



'Where charity and love are, God is there'

Early Years/ Foundation Policy for St Nicholas of Tolentine
RC Primary School
2023-24

Ratification Table:

Approved by:	Full Governing Board	Date: 8 th May 2024
Last reviewed on:		
Next review due by:	Summer 2025	

EYFS Policy

Updated May 2024

Mission Statement

Where Charity and Love are, God is there

St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School aims to create a Catholic Christian environment, which is inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus.

We aim to develop a Christian ethos which is reflected in all aspects of school life and the curriculum.

The school affirms that all children and staff are unique and should have opportunities to achieve their full potential to learn, or to teach and to experience success in a full, balanced and differentiated curriculum.

We wish to provide everyone in the school with a chance to experience and respect Christian values and put them into practice at home, in the parish and in the wider community. We also endeavour to develop respect and understanding for non-Christian faiths and cultures.

Vision Statement

“We are an Inclusive Catholic community, who welcome, love, care for and serve our pupils and families. We work together in Christ to ensure every unique child is able to become the best that they can be; academically, socially and spiritually with the support, respect and encouragements God wants for us all.”

Aims of This Policy

When children arrive in our Reception Class they have already learnt a huge variety of things at home/nursery. Our aim throughout the Foundation Stage is to continue to extend this learning process by providing a happy, secure and stimulating environment in partnership with parents and carers who have already begun the learning journey.

We aim to provide an environment in which children feel safe and valued, where they can learn through play, exploration, experimentation, observation and discovery. We acknowledge that learning is a continuous process and we will build on children’s skills, knowledge and experiences to guide their development.

We provide a setting that:

- ❖ is fun, safe and welcoming to children and their families/carers;
- ❖ encourages the children to be independent and resourceful;
- ❖ cultivates enthusiasm, motivation and an enquiring mind;
- ❖ delivers a broad and balanced curriculum that is accessible to all children;

- ❖ provides opportunities for first-hand experiences and recognises the importance of play;
- ❖ provides opportunities for the children to work both individually and cooperatively;
- ❖ offers opportunities for the children to develop their own creativity;
- ❖ celebrates differences, compassion and generosity to others;
- ❖ cultivates awareness and a respect for their own cultures and beliefs and the cultures and beliefs of others.

We recognise the importance of **working as a partnership** with parents/carers and will welcome parents/carers into our setting to work with us in ensuring **every child reaches their full potential**.

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based upon four overarching principles:

- ❖ A unique child.
- ❖ Positive relationships.
- ❖ Enabling environments.
- ❖ Learning and developing in different ways.

Learning and Development

The EYFS framework guidance states that, “there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in the early years setting.” All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. However, there are three areas that are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building firm foundations for their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive:

Prime areas:

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

Specific areas:

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

The characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- ❖ Playing and exploring
- ❖ Active learning
- ❖ Creating and thinking critically

We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We believe that the best quality learning is through play, which gives our children opportunities to consolidate their learning. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build on ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They learn through their interactions with the adults in the unit and with each other.

Personalised learning is in line with Development Matters guidance.

Please visit www.foundationyears.org.uk for more information.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Reception staff use observations to inform planning. The staff are skilled at observing what children say and do and are able to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations inform the planning. The staff use the children's interests to plan for themes and draw up medium term plans. The staff provide interventional work when and where it is needed to ensure that learning moves forward for every child.

At St Nicholas of Tolentine, we use Tapestry to record all of our children's learning. Tapestry is an online learning journal which allow parents to follow their children's learning at all times. Parents are also able to upload observations of what the children do outside of school. These provide evidence of children's continuing skills and progression. Children are assessed against the EYFS level descriptors and are judged at the end of the Reception year as either achieving, exceeding or not achieving the Early Learning Goals.

Positive Relationships

In Reception Class, we have one class teacher and one learning support assistant.

- ❖ All adults in the class are responsible for settling the children into their daily routine, ensuring that the children in their group feel safe and are thriving in the setting.
- ❖ All adults in the class will ensure that they are a base of support and encouragement throughout the day for the children in their group.
- ❖ All adults in the class will ensure that a relationship of trust and mutual understanding will be established with the parents.
- ❖ There will be at least one teacher and one teaching assistant in class to support all children throughout the day in all activities, whether adult led or during free flow play.
- ❖ Children will be supported by SMSAs at lunchtimes. These adults will be introduced to the children gradually throughout the induction period.

Enabling Environments

- ❖ The setting will be well resourced with a large variety of materials to enable children with all the different learning styles to access the curriculum.
- ❖ The rooms will be well labelled and kept well stocked of quality resources.
- ❖ The setting will be clean, clutter free and displaying a variety of children's work.
- ❖ The children will have access to an outside area that is also well resourced and inspiring to explore.

Engaging Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- ❖ Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to parents/carers during the new parents meeting, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- ❖ Offering an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- ❖ Sharing progress at school through parents evenings and termly reports.
- ❖ Inviting parents/carers in to special events in school such as 'play and stay sessions.
- ❖ Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.
- ❖ Facebook, Class Dojo's and Tapestry are used to keep parents informed of upcoming events and photos are shared of activities taking place in class.

Daily Reception routine

The children are welcomed in each morning to a carpet activity. Adults are available to support with the transition. Adults will complete the register and lunch register with the children before moving on to their morning lesson. This learning supports the children's learning through play throughout the day. The children have 'child initiated' play time each morning and afternoon, where they can choose their activity, or join an adult-led activity, which is often linked to the current class topic.

Children enjoy snack time altogether during the morning. This is a great time to reflect on what they have enjoyed learning or to listen to a story.

Before lunch, there is a structured whole class phonics (Unlocking letters and sounds) session. A new sound is taught each day, along with daily blending practice and learning of key words.

After lunch, there is an afternoon session which usually topic based. Children have child-initiated play with lots of opportunities for communication and language and fine and gross motor development.

Classroom rules

In reception, we focus on developing children's understanding of safety and boundaries in the school environment.

Alongside our school values and dojo heroes (see behaviour policy), we also have 3 main EYFS rules to promote positive behaviours:

Ready Steady Tiger



Children are ready to learn.

Keep Trying Tortoise



Children persevere and don't give up.

Kind Kangaroo



Children show kindness, care and respect.

Reading in Reception:

- ❖ Early in the first half term at school, children will begin to bring home a reading book and a reading folder containing Phase 2 sounds, numbers, sight words and a name card so that parents/carers can support their child with the sounds he/she has learnt at school. This will be explained in detail at the meeting for parents as well as in the welcome packs provided.
- ❖ The first books that children bring home to share with parents/carers will be picture books and then books with simple repetitive text and rhymes.
- ❖ Children will read at least once a week with an adult. Reading records are provided to keep an account of what reading children have been doing in school and at home.
- ❖ Key words will be provided for the children to learn and they will be tested regularly in school.
- ❖ Drama and role-play experiences using puppets to re-enact stories will be provided to gain understanding and develop a high level of comprehension.

Writing in Reception

The children will be provided with ample opportunity to write through a well-resourced writing area and role play areas. Their writing will progress through various stages:

- ❖ Mark making
- ❖ Letter-like shapes (emergent writing)
- ❖ Initial letter (beginning sound)
- ❖ Phonetic writing (hearing sounds in words and writing corresponding letter)

Activities are planned around the children's interests as well as the need to provide opportunities for the children to move their learning forward. Free flow involves the environment being rich in opportunities to engross the children in their learning. Activities are modelled by adults and the adults play alongside the children, modelling language and expectations.

The children are taught well known stories through 'talk for writing', where they learn to tell stories verbally and with actions by heart. The stories link in with their topic learning and children enjoy using story maps to retell the stories to others.

Induction and Transition Processes

The induction period for children is essential to enable them to feel safe and secure:

- ❖ Children will visit the setting prior to starting, if possible, as well as receiving information on their new classroom and familiar staff in the school. The dates and times of these visits will be given out in the induction pack.
- ❖ Parents are invited by letter to in an induction sessions.
- ❖ A staggered start ensures that children have time to settle in small groups. It also provides time for the adults to get to know the children and address any concerns that the parents/carers may have.
- ❖ Each child will have a nursery visit if possible, before they start school.
- ❖ The class teacher will also meet with parents for a transition meeting
- ❖ Activities within the first month will be based around children being introduced to one another and the adults as well as giving them plenty of opportunities to explore the various areas in the setting.

Children with Additional Needs

- ❖ The environment is to be well resourced to ensure inclusion.
- ❖ All adults involved are aware of children's needs and targets.
- ❖ Children are assessed as individuals and their own learning goals are set by the team.

- ❖ Meetings with the class teacher, Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and parent/carer will also take place, if needed, to ensure a smooth transition can take place.