



## Our Lady Catholic School Curriculum – Early Years Curriculum

Four guiding principles shape the practice of our early Years provision. These are: the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environment with teaching and support from adults and learning and development. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our educational programmes which offer activities and experiences for the children as set out under each of the areas of learning. These seven areas are broken down into Prime Areas (Communication and Language, Physical development and Personal, social and emotional development) and Specific Areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive arts and design).

Area of Learning	Educational Programme	Early Learning Goal
Communication and Language	<p>The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.</p>	<p><b>Listening, Attention and Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.</li> <li>• Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.</li> <li>• Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.</li> <li>• Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.</li> <li>• Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.</li> </ul>
Physical development	<p>Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives<sup>7</sup>. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability,</p>	<p><b>Gross Motor Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.</li> <li>• Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.</li> <li>• Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fine Motor Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.</li> </ul>

	<p>balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.</li> <li>• Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.</li> </ul>
<p>Personal, social and emotional development</p>	<p>Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive</p>	<p><b>Self-Regulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.</li> <li>• Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.</li> <li>• Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Managing Self</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.</li> <li>• Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.</li> <li>• Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.</li> <li>• Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.</li> <li>• Show sensitivity to their own and to others’ needs.</li> </ul>
<p>Literacy</p>	<p>It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy</p>	<p><b>Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.</li> <li>• Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.</li> <li>• Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.</li> </ul> <p><b>Word Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.</li> </ul>

	<p>recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.</li> <li>• Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.</li> <li>• Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.</li> <li>• Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<p>Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.</p>	<p><b>Number</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number; 14 - Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.</li> <li>• Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Numerical Patterns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.</li> <li>• Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.</li> <li>• Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.</li> </ul>
Understanding the world	<p>Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.</p>	<p><b>Past and Present</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.</li> <li>• Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.</li> <li>• Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.</li> </ul> <p><b>People, Culture and Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.</li> <li>• Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Natural World</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.</li> <li>• Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.</li> <li>• Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.</li> </ul>
Expressive arts and design	<p>The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.</p>	<p><b>Creating with Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.</li> <li>• Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.</li> <li>• Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.</li> </ul> <p><b>Being Imaginative and Expressive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher; - Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and song.</li> <li>• Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.</li> </ul>



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When planning and guiding what the children learn, staff reflect on the different rates at which children develop and adjust practice appropriately. Staff will consider how children learn and provide activities and experiences which best suit their learning style as well and develop other learning styles. There are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which staff will assess and plan for. These are: Playing and exploring, Active learning and Creating and thinking critically.

Characteristics of effective learning	Unique child – What a child might do	Positive relationships – What an adult might do	Enabling environment – What an adult might provide
<p>playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'</p>	<p><b>Finding out and exploring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing curiosity about objects, events and people</li> <li>• Using senses to explore the world around them</li> <li>• Engaging in open-ended activity</li> <li>• Showing particular interests</li> </ul> <p><b>Playing with what they know</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretending objects are things from their experience</li> <li>• Representing their experiences in play</li> <li>• Taking on a role in their play</li> <li>• Acting out experiences with other people</li> </ul> <p><b>Being willing to “have a go”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiating activities</li> <li>• Seeking challenge</li> <li>• Showing a “can do” attitude</li> <li>• Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play with children. Encourage them to explore and show your own interest in discovering new things.</li> <li>• Help children as needed to do what they are trying to do, without taking over or directing.</li> <li>• Encourage children to make decisions and choose their activities – what they want to do and how they will do it.</li> <li>• Join in play sensitively, fitting in with children’s ideas.</li> <li>• Model pretending an object is something else. Help develop roles and stories.</li> <li>• Encourage children to try new activities and to judge risks for themselves. Be sure to support children’s confidence with words and body language, and by introducing tools so that children can think about how to use them safely.</li> <li>• Pay attention to how children engage in activities – the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Talk more about the process than products.</li> <li>• Model responding positively when things go wrong, and talk about learning from failure.</li> <li>• Always respect children’s efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea and feel comfortable with mistakes.</li> <li>• Encourage laughter and have fun. Happiness deepens learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.</li> <li>• Make sure resources are relevant to children’s interests and abilities.</li> <li>• Arrange flexible indoor and outdoor space and resources where children can explore, transform, build, move and role play.</li> <li>• Help children concentrate by considering levels of noise, and visual distraction.</li> <li>• Plan first-hand experiences and challenges appropriate to the development of the children.</li> <li>• Ensure children have uninterrupted time to play and explore.</li> <li>• Setting leaders give staff time to reflect on how they support children to play and explore through their interactions, and planning of the environment</li> </ul>

<p>active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements</p>	<p><b>Being involved and concentrating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing a deep drive to know more about people and their world</li> <li>• Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time</li> <li>• Showing high levels of involvement, energy, fascination</li> <li>• Not easily distracted</li> <li>• Paying attention to details</li> </ul> <p><b>Keeping on trying</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persisting with an activity or toward their goal when challenges occur</li> <li>• Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off, and that their skills can grow and develop (growth mindset)</li> <li>• Bouncing back after difficulties</li> </ul> <p><b>Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals (I can!)</li> <li>• Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result</li> <li>• Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise (intrinsic motivation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support children to look into what they are curious about and what fascinates them.</li> <li>• Make time for quality interactions. Watch and listen carefully to try to understand what the child wants to know or achieve.</li> <li>• Help focus young children’s interest through shared attention. At times sensitively introduce a new element if young children’s interest is waning.</li> <li>• Help children to notice details.</li> <li>• Model a growth mindset. Help children to see mistakes or failures as stepping stones for learning. Help children see there is more than one answer to a problem. Demonstrate openly how adults do not get everything right.</li> <li>• Be specific when you praise, especially noting effort such as how the child concentrates, tries different approaches, persists, solves problems, and has new ideas.</li> <li>• Supporting emotional resilience in the face of challenge, e.g. “That must have been frustrating after you worked so hard. I wonder how else you could try it.”</li> <li>• Children develop their own motivations when you involve them. Give reasons for what you are doing and talk about learning, rather than just directing.</li> <li>• Step back and watch what children are doing. Be sensitive to when to join in sensitively, following children’s lead, and when to leave them to it. Be careful not to disrupt their play and train of thought.</li> <li>• Be aware that younger children may want to watch rather than take part in some activities.</li> <li>• Look out for signs that young children show satisfaction in something they have done.</li> <li>• Encourage children to listen to each other’s ideas as they play, have fun and think and learn together. Provide opportunities for children to celebrate with their peers what they are doing and learning – not just focus on the end result.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A familiar environment and predictable routine gives children confidence to take charge of their own activities.</li> <li>• Teach children how to use the areas of provision and tools within them appropriate to their age and stage, so they can use them independently for their own goals.</li> <li>• Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests.</li> <li>• Notice what arouses children’s curiosity, looking for signs of deep involvement to identify learning that is intrinsically motivated.</li> <li>• Ensure children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities.</li> <li>• Provide calm and reduce stimuli if children become over-stimulated.</li> <li>• Children can maintain focus on things that interest them over a period of time. Help them to keep ideas in mind by talking over photographs of their previous activities.</li> <li>• Make space and time for all children to contribute.</li> <li>• Setting leaders should provide opportunities for staff to actively engage in their own learning to better support children’s activity.</li> </ul>
<p>creating and thinking critically -</p>	<p><b>Having their own ideas (creative thinking)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking of ideas that are new and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the language of thinking and learning: think, know, remember, forget, idea, makes sense, plan, learn, find out, confused, figure out, trying to do.</li> </ul>	<p>In planning activities, ask yourself: Is this an opportunity for children to find their own ways to represent and develop their own</p>

<p>children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things</p>	<p>meaningful to the child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing with possibilities (what if? what else?)</li> <li>• Visualising and imagining options</li> <li>• Finding new ways to do things</li> </ul> <p><b>Making links (building theories)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making links and noticing patterns in their experience</li> <li>• Making predictions</li> <li>• Testing their ideas</li> <li>• Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect</li> </ul> <p><b>Working with ideas (critical thinking)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal</li> <li>• Checking how well their activities are going</li> <li>• Flexibly changing strategy as needed</li> <li>• Reviewing how well the approach worked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model being a thinker, showing that you don't always know, are curious and sometimes puzzled, and can think and find out. I wonder?</li> <li>• Give children time to talk and think. Make time to actively listen to children's ideas.</li> <li>• Encourage open-ended thinking, generating more alternative ideas or solutions, by not settling on the first suggestions: What else is possible?.</li> <li>• Always respect children's efforts and ideas, so they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea and feel comfortable with mistakes.</li> <li>• Encourage children to question and challenge assumptions.</li> <li>• Help children to make links to what they already know.</li> <li>• Support children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences.</li> <li>• Help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and to review their own progress and successes. Describe what you see them trying to do, and encourage children to talk about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well and what they would change next time.</li> <li>• Talking aloud helps children to think and control what they do. Model self-talk, describing your actions in play.</li> <li>• Value questions, talk, and many possible responses, without rushing toward answers too quickly.</li> <li>• Sustained shared thinking helps children to explore ideas and make links. Follow children's lead in conversation, and think about things together.</li> <li>• Encourage children to choose personally meaningful ways to represent and clarify their thinking through graphics.</li> <li>• Take an interest in what the children say about their marks and signs, talk to them about their meanings and value what they do and say.</li> </ul>	<p>ideas? Avoid children just reproducing someone else's ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build in opportunities for children to play with materials before using them in planned tasks.</li> <li>• Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas. Establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm and supportive relationships.</li> <li>• Recognisable and predictable routines help children to predict and make connections in their experiences.</li> <li>• Routines can be flexible, while still basically orderly.</li> <li>• Provide extended periods of uninterrupted time so that children can develop their activities.</li> <li>• Keep significant activities out instead of routinely tidying them away, so that there are opportunities to revisit what they have been doing to explore possible further lines of enquiry.</li> <li>• Plan linked experiences that follow the ideas children are really thinking about.</li> <li>• Represent thinking visually, such as mind-maps to represent thinking together, finding out what children know and want to know.</li> <li>• Develop a learning community which focuses on how and not just what we are learning.</li> <li>• Setting leaders should give staff time to think about children's needs, to make links between their knowledge and practice.</li> </ul>
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