

Learning and Development Requirements

Providers must promote the learning and development of all children in their care, and to ensure they are ready for school. The learning and development requirements are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress. Early years providers must guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in their care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them.

3.7 Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Introduction

The early years foundation stage policy refers to children from birth to five years of age. At St Joseph's Pre-school, children can be admitted from the age of 2 and remain until they start school.

Children joining our pre-school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community or at home with parents, carers or childminders. The early year's experiences we offer our children are based on the following principles:

- Learning builds on what our children already know and can do
- No child is excluded or disadvantaged
- There is a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and experiences that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- There is a safe environment which is rich and stimulating

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The underlying aims of the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) are to help every child achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes. To: Be healthy; Stay safe; Achieve and Enjoy; Make a positive contribution; and Develop skills for the future.

The early years foundation stage underpins all future learning by Supporting, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning
- Social skills
- Attention skills and persistence
- Language and communication
- Skills which support reading and writing
- Mathematical development
- Understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creativity and critical thinking

We plan and guide children's activities, reflecting on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three **characteristics of effective teaching and learning** 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.

The enabling environment

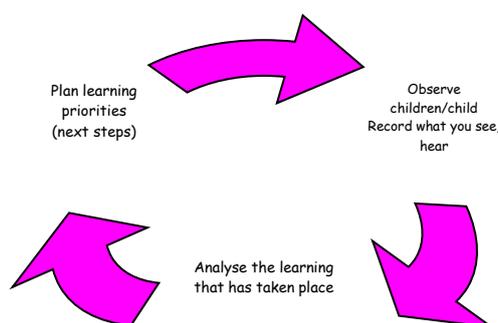
Our environment is carefully planned to help children achieve across all aspects of the early years foundation stage. Opportunities are provided for children to take part in a wide range of experiences and to extend their interests both indoors and outside through our continuous provision and further planned experiences. Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their experiences and to develop independence, decision-making and self-management.

All our planning begins by observing the children to understand and consider their current interests and fascinations, development and learning. Children's responses to different situations are analysed and their progress and future learning needs are identified and regularly shared with parents and carers.

Children are actively engaged in a variety of adult led and child-initiated experiences. We deploy a range of approaches to support and extend their learning by acting as a co-player, providing first-hand and open-ended experiences, intervening appropriately, giving clear explanations and extending and developing play and talk or other means of communication.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the experiences on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. Across the early years foundation stage we plan to build on what the children know, understand and can do. We achieve this by making observations of the children engaged in a range of experiences across the session / day. Many of these observations are recorded in an online learning journal and shared with parents almost immediately. They are also shared with staff during evaluation meetings and Tapestry's online Reflection tools.

Targets or learning priorities/next steps are identified to inform practitioners planning for individuals and groups of children. Practitioners understand how children develop and learn and know about individual and group interests and fascinations. This knowledge informs planning for learning, which is responsive to the needs of groups and individuals.



We use an 'In the Moment' Planning Approach that focuses on a small group of children each week. Plans for 'provocations' are made from information provided by the key person for these focus children and reviewed regularly. These detail the outcomes for the children, how learning and development may take place, the role of the adult and additional resources that may be required. Our full planning and record keeping procedures, including examples of all our planning sheets, our daily routine, and observation methods are available in our 'Curriculum Planning File'.

All practitioners receive regular training and the identification of the training needs of all adults in our pre-school is important so that we keep up to date, broaden our understanding and learn new skills.

Positive relationships

We believe that the positive relationships we build in the pre-school are the key to building partnerships between practitioners, parents and families, so that our children feel secure and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. Each child has a key person who meets their needs and responds sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.

In our pre-school positive relationships with families are fostered by:

- Talking to parents and families about their child before their child starts in our pre-school
- The key person and secondary key person visiting all children in their home setting prior to their starting pre-school
- Inviting all families to an induction visit with their child before their child starts pre-school
- Developing effective partnerships with parents, carers and families and offering regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- Encouraging parents and families to talk to the child's key person and team leader if there are any concerns.

Parents and families are able to contribute to learning journals themselves and add comments to reports through Tapestry. Reports are completed 2 or 3 times a year.

Parents are welcome to visit the setting with their child as often as necessary before they start to help the settling-in process. Links have also been established between the main schools that the children attend. Visits from Reception Teachers are encouraged and further links are also made with other settings in the area that the children may also attend. Links with other professionals such as Health Visitors, the Inclusion Team, Advisory Teacher service, Social Services, Physiotherapists, the local community etc. also form part of creating a joined up service for families that attend our setting.

Parent sharing events include discussion evenings, parent evenings, committee meetings, open sessions/days, drop-in's and social events. Parents are also encouraged to help on a regular basis at the group with everything from cooking activities, gardening, helping children on the computers, Forest School, or simply with preparing activities or maintaining equipment. Positive relationships are modelled by professional relationships between and across the pre-school team.

A Unique child

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We are able to do this by knowing our children really well and by taking account of their range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning and development.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children across the Early Years Foundation Stage. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with disabilities, children with special educational needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests, encourage positive attitudes to learning and develop well being, 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

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging experiences for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (for example speech and language therapy)
- Supporting children with sensory impairment by providing supplementary experiences and information to enhance their learning about the world around them
- Supporting children across all areas of the Early years foundation stage who use a means of communication other than spoken English to develop and understand specific vocabulary, for example mathematical language
- Valuing knowledge of specific areas of learning in the language or communication system used at home

Areas of learning and development

Play

Play underpins all learning and development for young children. Most children play spontaneously although some may need adult support. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

The EYFS is made up of Three Prime areas of learning and development and four specific areas. All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are underpinned by the principles of the EYFS.

The Prime areas of learning and development are:

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

The Specific areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding of World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Whereas we recognise that young children learn in a very holistic way, at our pre-school we ensure that the requirements of the EYFS are met across all areas of learning and development in the following particular ways:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are provided with experiences and support to help them develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. Children's emotional well-being is supported to help them to know themselves and what they can do. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Forming warm, caring attachments
- Establishing constructive relationships with parents, with everyone in the setting and with professionals from other agencies
- Giving encouragement and appropriate praise and acting as positive role models who value differences and take account of different needs and expectations
- Planning opportunities for children to play and learn, alone, in pairs and groups and that help children to develop autonomy and positive learning dispositions
- Providing time and space for children to concentrate on experiences and to develop their own interests
- Supporting the development of independence skills
- Establishing opportunities for play and learning acknowledging children's particular religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds
- Provide positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disability

Communication and Language

Children's learning and competence in communicating, speaking and listening, is supported and extended. Children are provided with opportunities and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes; and are supported to develop the confidence and disposition to do so. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Supporting children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and building relationships with adults and each other
- Providing daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, stories and poetry
- Identifying and responding to particular difficulties in children's language development at an early stage
- Talking to children and engaging them as partners in conversation
- Linking language with physical movement in action songs, rhymes, role play and practical experiences, for example cooking and gardening
- Showing awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of children learning English as an additional language, using their home language where possible and ensuring close team work between practitioners, parents, and bilingual practitioners so that the children's developing use of English and other languages support each other
- For children who may need to use alternative communication systems provide opportunities for them to discover ways of recording ideas and to gain access to texts in an alternative way, for example through ICT
- Providing time and relaxed opportunities for children to develop spoken language through sustained conversations between adults and children, both in one to one and in small groups and between children themselves. Children are given time to initiate conversations and their thinking time and silences are respected to help them develop interaction

Physical Development

The physical development of babies and young children in our pre-school is encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of

coordination, control, manipulation and movement. They are encouraged and supported to use all of their senses to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know. Children are supported to develop an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Building children's confidence to take manageable risks in their play, providing support and planning experiences that offer physical challenge
- Valuing children's natural and spontaneous movements, through which they are finding out about their bodies and motivating them to be active
- Providing a range of equipment and resources that are challenging and interesting and can be used in a variety of ways and support the development of specific skills
- Introducing vocabulary to children alongside their actions
- Supporting the development of understanding about good health, for example use of sun screens, sleeping, hygiene, eating and exercise
- Providing space and time for children to engage in energetic play, to set their own challenges, persist and practice

Literacy

Children develop an understanding of literacy by being read to and beginning to read and write is supported and extended. Mark making opportunities are always available and the environment is rich in written texts to explore and support children's interests and understanding. Importance is placed on activities which support the development of the necessary physical skills to develop controlled mark making and to build up an understanding of sequencing and representation.

We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Providing daily opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non fiction books, rhymes, music, songs, stories and poetry
- Providing positive role models by reading and writing and showing children what can be written and read
- Planning an environment that is rich in signs, symbols, notices, numbers, words, rhymes, books and pictures that takes into account children's different interests, understandings, home backgrounds and cultures
- Providing independent access and time to browse and share these resources with adults and children, as well as opportunities to borrow and share books at home
- Incorporating Letters and sounds activities into continuous provision planning
- Promoting and extending Listening skills and sound differentiation

Mathematical Development

Children are supported to develop their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they explore, enjoy, learn, practice and talk about their developing understanding. They are provided with opportunities to practice and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Encouraging the exploration of real life problems, making patterns and counting and matching
- Using mathematics as an integral part of daily experiences, modelling and encouraging child participation
- Valuing children's graphic and practical explorations of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- Providing time, space, resources and encouragement to discover new words and mathematical ideas, concepts and language during child initiated experiences

- Exploiting the mathematical potential of both the indoor and outdoor environments and ensuring mathematical resources are easily accessible
- Developing mathematical understanding through all children's early experiences including songs, stories, games and imaginative play

Understanding the World

Children are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. Their learning is supported by offering opportunities to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertaking practical 'experiments'; and working with a range of materials. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Creating a stimulating environment that offers a range of experiences to encourage children's curiosity and interest both indoors and outside
- Making effective use of outdoors, including the local neighbourhood
- Inviting families and carers to share their knowledge and skills to extend children's experiences of the world
- Using correct terms/vocabulary and asking open ended questions
- Planning opportunities based on firsthand experiences that encourage exploration, experimentation, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision making and discussion
- Encouraging children to talk about their experiences, to reflect and hypothesise
- Supporting children's use of ITC

Expressive Arts and Design

Children's creativity is extended with practitioner support to develop their curiosity, exploration and play. Children are provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play experiences, mathematics and design and technology. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

- Valuing what children can do and children's own ideas
- Providing a stimulating environment where creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued
- Accommodating children's specific religious or cultural beliefs relating to particular art forms or methods of representation and including resources from a variety of cultures
- Providing wide ranging opportunities for children to express their ideas in a variety of ways
- Presenting a wide range of experiences that children respond to by using many of their senses
- Allowing time for children to explore and develop ideas and finish working through them
- Encouraging children unable to communicate vocally to respond to music in different ways
- Providing opportunities for children with hearing impairment to experience sound through physical contact with instruments and other sources of sound
- Offering opportunities for children with visual impairment to access and have physical contact with artefacts, materials, spaces and movements