



ST BERNADETTE'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Approved by BoD: 03/04/2025

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Mission Statement

At St Bernadette's, we follow Jesus by sharing His light through our words and actions, spreading His word in how we live and learn, trusting His plan even when the path is uncertain, loving one another with compassion and respect, and serving others with humility, just as Christ did. Through these daily acts of faith and kindness, we grow together as a community of disciples.

Introduction

At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, we are dedicated to providing high-quality early education that supports children's development and lays a strong foundation for their future learning. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy reflects our values as a Catholic school and is in line with the statutory guidance set out by the Department for Education (DfE), including *Development Matters* (2021) and *Strong Foundations: A Guide for Schools and Practitioners* (2024). We aim to provide an inclusive and nurturing environment that ensures all children receive the best start in their educational journey.

Aims of the EYFS Policy

Our aims for the EYFS are to:

1. **Create a secure, loving, and stimulating environment** where children feel safe, happy, and ready to learn.
2. **Provide a rich and varied curriculum** that supports the development of the whole child - intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
3. **Foster curiosity, creativity, and a love for learning** by ensuring learning experiences are both engaging and meaningful.
4. **Respect and celebrate diversity**, supporting every child to achieve their full potential.
5. **Ensure close partnerships with parents and carers** to support children's learning both at school and at home.
6. **Follow current government guidance** in the delivery of the EYFS curriculum, as set out in *Development Matters* (2021) and the DfE's *Strong Foundations* (2023).

The Statutory Framework and Guidance

Our EYFS provision follows the legal framework set out in the *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework* (updated November 2024), which outlines the standards for learning, development, and care for children from birth to age 5. Additionally, we use *Development Matters* (updated September 2023) and *Strong Foundations* (2024) to guide our practice and ensure that children receive high-quality learning experiences.

The Principles of Early Years Education at St. Bernadette's

We believe that early education should be based on the following key principles:

1. **Every child is a unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. **Children learn best through positive relationships** with adults and peers. We value the importance of nurturing positive and trusting relationships to foster secure attachments and emotional well-being.
3. **Learning takes place in enabling environments** where children are supported to explore, discover, and experiment in their own ways. We provide a stimulating and well-organised environment that supports independent and collaborative learning.
4. **Children learn at different rates** and we recognise that each child is an individual, and that learning should be tailored to meet their unique needs and interests.

The Areas of Learning and Development

The curriculum for EYFS is divided into seven areas of learning, as outlined in the *EYFS Statutory Framework*. These areas are categorised as Prime and Specific areas, and we ensure that they are all fully integrated into our practice.

1. Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language (CL):**
Supporting children's ability to listen, speak, and understand language. We foster communication through storytelling, discussions, and sharing experiences.
- **Physical Development (PD):**
Helping children develop control over their bodies, strength, balance, and coordination. This also includes understanding the importance of physical activity and good health.
- **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED):**
Fostering self-regulation, positive relationships, and emotional well-being. We support children to understand themselves and others, developing empathy and respect.

2. Specific Areas:

- **Literacy (L):**
Promoting early reading and writing skills, focusing on phonics and developing a love for reading. We use the *Letters and Sounds* phonics scheme to support early reading development.
- **Mathematics (M):**
Encouraging the development of early numeracy skills, including counting, shape recognition, and problem-solving.
- **Understanding the World (UW):**
Promoting exploration of the world around them, including knowledge of people, communities, the environment, and technology.

- **Expressive Arts and Design (EAD):**
Encouraging creativity and self-expression through music, art, role play, and imaginative activities.

Our Approach to Teaching and Learning

At St. Bernadette's, we believe that learning is best achieved through a combination of child-initiated play and adult-led activities. Our teaching and learning approaches are influenced by current research on early education, ensuring that the learning environment is engaging, responsive, and flexible.

1. Play-Based Learning:

Play is central to learning in the EYFS, providing children with opportunities to explore, experiment, and make sense of the world around them. Through play, children develop creativity, problem-solving skills, social competence, and emotional regulation.

2. Adult-Led Activities:

These activities are carefully planned to target specific learning goals. Staff support children by modelling and guiding activities, asking open-ended questions, and extending children's thinking and understanding.

3. The Learning Environment:

The classroom and outdoor areas are designed to encourage independent exploration and hands-on learning. We ensure that the environment is rich with resources that are accessible to children, stimulating their imagination, curiosity, and critical thinking.

4. Use of Technology:

Children are introduced to appropriate digital tools, such as tablets and interactive whiteboards, to support learning in areas like literacy, numeracy, and communication. Technology is used in a balanced way to complement traditional learning experiences.

Assessment and Monitoring Progress

Assessment in the EYFS is ongoing and integrated into everyday practice. We assess children's progress through observation, noting significant moments in their learning and development. This enables us to understand each child's individual needs, interests, and strengths.

- **Formative Assessment:** Regular observations inform planning and help identify any areas where children may require additional support or challenge.
- **Summative Assessment:** At the end of the Reception year, children's progress is assessed using the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) to evaluate whether they have met the expected standard in each area of learning.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are integral to a child's learning journey. We strive to create a strong partnership between home and school by:

- Regularly communicating with parents through meetings, reports, and informal conversations.
- Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning, both in the classroom and at home.
- Encouraging parental input into planning for children's learning and development.
- Sharing strategies and resources to support learning at home, particularly in areas such as reading and phonics.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that all children are given equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of background, ability, or additional needs. Our approach is inclusive, and we work closely with external agencies and specialists to support children who require additional support.

We ensure that:

- All children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are given the appropriate resources and support to thrive.
- Our curriculum is designed to be culturally responsive and reflective of the diverse backgrounds of our children and families.
- We provide a safe and nurturing environment where all children feel valued and respected.

Safeguarding and Welfare

At St. Bernadette's, safeguarding is our top priority. We adhere to the latest safeguarding guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2024), to ensure that all staff are trained and vigilant in protecting children. The well-being of every child is closely monitored, and concerns are reported and addressed in a timely manner.

Conclusion

This policy outlines our commitment to providing a high-quality Early Years education based on current government guidance, including *Development Matters* and *Strong Foundations*. At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, we strive to offer an enriching environment where every child can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally. By fostering a love for learning, supporting spiritual development, and building strong relationships with families, we ensure that each child is given the best possible start in their educational journey.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date with the latest guidance and best practices in Early Years education.

