



# Our Lady Catholic Primary School

## *Early Years Policy*



**The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust**  
**A Catholic Academy**

May 2023

## Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation .....	2
3. Structure of the EYFS .....	2
4. Curriculum.....	4
5. Assessment .....	5
6. Working with parents .....	6
7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures .....	7
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	7
Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS .....	8

---

### 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

### 2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. Structure of the EYFS

The classroom environment is set up, both indoors and outdoors, to provide children with opportunities to develop in each area of learning. Children enter the class and participate in a range of fine motor skill activities. This is followed by carpet time which includes a morning warm up, daily counting, prayer and calendar. The morning session consists of one to two adult led activities, phonics and a minimum of one hour child initiated learning. After lunch children take part in an adult led activity and a further session of child initiated learning.

The structure of adult led activities changes throughout the year as children develop and prepare for Year 1. Autumn term activities will be a mix of whole class small group work.

In child initiated learning children are able to explore all areas of the classroom including the Reception outdoors area. Activities for play and exploring are planned to support children's development and take into account individual needs and interests enhancing the provision that is continually available for all children to access. During child initiated learning staff interact with children, participating in play and make observations to monitor development and inform planning.

## **Transition**

### **From Pre-school /Feeder settings**

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

- In July parents and children are invited to an assembly where the new children meet their Year 6 buddy.
- In July parents are invited to an information meeting where they are given key dates and information in preparation for their child's start in September.
- During the summer term parents are encouraged to complete an 'all about me' book. It is used during the staggered start to support transition and to inform planning and to provide assessment.
- The Reception class teacher makes links to feeder settings. The number of meetings/visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.
- Parents are offered a home visit which takes place at the beginning of the Autumn term prior to their child starting school. This is an opportunity for the teachers to meet the parents and child in a setting they feel comfortable and where information can be gathered about the child. These visits are always carried out by 2 members of staff.
- A staggered start in September allows for the children to start school in small groups, gradually increasing their hours.

### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child.

The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The profile reflects practitioners' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child and will inform discussions with parents and carers.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective teaching and learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

#### 4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) at the Our Lady school Early Years setting of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

Planning and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At Our Lady School 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 is also taught in the reception class following the Dioceses of Westminster curriculum directory and the planning from Margaret Carswell units of work.

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. This may include a discussion with the SENCO manager in order to access SEN support.

## **4.1 Planning**

Staff plan educational experiences, as set out under each of the areas of learning that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

## **4.2 Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners 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, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

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 located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its 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.

## **5. Assessment**

Baseline Assessment (RBA):

The RBA is a short assessment that takes place in the first 6 weeks in which the child starts reception. It assess a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The

RBS is a short, interactive assessment which takes around 20 minutes to complete. The assessment is carried out by a familiar adult (Teacher or Teaching Assistant from the Reception class). The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. Data is then compared to Key Stage 2 outcomes. RBA is not used as a formative or diagnostic assessment and scores are not shared. The RBS is solely intended for use as a progress measure and is not used to make judgements about early years provisions.

At Our Lady School ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

## **6. Working with parents**

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:

- Visiting children in their nursery setting and home setting and talking to their key worker.
- A New Intake assembly for parents and children is held in July where the children meet their Year 6 buddy.
- A parents meeting is held in July where parents receive the Reception Information booklet and the School Prospectus which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the parents of the schools vision and aims.
- Parents with children who may require additional support meet with the class teacher and SENCo.
- Asking parents to complete an admissions form, a medical form and write a synopsis about their child including their likes, dislikes and any concerns they may have.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, eg Early Reading and Phonics.
- There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns by adopting an open door policy at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents / carers: shared reading, class assemblies, sports day, open evening etc;
- Offering parents / carers regular opportunities to look through the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets and classroom displays;
- Parents / carers are made aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through the weekly newsletter being posted on the website along with any other relevant messages/information.

- Inviting parents / carers to make comments through 'Wow' slips relating to the children's achievements and making general comments on children's learning through their 'learning journals'
- Written contact through reading diaries.
- Parents who have English as an additional language or who are new to the Education system are supported through parent workshops and individual meetings. Support can be sourced from the LA where needed.

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 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the other practitioners.

## **7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

It is important to us 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.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by EYFS staff and EYFS leader every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

### **Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS**

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

<b>Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS</b>	<b>Where can it be found?</b>
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy