St Theresa's Catholic Primary School
Early Years Policy 2026/2027

Introduction

The Mission Statement aims for our school are:

- *To do the little things well*
  - To achieve this we will:
  - Be more like Jesus
  - Love one another
  - Enjoy coming to school
  - Have fun & achieve more each day
  - When you fall out, forgive.

What is the 'Early Years'?

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old. This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

At St Theresa's, the 'Early Years' refers to children in their first two years at school (Nursery and Reception) for children aged 3 to 5.

Aims of St Theresa's Early Years Provision:

1. To provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced environment, both inside and out which meets all the individual needs of 'young learners'.
2. To enable them to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.
3. To give each child opportunities to interact with other children and adults and to establish good relationships. The child needs to find in his/her key worker someone to love and respect, with firm and sensitive control who provides the security of an ordered way of life.
4. To encourage the development of self–confidence, self–esteem and a sense of achievement. The needs of the child come first; they require recognition and the satisfaction of feeling accepted and approved of by all adults.
5. To provide opportunities for learning through direct experiences. These will encourage natural curiosity and allow for exploration and discovery.
6. To provide opportunities to practise and consolidate new ideas and experiences. Children need activities that are challenging and encourage them to think, reason, make choices and solve problems.
7. To develop perseverance and concentration and to establish patterns of learning for the future.
8. To nurture and foster an awareness of the needs and feelings of others. To develop a sense of responsibility and a caring attitude towards the environment and other living things.
9. To promote equal opportunities for all children irrespective of race, gender, ability or special educational needs.
10. To develop skills and understanding in communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, creativity, knowledge of the world and to encourage physical, personal, social and emotional attributes.

11. To develop links between home and school in order to work together to promote the child's development.
12. To maintain continuity and progression between the Early Years and school through common policies, practices and attitudes.

The EYFS Curriculum

The curriculum is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS is a framework which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 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
Communication and language – Listening, Attention, Understanding / Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Self-Regulation / Managing Self / Building Relationships
Physical Development – Gross Motor Skills / Fine Motor Skills

The Specific Areas
Literacy – Comprehension / Word Reading / Writing
Mathematics – Number / Numerical Patterns
Understanding the World – Past and Present / People, Culture & Communities / The Natural World
Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with Materials / Being Imaginative and Expressive

Assessment

At St Theresa'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.

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 and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

English as an Additional Language: Staff will support children in the setting who have English as an additional language. There is a clearer focus on the reasonable steps providers must take, including

the assessment of children's skills in English. Other skills will be assessed in the context of the child's own language.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve in staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

How children learn

We see play as the vehicle by which our children gain access to the curriculum.

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. Children must have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors.

'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults' (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021).

Through carefully planned and structured play we aim to provide children with learning experience in a way that is fun and exciting. Staff plan and resource the environment and intervene appropriately to support and extend the children's learning and develop their language and communication skills. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity.

Through play children can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences which help them make sense of the world;
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse feelings and take risks;
- Think creatively and imaginatively;
- Communicate with others as the investigate or solve problems;
- Express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring	Children will 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.

Outdoor Environment

Children should be allowed to enjoy themselves when outside. They should be given opportunities to use their senses and to access all areas of the EYFS Curriculum. Staff and parents are encouraged to value the benefits of outdoor play as it complements and enhances all aspects of a child's

development and learning through its physical, open ended nature.

Aims:
To create opportunities to be able to explore the outdoors, and to enhance learning in the outside environment.

Objectives:
1. Enjoy outdoor activity during ALL seasons.
2. Experience natural resources.
3. Develop the skills of asking and answering questions about outdoor experiences.
4. Behave safely outdoors.
5. Develop respect for the environment.
6. Encourage multi-sensory exploration.

Implementation:
1. Allow all children to access resources independently.
2. Provide stimulating resources which can be used outside.
3. Plan to address all key areas of learning outside.
4. Dress children appropriately.
5. Model a positive attitude towards being outside.
6. Ensure that the outdoor environment is safe.
7. Raise potential awareness of policies and practice.
8. Interact with the children when outside.

The Role of the Key Person
The Key Person is responsible for promoting effective and positive relationships for the children in our EYFS. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

In Nursery, each member of staff has a group of children whom he/she is particularly responsible. When a child first starts in nursery, they help her/him to settle and to benefit from the activities provided. The Key Person encourages positive relationships between children in their key groups, spending time with them as a group each day.

In the Reception class there is one full time class teacher and two teaching assistants who all promote effective and positive relationships for the children in their care.

Parents as Partners
At St Theresa's we feel it is essential that we recognise and value parents as the child's first teacher. We want them to be full partners in the education process of their child, so we can develop a mutual understanding with them and respect. Continued dialogue and sharing of information and expertise support the child's learning throughout the school.

We involve parents by:

- Holding parents' induction meetings for children beginning both nursery and reception classes.
- Encouraging parents to contribute towards their child's learning journey.
- Parents are encouraged to download the 'Tapestry' app, where staff will regularly send home observations of the children each week, showing what the children have been learning. Parents can send photos/videos in of the children, to show different things they do at home. They are also given the opportunity to comment on each observation.

- Inviting them to attend assemblies and celebrations.
- Encouraging them to share their child's education at home.
- 'Wow Moments' which help parents to celebrate children's achievements at home as well as at school. Parents can contribute to this as frequently as possible.

Safeguarding

At St. Theresa's we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Mobile Phones: Please see separate policy on 'Mobile phones, cameras and sharing images'.

The designated Safeguarding Leads for child protection are **Mrs Tatlock, Mrs Johnson and Mrs Rankin.**

Health and Self –Care:

Personal Hygiene

Children are encouraged to shield their mouths when coughing and to wash their hands regularly.

Children are encouraged to blow and wipe their noses when necessary and dispose of tissues hygienically. Staff will always support the children with their health and self-care needs.

Hands are washed under running water with soap.

Hand sanitizer is used in class

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, for example by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Please see the separate Intimate Care and Toileting Policy.

MEDICINES:

Please see separate medicines policy

Food:

Children are provided with nutritious snacks. Staff pay due attention to children's particular dietary requirements.

We keep an up to date list of any known allergies - The list is displayed on the kitchen walls in the nursery and reception classrooms. The school cook has photographs and information about any particular dietary requirements (Reception children) on the kitchen wall.

We promote and extend the children's knowledge and understanding of a healthy diet.

2 nursery staff members hold food hygiene qualifications and all staff in EYFS are aware of the safer eating requirements as set out in the Statutory Framework.

Injuries / Accidents

Nursery - Injuries / accidents that occur are recorded in a green accident book. A carbon copy is kept in school and parents are given the original copy to take home.

Reception - Injuries / accidents that occur are recorded in a green accident book. A carbon copy is kept in school and parents are given the original copy to take home.

If thought necessary first aid will be administered.

If thought necessary, an ambulance will be called.

There are four members of staff with a valid Paediatric First Aid Certificate. (Miss Beard, Miss Clarke, Mrs Welsby, Mrs Corbett)

British values:

In the Early Years staff will teach the children to show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.

Staff will teach children fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This policy was reviewed by MISS E BEARD September 2026

Next review date: September 2027