

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2024



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Early Years Foundations Stage Policy

Revision history page

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Early Years Foundations Stage Policy

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This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of Early Years teaching and learning in Reception at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early Years Foundation Stage

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework,

Department for education and skills, 2021

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School [OLOL] we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however, we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

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The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the reception teacher work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Aims

“When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.”

Development Matters Sept 2020

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At OLOL the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five “Every Child Matters” outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At OLOL we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability
- provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development
- provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel

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Learning and Development

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 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. 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 seven areas of learning and development are:

Prime Areas

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

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

There are also three characteristics of effective learning:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

At OLOL we believe that all areas of learning are important and interconnected in order to promote the development of the 'whole child'. The prime areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in reception at OLOL are involved in this effective process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. The scheme of work consists of 3 creative termly topics which provide the vehicle for delivering the Early Learning Goals and Educational programmes.

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These topics are relevant to the needs of our children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum.

Term & Topic

Autumn: Knock, Knock!

Spring: A Walk in the Woods

Summer: Splish, Splash, Splosh!

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, success criteria, differentiated activities and deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational teacher assessment. This planning format is consistent with the principles of Assessment for learning.

Staffing and Organisation

There is one reception class at OLOL with a maximum of thirty children in the class. There is a ratio of one teacher supported by a part time Nursery Nurse/ Higher Level Teaching assistant 3 days a week and a Grade C teaching assistant for 2 days. The staff work as a team and meet formally at least once a week in order to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments for the Reception Class.

The Reception class has a role play area and the children have access to this at all time during the day. There is also a secure outdoor area, which is used to support the children's learning. The children have access to these from the classroom.

At OLOL we engage in ongoing professional development to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. All practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses; in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At OLOL we adhere to the principles of assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

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Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations recorded on group assessment sheets, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number and high frequency words, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning.

Summative assessment

Statutory Assessments - Children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of joining Reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language that is delivered in English. It is clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The purpose of the RBA is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created. The results of the EYFS profile shall be shared with parents and the Local Authority.

A written summary of the child's attainment using the 17 ELGs and a narrative on how a child demonstrates the 3 characteristics of effective learning are given to parents. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the EYFS profile report together with a narrative on how the child demonstrates the three characteristics of effective learning.

The Reception teacher participates in regular in-house and local cluster group moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments.

The quality of the taught curriculum is monitored by the subject co-ordinators in school through regular lesson observations, pupil interviews, planning and book scrutiny. The foundation stage teacher monitors teaching and learning across the foundation stage each year and analyses EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the Headteacher (Paul Barber) and Assessment co-ordinator (Anita Philbrook).

Learning through play

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At OLOL we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, writing table, maths challenge, topic display table, listening centre, computer area, art and craft area, play dough, builder's tray, sand, water, outside, construction, small world and puzzles. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Liaison with pre-school settings and induction

At OLOL we have over 16 feeder nurseries; however, we are trying hard to establish close links between the local nurseries and the reception class.

During the summer term, nursery children who will be starting school in September make visits to the reception classes as part of the induction process.

A parents meeting is held by the Head teacher and Foundation Stage Leader in the Summer Term to introduce parents/guardians to the school and reception procedures.

Through this meeting the school's expectations and routines are communicated. The induction process and reception curriculum are also introduced. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the class teacher.

Parents/guardians are given a reception brochure which outlines the reception curriculum and school routines, along with other necessary documentation.

During the summer term, all prospective children are invited to visit the school for an afternoon play visit; the current Reception children become buddies to the visiting children and show them the learning environment.

Children and their families are also invited to the Summer Fair.

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Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. If it is required, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

During the induction period in September, children are split into groups of about 10 children. This allows:

- children to adjust and feel secure in their new environment
- the practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
- the reception teacher to carry out initial assessments

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and Year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At OLOL:

Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year

Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support

Reception children meet year 1 teachers during worship and other whole school activities during the reception year

EYFS Profile are passed on to year 1 teachers and discussed alongside a short narrative describing the child's three learning characteristics. Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July

Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a minimum of one morning/afternoon in July

Year 1 classroom include learning areas similar to the reception classroom: eg role play, writing table.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians 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:

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Outlining the reception curriculum to parents/guardians during the new parents meeting in June, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home

Encouraging parents/guardians to complete the home/school contract

Sending home a termly topic letter, informing parents/guardians of the learning that will be taking place at school, with suggestions of the types of activities that could be carried out at home to support that learning

Holding parent/guardian class visits/curriculum talks to outline the Read Write Inc Phonics Programme and the reception curriculum and to provide an opportunity for asking questions.

Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner

Inviting parents/guardians to help in the reception class and to accompany children on school visits.

Encouraging parents/guardians to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.

Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school.

Discussing children's individual targets with parents/guardians at parents' evenings.

Equal Opportunities

At OLOL we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed formally every term.

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The school's SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but at least every two years.