



## **St. Gregory's Catholic Primary school**

We give thanks to God, work together and always try our best

### **Early Year Foundation Stage Policy**

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### 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
- A close working partnership between staff and parents/ 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 [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

### 3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five. The final year of the EYFS is the Reception year, which is the only EYFS class in St. Gregory's. We greatly value the important and distinct role that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. In our school all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five.

### 4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
  - Physical development
  - Personal, social and emotional development
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The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

## 4.1 Planning

At St.Gregory's we use the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS provided by 'Development matters' in order to design an effective Early Years curriculum. We use 'Development matters' to help us to create half-termly plans, or 'overviews', based on a topic chosen to stimulate and interest the children. We use these medium term plans to inform our more detailed weekly plans. Planning in Reception class has to be flexible in order to take into account unforeseen learning opportunities and is amended and annotated in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consult with the school SENCO and head teacher about how best to support that child.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children which enable them to develop and learn effectively. We plan for a class trip or other 'enrichment' activity such as a visit from an outside agency, at least once every half term. We take the children to a range of places such as the local library, the woods and a gymnastics centre.

We are aware when planning that we need to focus strongly on the three prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal, social and emotional development and Physical development.

When planning, staff always bear in mind the seven key features of effective practice. These seven key features, as outlined in 'Development matters' are:

- The best for every child
- High quality care
- The curriculum: What we want children to learn
- Pedagogy: Helping children to learn
- Assessment: Checking what children have learnt
- Self-regulation and executive function
- Partnership with parents.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff use their knowledge of how individual children in the class learn best in order to inform their practice.

## 4.2 Teaching

At St. Gregory's, we are always aware of 'The characteristics of effective teaching and learning' when working with the children. These characteristics 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
- creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

The children have free-flow access to our outdoor classroom which is open in all but the most challenging weather conditions.

We place great importance on the teaching of phonics and follow the 'Floppy's phonics' scheme.

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.

## 5. Assessment

At St. Gregory's, 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. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. We use 'Evidence me' in order to share observations with parents/ carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At this early stage in the year, staff also carry out informal observations of our key children against the 3-4 year old 'Development matters' milestones in order to ensure that the children are ready to access the Reception objectives. Children who aren't working at the Reception level receive appropriate interventions from staff.

At the end of each half term the Reception staff have a team meeting where we go through the 'Reception' objectives from 'Development matters' and discuss whether we think children have achieved, or are on track to achieve by the end of the year, these objectives.

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/ carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/ carers.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

## 6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/ carers. Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Parents/ carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. We use 'Evidence me' in order to share observations and achievements with parents and in turn we encourage parents to use this platform in order to share their own observations with staff. We have termly parent's evenings where all parents are invited to meet with the class teachers. The detailed end of year report and EYFS profile helps to provide parents/ carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Staff endeavour to form excellent relationships with families. We want parents/ carers to be able to approach us with any concerns which they may have.

## 7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important to us that all children at St Gregory's School are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand how they can take responsibility for their own safety. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We believe children should be

allowed to take some age appropriate risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards and dangerous situations.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by accompanying the children into dinners and discussing the importance of making healthy choices. We also regularly address issues such as brushing teeth, washing hands etc.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by J. Douglas/ J. Mc Mullen (EYFS Co-ordinators) and Mrs A Dunne (Headteacher) every 2 years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

**Approved by: Local Governing Committee**

**Date:** October 2023

**Next review due by:** October 2025

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

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
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