




OUR LADY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

	Name	Date
Prepared by:	Alzira Blass	Spring 2026
Approved by:	Richard Curry 	Spring 2026
Version number	1	Date of next review: July 2027

We learn to love and love to learn with Jesus

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) states

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their full potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and five have a major impact on their future life chances. The term “Early Years” refers to children from birth until the end of the Reception Year.’ Our EYFS setting consists of one Nursery class, offering both full-time and part-time provision and one Reception class with 30 children on roll.

The Foundation Stage is crucial as it prepares children for their exciting and meaningful learning journey. The Early Learning Goals (ELG) highlights what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage. At Our Lady School, the Teachers and Early Years Practitioners have high expectations of children to help them succeed in their journey, this includes adapting lessons where necessary and encouraging children to have a positive mindset when facing new challenges.

Aim of the EYFS Policy:

We endeavour to ensure that children “learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.” In addition to this, we aim to support children in their learning through “teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and give children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2023)

In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

To fulfil this aim all children in EYFS should:

- Feel safe and secure;
- Be offered a wide range of new and exciting experiences;
- Be provided with the opportunity to consolidate, explore and investigate;
- Be challenged to reach the highest standards;
- Feel valued, respected and treated fairly;
- Feel enthusiastic and happy about coming to Our Lady;
- Children’s interests to be reflected in the activities set up;
- Develop a sense of confidence and responsibility for their own learning.

Our Lady provides an Early Years environment where:

- The whole school community is enriched by each child’s uniqueness;
- We develop good community links;
- Children are encouraged to have high aspirations;
- There are high expectations for each child to try their best;
- All are encouraged to make a positive contribution;
- All are encouraged to appreciate and enjoy our history and spacious grounds;
- Habits of good learning are established for life;
- Children’s learning is further enriched through educational visits related to the learning enquiry being taught;
- Children are learning in a stimulating and purposeful learning environment;
- The Early Years and the Foundation Stage will provide a happy, caring and secure environment, which will nurture children’s physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs;
- The Early Years and Foundation Stage will provide a broad and balanced curriculum led by the Early Learning Goals and through the development of our own Curriculum, tailored to meet the needs of the children attending Our Lady.

Fundamental British Values in the EYFS:

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are implicitly embedded in our EYFS curriculum. Below are some examples of what this means in practice within our setting:

- **Democracy** – children are encouraged to know that their views count and to value others thoughts and feelings. They take part in activities that involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration;
- **Rule of law**– children are taught to understand their own, others’ behaviour, and its consequences, and learn to distinguish between right and wrong;
- **Individual liberty** – staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and increase their confidence in their own abilities;
- **Mutual respect and tolerance** – children will acquire tolerance and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child** – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals;
- **Positive Relationships** – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent;
- **Enabling Environments** – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child;
- **Learning and Development** – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

A Unique Child:

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion:

All children and their families are valued at Our Lady Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments consider contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage.

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;
- Offering 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 challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children’s progress and acting to provide support as necessary;
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children’s needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Equal Opportunities:

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. Therefore, the Early Years Foundation Stage learning environment will ensure that children's experiences, backgrounds and needs are equally valued through the provision, displays and experiences offered. Children, their parents and staff will be encouraged to use their home languages both at home and in the educational setting. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare children for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Safeguarding and welfare:

It is important that all children in our 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 develop this important life skill. 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 our children.

At Our Lady, we know that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. Staff will bring any signs of a child being unwell to the attention of the parents for further investigation and any accidental injury will be recorded and parents informed.

Parents are given guidelines for the start and end of day times and for arrangements regarding settling in periods. It is imperative that these guidelines are given succinctly and parents are clear of the expectations. Children become unsettled if brought to school late and can become distressed if they are not picked up on time.

We understand that we are required to:

- Follow appropriate staff : child ratios;
- Ensure all Nursery Nurses hold a valid paediatric first aid certificate in order to be included in the staff : child ratio;
- Have a designated practitioner who takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding children and train all staff to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures;
- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children;
- Promote good health, 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 all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- Be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere;
- 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;
- Monitor image sharing devices where necessary; this includes: mobile phones, cameras, smart watches and any other device with imaging and sharing capabilities.

Health and Safety

At Our Lady School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. Teachers complete thorough risk assessments each term and children are given the opportunity to be 'safety monitors', developing their awareness of potential dangers within the learning environment. Regular checks are made to ensure that apparatus and materials are in good order and safe for the children to use. Additionally, all children in Reception are expected to wear school uniform. Jewellery and inappropriate footwear are not allowed for health and safety reasons.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2025, at Our Lady School we:

- Ensure that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor or we have written consent from a parent;
- Provide training for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer;
- A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child;
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy is in place for the whole school including EYFS.

We ensure that:

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times;
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required;
- Milk and fruit are available during the morning session (and afternoon session for afternoon nursery).

Positive Relationships:

At Our Lady School, 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 they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school during play sessions, induction meetings and 1:1 interviews;
- Holding a 'Welcome' meeting for new parents in the summer term where they receive information which helps them to prepare their children for school, highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the parents of the school's vision and aims, outlining the schools expectations in the Home-School agreement. Providing an opportunity to talk to the Reception team and representatives from other areas of school life;
- Asking parents to complete an admissions form, a medical form and gather any other relevant information about the child;
- Asking parents to sign permission slips for visits out of school and photographs of their child;
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns;
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;

- Giving children the opportunity to spend time in their new setting before starting school, during Nursery and Reception Induction meetings;
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings and workshops, throughout the year, providing information about the Early Years curriculum, e.g. Early Reading and Phonics;
- Organising a range of activities and events throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents / carers: open afternoons, class assemblies and performances, Sports Day, reading mornings etc;
- Setting formal meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress in the Spring term;
- Offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class and allowing free access to the children's books and classroom displays;
- Setting a written contact through reading diaries as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring the school to contact staff and the EYFS Leader;
- Keeping Parents / carers informed of the curriculum and ongoing activities through weekly and whole school newsletters that are posted on the school website.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the EYFS teachers act as the 'Key Person' to all children, supported by the other practitioners.

Key Person:

The Key Person meets the needs of each child in their care and responds sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour. In the Nursery, children are part of a Key Group with their own Key Person and in Reception teachers act as the Key Person to each child in their class, supported by the teaching assistants. The Nursery and Reception teachers meet with staff from local pre-school settings to discuss transition to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements.

Enabling Environments:

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

- Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences;
- Children are encouraged to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning;
- Teachers and Early Years practitioners work in focussed learning groups with the children to extend their learning;
- Every child works towards their own individual targets.

The EYFS Classroom:

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or take things more quietly. The classroom covers all learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Outdoor Learning:

The EYFS classes have their own large enclosed outdoor area. 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 ability to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Learning and Development:

The Curriculum:

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document which can be found on www.gov.uk.

Teachers and Early Years Practitioners provide the curriculum in the morning and afternoon Nursery and the Reception classes. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

Teachers and Early Years Practitioners aim to prepare children for their educational journey by developing children's confidence, concentration, ability to listen and follow instructions. Children will be exposed to a wide variety of activities and experiences that will generate a love of learning and an enjoyment of school, maximising children's learning at all times.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The Prime Areas.

The prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships, they support children's learning in all other areas. They are:

- Communication and Language – Listening and Understanding and Speaking. At Our Lady, we have a language rich curriculum, embedding spoken language, vocabulary development and listening into all aspects of children's work;
- Physical Development – Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills. Developing children's muscles so that they are able to move safely and with co-ordination and dexterity;
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development. – Self Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships. Developing children's social and emotional development through whole class and small group activities focussing on the importance of being kind to one another, appropriate behaviours, developing independence and how to make friends.

The Specific Areas.

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. They are:

- Literacy – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing. Children take part in regular story times where they can be taught to understand what they have heard, this helps children with their comprehension skills. Daily phonics is taught using the 'Little Wandle' scheme, this includes learning letter sounds, daily reading and writing;
- Mathematics – Numbers and Numerical Patterns. Children learn maths through active learning in both the indoor and outdoor areas. Activities are planned to meet the needs of the children in; understanding what numbers are, using the correct mathematical vocabulary and being able to talk about 'why' something happens through reasoning;
- Understanding of the World – Past and Present, The Natural World and People, Culture and Communities. Children learn about the world around them through daily discussions and exploring their environment. They are encouraged to talk about their observations as well as link it to their daily lives;
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive. Children learn how to use tools and equipment safely to make a variety of structures, they explore how colours change and how to make things with a purpose. Children take part in lots of role play, singing and dancing. They are encouraged to explore a range of media.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

At Our Lady School: "Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity." Play is used as an essential part in children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2023)

Baseline Assessments

On entry to Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a statutory assessment. It provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school.

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

At Our Lady, we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- **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; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Religious Education and PSHE is also taught in the Reception classes.

VISITS & TRIPS

As part of extending the children's learning, visits to local places of interest are included in the curriculum throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents sign a permission slip for these trips and will be informed when these trips are organised. When trips or visits require the use of transport and/or an entry fee there will be a request for a voluntary contribution to cover the costs. Children are well supervised during trips, which take place away from the school site.

Transition

During the Summer term, prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parent/teacher meetings - to get to know the children and gather initial information;
- Parents are invited to a 'Welcome' meeting to ensure they know about how to prepare their child for Reception, the school procedures and allocation of classes. They then have an opportunity to share any concerns they may want to express;
- Contact is made with the preschools and playgroups to find out information about the child and documentation is requested from previous settings;
- Children attend a 'stay and play' session in their new class and get to know their new teacher;
- Children have a staggered start to the academic year in September to help them become familiar with staff and the setting, allowing them to settle quickly and confidently.

From Nursery to Reception

Parents and Carers are introduced to the settling in procedure at the initial interview. There is a staggered entry for all children in the first weeks of school, to allow them time to get to know the staff, routines and the new surroundings. In Reception, the children are part time for part of the first week, unless there are any concerns about the transition period. This will be discussed on an individual basis where it is felt that a child needs more time to settle in.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report following a handover meeting where each child's development and needs are discussed. This dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers assists with the planning of activities in Year 1 to meet the children's learning needs. The children will have to opportunity to visit their Year 1 teacher and their new classroom at the end of the summer term.

