together to create the child's learning journal .These give a complete picture of the child's achievements in the Learning and development bands, working towards the Early Learning Goals.

The majority of the children's assessments are in the form of observations and are used to plan the children's next steps and to inform future learning experiences. Ongoing assessment is part of everyday practice and is not seen by the child as a test.

Nursery & Reception teachers make assessments of the children's on entry skills as they begin Nursery and Reception through autumn baseline assessments. Termly assessments and progress are recorded and monitored through the Pupil Asset assessment program.

It is the policy of the school that all parents are invited to see the class teacher/or child's Key Person once a term during the autumn and spring terms for a 'Parent Consultation' to discuss the progress of their child and the next steps in their learning. In the summer term an end of year report is issued to the parents. Parents are very welcome to discuss reports with the class teacher if they wish to do so.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING UNDER 5's PROVISIONS**

The responsibility for monitoring and evaluating under 5's provisions rest with the Early Years Foundation Stage Standards Leader.

In the Nursery the staff have indoor and outdoor focuses each week. The children's ability is also assessed in general as they say or do something that shows their stage of development. The Key Person keeps an All About Me book and 2simple record with annotated photographs and children's work.

The child's 'All About Me' book and 2simple profile goes with them to their Reception class and it is continued throughout the year. In Reception all children are expected to complete certain adult directed activities to the best of their ability, but their work is also child initiated within a structure which is child initiated. The teacher and nursery nurses/teaching assistant work with small groups of children and 1:1 with children to assesses their attainment, progress, and next steps in learning and also observe activities that the children choose to do during their choosing time. Through a process of weekly observations staff can note children who need extra help or encouragement to try new areas of the classroom and curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

As a Roman Catholic School, Our Lady & St Joseph has a specific policy and guidelines for the teaching of Religious Education.

The framework for the lessons is set out in the Diocese of Westminster's Religious Education Programme. The children pray with their class at the beginning and end of the morning and afternoon.

The Reception children attend weekly whole school assemblies after the October half-term. They also have weekly R.E focus lessons and activities in class where they can build a better religious understanding and learn about their community in a more intimate way.

The Nursery and Reception children perform a nativity play at the end of the autumn term. Each reception class performs one class assembly on the church calendar theme before the end of the school year. All children become familiar with prayers and hymns and they learn to join in reflectively during prayer time and at Mass.

Children learn about Saints' Days and Feast Days. They begin to understand the importance of playing an active part in their Catholic community throughout the school year.

## **OTHER FAITHS/MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

Festivals, beliefs and customs relevant to other faiths and nationalities are taught and experienced by the children throughout the year. Resources in school such as books, posters and artefacts related to these events are introduced as appropriate with role play and art activities to support their understanding.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Children are encouraged to learn how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family.

They are given opportunities to explore new learning and are encouraged to use their own ideas and solve simple problems. The classroom is structured to increase independence in selecting activities or resources. Although they are given support an emphasis is put on being able to dress themselves and being aware of personal hygiene.

Children are expected to be sensitive to others needs and feelings. They are taught to respect both people and property. Opportunities are given for them to develop sharing and turn taking.

Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and develop an understanding of what

is right or wrong and why.

They begin to build an awareness of the wonders of our environment through the seasons and other senses. This awareness is linked with our responsibility to look after the environment and the living things in it.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

We aim to develop the children's physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments.

In Nursery the children take part in a weekly PE session. In Reception the children have 1 indoor and 1 outdoor PE lesson each week.

The children use a range of small and large equipment, which is slowly introduced once the children have achieved reasonable control. The safe handling of all equipment is extremely important and is, therefore, taught carefully at this stage.

Children are taught how to hold and care for and use a range of tools such as scissors, pencils, paint brushes and split pins. They use constructional and malleable materials either to achieve a given task or to develop their own ideas of space and shape.

Children become familiar with the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active and begin to develop an understanding of what it means to be healthy.

### **COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

The children are encouraged to develop confidence and competence in speaking and listening and in becoming readers and writers.

The children have opportunities to listen and talk in both large and small groups about their knowledge and experience. They are offered a rich diet of stories, songs, rhymes and poems and make up class and group stories. Role play is an important part of language development and the scene is changed from home corner to a clinic; flower shop; garden centre; hospital; church; building site; school; Santa's Grotto; pet shop; vets and café etc. In the Nursery the children borrow a weekly core story and class library book to take home and they are encouraged to explore the activities in their reading explorer book. We particularly want them to develop a love for stories and to understand that print carries meaning.

A main emphasis is put on the children learning, using and applying their phonics knowledge. We teach reading through sight words and blending skills and staff work closely with parents to support reading at home. At the same time the children are learning initial sounds each week and beginning to use strategies like picture clues or letter sounds to help them identify words. We use the Letters and Sounds scheme to teach phonics. We use a variety of game-based strategies to help children learn to read the 45 Reception High Frequency words by sight. In Reception the children take home a core story, phonics book, and a comprehension book each week to develop their reading skills at home.

In the Nursery children are encouraged to recognise and write their name and to make marks to represent writing i.e. a shopping list. They make class and group books, and retell stories using pictures. The main emphasis is on language development throughout the Nursery year. The children also have many opportunities to learn and differentiate between sounds and concentrate their activities on Phase 1 "Letters and Sounds".

In Reception children are encouraged to do emergent writing, which develops by using phonics and their sight vocabulary. The children have access to sound cards, letter sound mats, writing prompts, and word mats to support them in their writing.

The Reception teachers have a Literacy focus every day and work towards teaching a literacy session by the end of the Summer Term although this may be in strips.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The aim of the teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage settings is to provide a firm foundation for Mathematics. The classroom is structured so opportunities for counting, matching and sorting work are part of the daily routine. The focus is on achievement through practical activities and on using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical concepts.

Children learn the language of shape, position, measurement and capacity. They recognise and create patterns. They learn rhymes, songs and games. They compare, sort, match, order sequence and count using everyday objects. Our aim is that they will enjoy experimenting with numbers, focusing on numerals 0-20.

They will begin to solve problems and relate addition to combining two groups of objects, and subtraction to 'taking away'.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD**

We provide a foundation for children's learning in history, geography, science and technology and ICT so they can better understand the environment, other people and both natural and manmade things.

We encourage the children to talk about their own lives, the environment in which we live and past and present events in the natural and manmade world.

We use visual aids and local walks to give opportunities for observing similarities, differences, pattern and change. We consider the purposes of the things in the area where we live.

Children have opportunities to observe materials in different ways and are encouraged to make observations and sometimes record the results of their work. They also explore and select materials and tools to use skills such as cutting, joining, folding and building.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the class IWB is always available and children learn to interact with learning programs to support the class topics. Programs are selected to support the children's learning. They will learn how to change programs, save and print their work.

## **EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN**

We aim to give the children opportunities to develop their imagination, their ability to communicate, express ideas and feelings in a creative way using a widening range of materials and suitable tools.

The children are given opportunities to explore sound, colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions. They listen to different types of music and some of this is used as a basis for imaginative dance and play. The nursery and reception classes have weekly music lessons with a Music teacher, who plans sessions based on the curriculum. The children listen to stories and join in with parts or act out the whole scenario. The role play area changes from one imaginative focus to another so that the children can act out a variety of different roles. The children learn to sing simple songs from memory, and they learn to recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns in new songs.

## **INCLUSION**

We are an inclusive school therefore we address the needs of all learners throughout the curriculum. This includes addressing the needs of SEN, G&T, PPG, Summer born and other vulnerable groups.

It is important for all children to experience a range of activities, irrespective of difference in race, gender, cultural background or physical disability.

We promote racial equality and encourage, support and enable all children to reach their potential regardless of race or culture.

Our commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in the aims of our school. Our planning and teaching actively reflects an awareness of age, gender, ethnicity and ability across the year groups.

We foster an ethos of mutual respect and self-esteem for everyone in our community. As a whole staff, we strive to provide positive role models for the children in our care.