



Sacred Heart
Catholic Primary School
Together we live and learn; we play and pray

EYFS Policy

March 2026

Date of next review March 2029

Review Period – 3 Years

*Responsible for Policy: Local Governing Body on behalf of St John the Baptist Catholic
Multi-Academy Trust*

Policy Approved: March 2026

Equality Act Statement:

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Please refer to St John the Baptist Multi Academy Trust Equality & Diversity Policy

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Aims

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, we aim to provide a high-quality Early Years education which gives children a secure foundation for future learning and for life. Rooted in our Catholic mission, we recognise that every child is a unique gift from God and we are committed to nurturing the spiritual, moral, social, emotional and academic development of each individual.

We seek to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, rich in language and first-hand experiences, which enables all children to make good progress from their starting points. We aim to develop confident, independent learners who demonstrate pro-social behaviour, form positive relationships and approach new challenges with resilience and enthusiasm.

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024). It also reflects guidance from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

Catholic Ethos and Mission in the Early Years

Our Early Years provision reflects the mission of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School where, together, we live and learn and play and pray. Christ is at the centre of all that we do and our youngest children are introduced to the love of God through daily prayer, the celebration of the liturgical year and the witness of staff who model Gospel values in their relationships and interactions.

We follow the Religious Education Directory, *To Know You More Clearly*, through which children begin their journey of faith by hearing the Word of God, responding in prayer and learning that they are loved by God. In partnership with parents, who are the first educators of their children, we support each child to grow in faith and to understand their unique vocation within God's family.

Governance and Leadership

The St John the Baptist Catholic Multi-Academy Trust has overall responsibility for the strategic direction of the school. The Local Governing Body monitors the implementation of this policy and its impact on standards and provision.

The Headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYFS Leader oversees planning, assessment, provision and the quality of teaching and learning, and ensures continuous improvement through self-evaluation and professional development.

Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School consists of one Reception class. Staffing is determined in line with academy guidance and ensures that there is a qualified teacher supported by teaching assistants. Staffing levels are organised to ensure that children are safe, well supervised and able to access high-quality learning experiences at all times. Priorities relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage will be identified in the school improvement plan as appropriate. Management roles and responsibilities will be reviewed in line with performance management procedures.

The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher's main responsibilities are:

- ✚ ensuring the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
- ✚ ensuring the efficient running of the Reception class
- ✚ monitoring the quality of learning and teaching
- ✚ being dedicated to continuous quality improvement
- ✚ making use of quality improvement tools available
- ✚ managing the budget for the Reception class with particular reference to resources and equipment
- ✚ supporting the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage staff and informing them of national, local and school decisions which will impact on the Early Years
- ✚ encouraging a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion.
- ✚ ensuring smooth transition for pupils between home, Nursery, Reception and Year One.
- ✚ keeping the headteacher, senior staff and governors informed of developments within the Early Years Foundation Stage




Relevant staff training and development needs will be outlined in the school improvement plan. It is expected that all staff and governors are aware of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and its importance in relation to the children's learning and its impact on raising standards across the school. The School Improvement Development Plan details developments within this stage.

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

The curriculum is carefully sequenced and designed to build knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time. It is ambitious for all children and responsive to their interests and needs. Rich first-hand experiences, high-quality texts and meaningful interactions ensure that children develop the cultural capital they need for future success.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are central to our practice and children are supported to play and explore, to be active learners and to think creatively and critically.

Teaching and Learning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's learning, staff use the EYFS educational programmes and the characteristics of effective learning to provide a balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences, responding to children's interests and needs and supporting progress across all areas of learning. 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 interactions. 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 One.

Warm and positive relationships are at the heart of our practice. Adults model language, extend children's thinking through skilful questioning and provide support and challenge to ensure all children make good progress.

Early Readings and Phonics

Early reading is a priority within the Early Years. We teach phonics using Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. Daily phonics sessions ensure that children develop secure decoding skills and a love of reading. Reading books are fully decodable and closely matched to each child's phonic knowledge. Regular workshops and communication with parents enable them to support their child's reading at home.

Story time and the sharing of high-quality texts play a central role in developing children's language and comprehension.

Behaviour and Personal Development

Our approach to behaviour reflects the principles of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. We promote pro-social behaviour so that every child knows that they are loved, they are safe, they are capable and they are fun to be around. Through clear routines, positive role modelling and restorative approaches, children learn to manage their feelings, build relationships and take responsibility for their actions.

Assessment

At Sacred Heart, 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.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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 and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, and schools across the Trust, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring that all children are fully included and supported. Early identification of additional needs enables us to work closely with the SENCo, parents and external agencies to provide appropriate support. We are particularly mindful of the needs

of disadvantaged pupils and those learning English as an additional language and ensure that provision enables them to achieve well.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through informal conversations, parents' consultations and a written report at the end of the school year. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. This partnership supports children's learning and wellbeing.

Transition

We ensure smooth and effective transition into Reception through close liaison with pre-school settings and meetings with parents. Transition into Year One is carefully planned so that children continue to build on the skills and knowledge they have developed in the Early Years.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

The Safeguarding Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. All staff are vigilant and report concerns according to the school's policy and procedures. The Safeguarding Policy can be found on the school website.

At Sacred Heart it is important to us that we embed safety and child welfare into all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage and we create an environment where everyone from staff to parents understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Key Elements to create a strong, proactive safeguarding culture in EYFS include:

- ✚ Ongoing Training: All staff receive regular safeguarding training to stay informed and confident in handling concerns.
- ✚ Clear Reporting Systems: At Sacred Heart we use CPOMs to report any concerns.

- ✚ Positive Role Models: Staff model safe, respectful behaviour, fostering trust and security for children.
- ✚ Engagement with parents: All families are engaged and informed about policies and procedures.
- ✚ Child-centered practices: Safeguarding policy priorities children's safety, listening to their voice and ensuring their environment is secure and supportive.

Health, safety and wellbeing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the Early Years by prioritising the prime area of physical development, eating a healthy fruit snack together and learning about healthy lifestyles through our curriculum.

Children are taught about:

- ✚ The effects of eating too many sweet things
- ✚ The importance of brushing their teeth
- ✚ How to brush their teeth well

Further safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present and will accompany the children on outings. The certificates are renewed every three years.

Food and Drink

Children are provided with healthy balanced and nutritious snacks and drinks throughout the school day in line with the [Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance](#). Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to the children.

All foods brought in from home should be checked for potential allergens so that the risk of cross contamination is reduced. *We are a nut free school.*

All food served to children must be prepared in a way to prevent choking. The Food Standards Agency has two posters on how to prepare food safely to avoid choking. At Sacred Heart we communicate with parents and or carers regularly regarding the best practices for packing lunches and other food brought from home, including tips on keeping food safe and fresh.

All staff within the EYFS have read and are familiar with Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance with regular updates and reminders.

We ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time.

All staff involved in preparing and handling food in the EYFS setting have the appropriate food hygiene training.

Safer Eating

Whilst children are eating there is always a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate. Before a child is admitted to our school, we always obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that a child has, and any special health requirements.

We have ongoing discussions with parents or carers and where appropriate health professionals to develop action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information is regularly reviewed and updated and shared with all staff involved.

All food served to children is prepared in a way to prevent choking. The Food Standards Agency posters are shared with staff and parents. [Preparing Food Safely to avoid choking.](#) All staff are referred to the following guidance. [Guidance on Food Safety for Young Children](#)

Attendance

Good attendance is promoted through strong relationships with families and early support where concerns arise.

Outdoor Learning

The outdoor environment is an integral part of our provision and provides opportunities for exploration, physical development and collaborative play.

Cultural Capital and Vocabulary Development

We provide a wide range of experiences, visits, visitors and high-quality texts to broaden children's knowledge of the world. A strong focus on developing vocabulary ensures that all children are well prepared for future learning.

Monitoring and Review

The quality of provision is monitored through learning walks, moderation activities, pupil progress meetings and the Trust's quality assurance cycle. The effectiveness and outcomes of the EYFS provision are reported to the Local Governing Body and the Trust. This policy will be reviewed in line with the Trust's review schedule.

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 First Aid Policy Incorporating Administration of Medicines and Care of Sick Children
Administering medicines policy	
Emergency evacuation procedure	See emergency evacuation plan
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

