St Bartholomew's RC Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Date of last review:	June 2024	Date of next review:	September 2028
Author:	Miss Synnuck Mrs McRae	Owner:	St Bartholomew's School
Type of policy:	School	Approval:	Headteacher
Local Governance Committee Approval following personalisation			
Date of last review:	September 2026	Date of next review	September 2028

Our vision at St. Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School is to create a Christian environment which caters for the individual academic, social and spiritual needs of each child within a caring school family in which all individuals are valued and respected as much for their differences as for their similarities.
We promote values and attitudes of the highest standard which allow each child to reach their full potential.
We strive to develop children's interests and talents and to equip each child with the tools they need for the future.
The dignity and value of our children is at the centre of everything we do

An introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides the Curriculum framework for adults working with children to the end of their reception year. The Statutory Framework (September 2021) establishes expectations for children to achieve by their time in Reception. At St Bartholomew's we aim to equip the children with the skills that will enable them to progress through the school and continue their learning journey successfully.

The curriculum is split into two main areas, Prime and Specific, and then subdivided into seven areas of learning in total:

The Prime Areas of Learning:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

The Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

At St. Bartholomew's we aim to provide a safe, caring and inclusive environment in which children can develop spiritually, morally, culturally, physically, academically, socially and emotionally. Every child is a unique individual with different needs. They are constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Children are encouraged to develop their full potential, building on what they already know and can do and acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to life. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

We aim to help children develop lively, enquiring minds learning through first-hand play experiences encouraging problem-solving, independence, risk-taking and creative thinking.

Partnership is a priority and we strive to develop positive relationships with parents, carers, other professionals and pre-school settings.

We aim to ensure each child has equal access to the curriculum and opportunities offered regardless of gender, ethnicity, social background or additional educational needs. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and we plan our curriculum with this in mind.

Structure of the EYFS at St Bartholomew's School:
At St Bartholomew's school, our Early Years consists of two Reception classes, with a maximum intake of 45 children across the year group.

Objectives:

1. To provide well-planned, stimulating, challenging learning opportunities using a wide range of resources following the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

2. To provide a stimulating and attractive environment with opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors across the prime and specific areas of learning.

3. To structure quality play situations building on pupils' current levels of understanding an experience and provide appropriate intervention to develop and extend learning.

4. To continually monitor and assess pupils' learning both during child-initiated and adult led sessions and to maintain assessment records that can be used effectively when reporting children's levels at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

5. To ensure continuity and progression between pre-school/Reception and Reception/Year 1 enabling smooth and successful transitions.

6. To liaise with pre-school feeder settings and visit families prior to entry to school enabling discussion with Governors, Leadership Team, SENCO and Early Years' staff so that provision for additional needs and Provision Plans can be prepared.

Spiritual, Cultural and Moral Ethos

"We serve the Lord with joy as one school, one family."

At the heart of our Early Years provision is the recognition that every child is a unique and valued child of God. We nurture children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a faith-filled environment where they feel loved, respected and encouraged to flourish.

Children are given opportunities to experience and express their faith through prayer, worship, singing, storytelling, role play, reflection and acts of kindness. They participate in daily collective prayer and worship, class liturgies, assemblies and celebrations throughout the Church's liturgical year.

As part of the wider Catholic community, children attend Children's Liturgies and whole-school Masses, helping them to develop a sense of belonging and an understanding of their faith. They learn traditional prayers, including morning and evening prayers and grace before meals, and are encouraged to respond to God through their own spontaneous prayers.

Through the teaching of Religious Education, following the school's RE curriculum and the *Lighting the Path* programme, children begin to develop an understanding of Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church. They are encouraged to live out these values in their relationships with others through compassion, respect, forgiveness and service.

We also foster an appreciation of the rich diversity of God's world by learning about and celebrating different cultures, traditions and faiths. Through these experiences, children develop respect for others and an understanding of the importance of living together in harmony within a diverse society.

Teaching and Learning

At St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that children learn best through a balance of play, exploration, direct teaching and meaningful interactions with skilled adults. Our Early Years curriculum is designed to provide a rich, stimulating and nurturing environment where every child is encouraged to develop confidence, independence and a love of learning.

We understand that high-quality play is fundamental to children's learning and development. Through carefully planned indoor and outdoor environments, children are provided with opportunities to explore, investigate, create, imagine and take risks within a safe and supportive setting. We recognise that positive relationships, enabling environments and an understanding that every child is unique are central to successful learning experiences.

Teaching is delivered through a combination of child-initiated learning, adult-guided activities, small-group work and whole-class teaching. Learning experiences are carefully planned and adapted to meet the needs and interests of all children, ensuring appropriate challenge and support so that every child can make excellent progress.

We promote learning across all areas of the EYFS curriculum through:

- Carefully planned experiences that meet the needs of individual learners and maximise each child's potential.
- High-quality interactions that develop language, communication and vocabulary through listening, talking, questioning and discussion.
- Opportunities for children to express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions in a safe, supportive and respectful environment.
- A well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environment that encourages exploration, curiosity and independent learning.
- Ongoing observation and assessment to inform planning and ensure learning is appropriately matched to children's next steps.
- Strong partnerships with parents, carers and external professionals, recognising that education is most effective when home and school work together.
- Highly skilled teachers and support staff who understand how young children develop and learn, and who provide appropriate support, challenge and encouragement to extend children's thinking and understanding.

Rooted in our Catholic values, we strive to ensure that all children feel loved, valued and inspired to fulfil their God-given potential as confident, capable and enthusiastic learners.

Curriculum Intent and Principles

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we actively promote our whole-school values of **Aspiration, Experience, Independence, Dignity and Joy**, ensuring that every child is encouraged to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Through a nurturing, ambitious and inclusive environment, children are inspired to develop confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning.

Our approach to teaching and learning is carefully designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that children need to become successful and independent learners. The curriculum is broad, balanced and engaging, providing meaningful opportunities for exploration, creativity and challenge while responding to the individual needs and interests of each child.

Our EYFS curriculum:

- Promotes high aspirations and enables every child to achieve their God-given potential.
- Provides rich and varied experiences that broaden children's understanding of the world and inspire a love of learning.
- Fosters independence, resilience and confidence, encouraging children to take ownership of their learning.
- Upholds the dignity of every child by valuing diversity, celebrating individuality and promoting mutual respect.
- Creates a joyful and nurturing environment where children feel safe, happy and motivated to learn.
- Ensures equality of opportunity for all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social background, religion, disability or additional needs.
- Supports children's spiritual, moral, cultural, academic, social and physical development within the context of our Catholic ethos.
- Is informed by ongoing observation and assessment, enabling practitioners to identify children's strengths, respond to their next steps and ensure strong progress for every learner.

Through these principles, we lay firm foundations for future learning and help children become confident, compassionate and capable members of society.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning. We use the valuable information we gain from observations to complete a statutory baseline assessment (RBA) on each child within the first six weeks of them starting school. This information is then used to monitor children's progress throughout the year and ensure all children are guided and challenged appropriately.

We aim to record all memorable and valuable learning moments within all areas of the Framework throughout the school year to inform future planning and as evidence to support judgements made in the Foundation Stage Profile.

At the end of the EYFS staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. The Profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters Document 2021 and Birth to Five Matters September 2026) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.
EYFS Profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

Safeguarding and Welfare

The safeguarding of all children in EYFS is of paramount importance to us. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand their own value. We provide children with choices to help them develop important life skills. Children are taught 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 children. (Refer to School Safeguarding Policy)

At St. Bartholomew's Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework of Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

· Promote the welfare 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.

· Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is 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.

Parents and Carers as Partners

We recognise parents and carers as the first educators of their children and therefore we strive to develop a positive, effective partnership with them.

To help aid a smooth transition into school:

- Parents and carers are invited to visit the school in the summer with the child.
- A meeting is held to inform and reassure them of the routines of Reception.
- Children are invited to art sessions at the end of the summer term so that they can form relationships with the Foundation Stage staff and get to know their new environment.
- All children are visited in their home prior to starting school in September.
- A Teddy Bear's picnic for new parents and children to meet their soon to be Year 6 buddies in term five.
- The Foundation Stage staff meet with pre-school providers when possible, to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.
- We operate an open-door policy for parents and carers with any queries.

When starting school:

- We use 'Parent Voice' to contribute to their child's individual profile.
- Parents are able to contact teachers through their class email or making an appointment with them through the office.
- Parental consultations are held in the Autumn and Spring terms.
- Parents and carers are invited in termly for an open morning.
- We organise regular coffee mornings for the parents to come into school.
- Transition questionnaire and whole school parental questionnaires and opportunities to feed back to the school are sent out.
- Parent readers are invited in.

- The EYFS staff hold phonics, reading and maths meetings for the parents.
- Parents and carers are invited to attend termly para liturgy in the Church and class assemblies when parents and carers can build relationships with other parents and carers informally with the staff.
- We send a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.
- All Reception children are assigned a Year 6 buddy who build a strong relationship with them throughout the year

Transition into EYFS

At St Bartholomew's we have strong links with various feeder pre-school and nurseries. The EYFS team meet with providers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school, we also discuss what children have been learning at nursery to ensure we have a good understanding of children's previous knowledge.

Transition into Year 1

We recognise that the transition from Reception to Year 1 is a significant step in every child's educational journey. We are committed to ensuring that this transition is positive, nurturing and carefully planned, enabling children to build on the strong foundations established in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Through close collaboration between Reception and Year 1 staff, regular opportunities for children to visit their new classroom and meet their teacher, and ongoing communication with parents and carers, we support children emotionally, socially and academically. Rooted in our values of dignity, respect and care for one another, we ensure that children continue to feel safe, valued and confident as they move into Key Stage 1.

Teaching and learning in Year 1 initially reflect familiar Early Years approaches, including play, exploration and active learning, while gradually introducing increased independence and the expectations of the National Curriculum. This carefully managed process promotes continuity, wellbeing and a lifelong love of learning.

Additional Needs

All staff will be alert to the potential need for additional support for children who may be more vulnerable or whose circumstances may indicate emerging, escalating or unmet needs. Parents and carers are expected to inform the school of any additional support their child requires before they start in Reception. From, the outset, parents and carers are informed of any additional needs identified by the school and of the support they require.
External agencies may be involved if necessary and parents and carers are kept informed at each stage.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy and Review

Biannually (or when the need arises) the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.

Signed…….Headteacher

Dated……..