



ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
BACUP

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

School Policy

“Jesus is the Centre of our lives”

God wants me to be the best me I can be

Our Mission

Through His teaching we aim to value ourselves and each other as unique and precious individuals created by God; we encourage and develop love and respect for each other and for our world; we strive to promote and deepen our Catholic faith through prayer, work and play; we aim to foster a loving, caring environment in which each child can freely learn and develop to their full potential.

2026–2027

Policy information

Document control	Details
Policy title	Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
EYFS lead	TBC
Review date	Autumn term 2028
Audience	Staff, governors, families and other stakeholders

1. Purpose and statutory context

This policy sets out St Joseph's approach to education and care in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It applies to all staff and leaders working with children in the school's early years provision and should be read alongside the current statutory framework for the EYFS for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026, and the school's safeguarding and welfare policies.

The EYFS framework sets the standards that providers must meet to support children's learning and development, keep them healthy and safe, and ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed for school. Where this policy and statutory guidance differ, the current statutory requirement takes precedence.

2. Catholic life, mission and Gospel values

Our mission recognises every child as a unique and precious individual created by God. Christ is at the centre of relationships, routines, worship and learning. Love, friendship, respect, truth, hope and forgiveness shape a caring family environment in which children feel secure, develop confidence, learn to serve others and are encouraged to become the best they can be.

3. EYFS principles and curriculum intent

Our practice reflects four connected principles: every child is unique; children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships; children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults; and children develop and learn at different rates.

Our ambitious, inclusive curriculum gives children secure foundations for future learning while valuing the importance of early childhood. It is shaped by the statutory educational programmes, knowledge of child development, children's starting points, interests and experiences, the local community and St Joseph's Catholic mission. It builds communication, vocabulary, physical development, emotional security, early literacy and mathematics, curiosity, creativity and understanding of the world.

4. Areas of learning and characteristics of effective teaching and learning

The seven areas of learning and development are inter-connected. The three prime areas are communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; and physical development. The four specific areas are literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design.

Staff consider how children learn through the characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring; active learning; and creating and thinking critically. These characteristics inform adult interaction, provision and reflection, rather than being used as a checklist or limit on children's individual approaches.

5. Curriculum organisation and progression

St Joseph's mixed Nursery and Reception class follows a carefully planned two-year cycle of themes and experiences. Staff identify the important knowledge, language, experiences and routines to be developed and ensure that learning is sequenced from children's starting points.

Longer-term planning provides breadth and progression; responsive weekly and daily planning takes account of what adults notice children know, remember, can do and need next. Topics and interests provide meaningful contexts but do not replace deliberate curriculum progression. Current curriculum information is shared with families through the class webpage and school communications.

6. Pedagogy: play, teaching and interaction

- Children learn through a balanced combination of purposeful play, first-hand experience, adult modelling, direct teaching, guided practice, stories, songs, talk, exploration and sustained shared thinking.
- High-quality interactions extend language, thinking and self-regulation. Adults notice, listen, model vocabulary, comment, question sensitively and give children time to respond.
- Whole-class, small-group, paired and individual teaching are used according to the learning purpose and children's developmental needs.
- Adults teach routines and skills explicitly while preserving children's agency, imagination, curiosity and opportunities to make choices.
- Phonics, early reading, writing and mathematics are taught systematically and reinforced through meaningful provision and interaction.
- Outdoor learning is an integral part of the curriculum and offers daily opportunities for movement, investigation, managed risk, creativity and knowledge of the natural world.

7. Enabling environments and continuous provision

Indoor and outdoor environments are safe, welcoming, language-rich and organised to support increasing independence. Continuous provision gives children access to well-chosen, open-ended and subject-relevant resources that enable them to revisit, practise and apply learning. Enhancements are added when they serve a clear curriculum purpose.

Staff evaluate how spaces and resources are used through observation, professional dialogue and appropriate pupil voice, including learning conversations. Changes are made when they improve access, engagement, safety or curriculum depth, rather than for novelty alone.

8. Inclusion, SEND, equality and home language

Every child is entitled to a broad, ambitious and accessible EYFS curriculum. Staff identify emerging needs early, work with the SENCO and families, make reasonable adjustments and use a graduated approach where appropriate. Adaptations may include communication support, visual routines, sensory or physical adjustments, changes to resources and environment, additional modelling, targeted teaching and specialist advice.

Children are represented respectfully through books, images, resources, celebrations and experiences that reflect diverse families, cultures, languages, faiths, abilities and communities. Children whose home language is not English are valued as multilingual learners and are given opportunities to use their home language while receiving rich, systematic support to develop English. Assessment distinguishes language acquisition from additional need.

9. Personal development, behaviour and self-regulation

Warm, predictable relationships and clear routines help children feel secure and ready to learn. Adults explicitly teach emotional vocabulary, turn-taking, cooperation, independence and ways to resolve conflict. Behaviour is understood in the context of development, communication, relationships and need. Staff use calm, consistent and restorative responses aligned with the school behaviour policy and seek additional support where patterns indicate an unmet need.

10. Assessment, Reception Baseline and EYFS Profile

Assessment is based primarily on practitioners' professional knowledge of each child, gained through day-to-day teaching, interaction and observation. Its purpose is to identify what children know, remember and can do, detect where support is needed and decide what to teach next. Staff may record concise, significant information where it is useful, but do not create burdensome collections of written or photographic evidence.

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is completed during the first six weeks after a child enters Reception, in accordance with current guidance. In the final term of the year in which a child reaches age five, the teacher completes the EYFS Profile against all 17 early learning goals and reports each outcome as expected or emerging. The profile must be completed and submitted by the statutory deadline. The early learning goals support end-of-stage assessment and do not define or narrow the curriculum.

Assessment is inclusive and reasonable adjustments are made where needed. Children with SEND are not exempt from the EYFS Profile solely because of SEND. Judgements are quality-assured through professional discussion and moderation without generating unnecessary evidence.

11. Key-person approach and partnership with parents and carers

Each child has a named key person who helps ensure that care and learning are tailored to individual needs, supports a settled relationship with the setting and engages parents and carers in guiding development at home. In the mixed class, responsibility is shared professionally across the team while the key person remains a clear point of connection.

Partnership begins before entry through visits, meetings and information sharing. Families receive regular opportunities to discuss learning, development, wellbeing and next steps through informal contact, planned meetings, stay-and-play sessions and reports. At the end of the EYFS, parents and carers receive the child's Profile results and an opportunity to discuss them. Concerns are welcomed and addressed promptly through the class teacher, EYFS lead or senior leader as appropriate.

12. Transitions and continuity

Transitions into Nursery or Reception, between rooms or groups, and from Reception into Year 1 are planned around the individual child. Staff share relevant information securely, involve families, liaise with previous or receiving settings and provide visits, visual supports or additional transition arrangements where helpful.

EYFS and Year 1 staff maintain professional dialogue so that Year 1 teaching builds from each child's knowledge and needs while providing continuity in relationships, routines and pedagogy. The EYFS Profile and additional information about successful strategies and support are shared in accordance with statutory requirements.

13. Safeguarding and welfare

The safety and welfare of children are paramount. Staff follow the current EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, Keeping Children Safe in Education, the school safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct and reporting procedures. Current Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy details are displayed in school and maintained in the safeguarding policy; concerns are reported immediately through the agreed process.

- Staff suitability, recruitment, references, disqualification requirements, supervision and ongoing conduct are managed through school safeguarding procedures.
- Required staff-to-child ratios, qualifications and paediatric first-aid arrangements are maintained. Children are adequately supervised, including while eating. (1:13)
- Arrival, collection, missing-child, intimate-care, toileting, medication, accident, illness and emergency procedures are followed consistently.
- Food and drink arrangements take account of allergies, dietary and medical needs, hygiene and choking risk. Relevant information is checked and communicated to staff.
- Mobile phones, cameras, images, personal devices and online systems are used only in accordance with school safeguarding, data-protection and acceptable-use requirements.
- Screen use is purposeful, age-appropriate, supervised and balanced with talk, play, movement, first-hand experience and rest.
- Any rest or sleep arrangements follow current safer-sleep requirements and are planned, supervised and recorded as required.
- Visitors, animals, outdoor areas, equipment and educational visits are assessed and managed safely in line with current requirements and school procedures.

14. Health, safety and wellbeing

Risk assessment supports safe exploration rather than removing all challenge. Staff check environments and resources, teach children to recognise and manage age-appropriate risks and maintain close supervision. Daily practice promotes oral health, physical activity, healthy eating, hand hygiene, toileting independence, sun safety and emotional wellbeing. Accidents, first aid and medication are managed and recorded through school procedures.

15. Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality support security, relationships and learning. Statutory school-attendance requirements apply according to a child's age and registration status. The school works supportively with families to understand absence, identify barriers and promote regular participation, following the school attendance policy and safeguarding procedures.

16. Roles and professional development

- The headteacher ensures the EYFS is implemented, appropriately staffed and resourced, and that statutory assessment, safeguarding and welfare duties are met.
- The EYFS lead develops curriculum coherence, supports staff, coordinates assessment and transition, evaluates provision and reports priorities to senior leaders and governors.

- Teachers and early years practitioners provide safe, responsive care and ambitious teaching, know their key children well, work with families and follow statutory and school procedures.
- The SENCO supports early identification, graduated provision, reasonable adjustments and partnership with families and external professionals.
- Governors provide strategic oversight, challenge and assurance that statutory duties and the school's mission are fulfilled.

Staff engage in induction, supervision, coaching and relevant training. Professional development priorities reflect curriculum knowledge, child development, communication, early literacy and mathematics, SEND, safeguarding, paediatric first aid, wellbeing and the needs of the current cohort.

17. Monitoring, evaluation and impact

Leaders evaluate implementation and impact through a proportionate range of evidence, which may include curriculum and planning review, professional dialogue, observation of provision and interaction, pupil and parent voice, assessment information, safeguarding and welfare checks, transitions and learning walks. No single source is used in isolation. Findings lead to clear actions, support and improvement.

Impact is evident when children are safe, happy, included and increasingly independent; communicate and build relationships confidently; remember and apply important knowledge; sustain play and attention; develop physically and emotionally; approach challenge with curiosity and resilience; and are well prepared for their next stage.

18. Related documents

- Current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers
- EYFS Profile handbook and Reception Baseline Assessment guidance
- Safeguarding and child protection policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND policy and equality information and objectives
- Behaviour and attendance policies
- Health and safety, educational visits and intimate-care procedures
- Online safety, acceptable use and data-protection policies

19. Approval and review

This policy will be reviewed by the EYFS lead and senior leadership team, approved through the school's agreed governance process and reviewed by the date shown in the document J table, or sooner if statutory, safeguarding or school requirements change.