Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School

Policy: Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
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1. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- Learning and development is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, our school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Assigns each child with a key person to ensure that each child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

2. Legislation

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Crime and Policing Act 2026)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Victims and Prisoners Act 2024
- DfE (2026) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school-based providers'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' (latest statutory guidance)
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (latest statutory guidance)
- DfE 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'.

3. Context

In the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary school we believe in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development for our pupils, giving them the best possible start to their education in which Catholic values are fostered. We continuously encourage pupils to be independent, curious, creative and resilient learners who show respect for each other, their communities and the wider world. Through our personalised and skilled teaching and learning approach, we are able to offer children a platform to be expressive, to feel valued and to feel empowered. As well as following the children's interests, our creative thematic curriculum is specifically planned for our pupils with a careful balance of whole class teaching, group work and child-initiated play to support children to reach their full potential. By establishing effective, trustworthy and supportive relationships with our pupils, children enjoy their learning whilst achieving the Early Learning Goals. We are committed to providing our children with the knowledge and skills to make a positive difference and succeed in an ever-changing world.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the statutory framework for the EYFS (effective September 2026). The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a comprehensive statutory framework that sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five. The EYFS extends from birth to the end of Reception and the beginning of Key Stage 1. The curriculum should therefore be seen as part of a continuum of learning, which begins at birth, extends throughout the years of compulsory schooling and establishes the young person as a lifelong learner. At St Richard Reynolds, Catholic values underpin all teaching, learning and conduct, providing a context in which children's spiritual, moral and social development (SMSC) may take place. Children and their families are part of our college community in which the teachings of Christ are central to daily life. The ethos of the college and the values it cherishes, together with home and parish life, will have considerable influence on each child.

We are mindful of the responsibility this influence brings and it is our intention that over their seven-year journey:

- We teach the truths of our faith and reflect the traditions of the Catholic Church;
- We nurture the spiritual life of the children through example, prayer, liturgy and the sacraments;

- We help our children grow in confidence and self esteem

Religious Education is a core subject and pupils engage in 10% of their curriculum time in RE as well as participating in class liturgies, masses and whole school assemblies.

5. The EYFS framework

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected and encompass 17 early learning goals (ELG) 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.

Prime:
The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS, work together, and move through to support development in all areas.

Prime areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation
	Managing Self
	Building Relationships
Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding
	Speaking
Physical Development	Gross Motor
	Fine Motor

Specific:
The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

Specific areas	
Literacy:	Comprehension
	Word Reading
	Writing
Mathematics:	Numbers
	Numerical Patterns
Understanding the world	Past and Present
	People, Culture and Communities
	The Natural World
Expressive arts and design:	Creating with Materials
	Being Imaginative and Expressive

6. Planning

The planning within EYFS is based around different themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs

(achievements/occurrences and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning and will inform future plans. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In the Autumn Term a strong emphasis is provided on the Prime areas of learning as we know that success in these areas will support understanding and achievements in the specific 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 activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Practitioners reflect on the three characteristics of effective learning and ensure that the learning environment provides an opportunity to develop these skills.

Characteristics of Effective Learning	
Playing and exploring – engagement	Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to "have a go"
Active learning – motivation	Being involved and concentration Keeping trying Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
Creating and critically – thinking	Having their own ideas Making links Choosing ways to do things

7. Teaching and Learning Style

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. At St. Richard Reynolds we aim to develop each child to their full potential through an enriched play-based approach to learning and development. Research tells us young children learn best through play and the Early Years Team at St. Richard Reynolds aims to provide your child with appropriate play and learning experiences for their stage of development and help them to develop new skills. 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.

Our policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS and continue into Key Stages 1&2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- Making optimum use of the local community as an educational resource, taking the children on a variety of trips throughout the year;

- The teaching style embraces the different learning styles of the children. E.g. kinaesthetic.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the ELG's by the end of Foundation Stage; extending into National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 where appropriate;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, self-management, and the ability to resolve personal conflict and disagreements with others;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment, ensuring appropriate all-weather clothing is on hand so that outdoor play and continuous learning are never impeded by the weather.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The clear aims for our work, and the regular reflecting and monitoring (between the two sites) to evaluate and improve what we do;
- The close communication between parents/carers and staff including workshops/open sessions to facilitate understanding of teaching methods.

Pupils in Reception at St Richard Reynolds have a reception classroom and dedicated outdoor space which allows for continuous provision. Pupils also benefit from being part of a wider college allowing them opportunities to utilise these spaces; such as, large hall spaces, college chapel and drama studio.

At St Richard Reynolds we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

8. Transition into Reception

In the summer term, prior to a child starting with us in September, EYFS staff liaise with pre-school and nursery settings for a handover of information. This is invaluable in ensuring that provisions can be made to carry on building on the foundations of learning that have already taken place. This provides an opportunity for finding out first-hand the pupils' areas of strength and their areas of need. This meeting also allows staff to identify if any further support is required either from external agencies or in school support.

Get set for success

We run a 'Get Set for Success' programme which targets pupils and families who may need additional support prior to starting school. This may be due to speech and language concerns or Special Educational Needs (SEND) and therefore the child may need some support with transition. The 'Get Set for Success' programme runs for 3 weeks and adapts to the needs of the incoming pupils. Pupils get an opportunity to meet the EYFS team and visit the setting whilst parents are given input from health, speech and language and SENCO.

Home visits

Home visits take place in the summer term and are completed by the class teacher and Teaching Assistant. During the visit, the Teaching Assistant engages the child with a selection of play activities while the class teacher reviews necessary transition paperwork and addresses parental queries. This

initial meeting enables staff to meet each child in a familiar environment, plan for specific needs and interests and identify any required transition support.

Familiarisation & Welcome Postcards

Prior to the summer break, families are provided with photographs of the EYFS staff to reference at home over the summer. In addition, teachers send a personalised welcome postcard home to each child ahead of the new term to build excitement, foster a positive connection and help familiarise the child with their new teacher before their first day. All pupils also have the opportunity to visit the reception classroom in the summer term prior to their start in September to familiarise themselves with their new environment, adults and peers.

Staggered entry

In September, we operate a staggered start to support pupils transition into school. The staggered start enables staff to spend time further getting to know pupils in their new environment and establishing routines and expectations. It also allows staff time to spend with those who may be struggling with this transition.

9. Staffing

Our school follows the Westminster Diocese and Richmond-Upon-Thames local authority procedures and policies, which aim to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable. Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety. Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience. We also benefit from being part of a whole college community where leadership and specialist teaching supports the EYFS curriculum. Pupils in Reception benefit from specialist teachers in Music, French and PE who support the outcomes of the EYFS curriculum.
All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

• Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
• Identify solutions to address issues.
• Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

Key person

In Reception, the key person for the class is the class teacher and will work collaboratively with the teaching assistant to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

10. Parents as partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. Our aim is for pupils and their families to quickly establish positive relationships with their class teacher and Teaching Assistant. We know that by quickly establishing positive relationships between child, school and home we are enabling our pupils to feel happy and secure and therefore make great progress in all areas of learning. We recognise the role that parents will have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We support this through:

- A new to reception parents information evening. - Talking to parents about their child's experiences before their child starts school. Parents are also given a reception handbook

which acts as a resource to help prepare children for their start in Reception. It covers what to expect when starting at a Catholic school, introduces staff and the environment as well as sharing some of the developmental norms and expectations for a child prior to starting school.

- A new to reception familiarisation day giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher and peers before starting school during transition sessions.
- Conducting home visits in the summer term.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns before or after school.
- Encouraging parents and carers to share their child's successes and achievements outside of school so these can be celebrated within the classroom and shared via our mid-week bulletin.
- Sharing successes, learning updates and school notices through parent bulletins.
- Providing support through the role of class reps who act as a liaison between home and school. Parents also have access to a class email address to communicate non-urgent daily messages.
- Inviting parents to a formal meeting twice a year at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress and new learning targets.
- Holding an annual Early Reading and Phonics workshop to explain how phonics is taught in school and how parents can support reading at home.
- Providing parents with a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Ensuring that staff in the EYFS provide a range of opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents: class assemblies, school visits, liturgies and parent workshops.

11. Assessment

Assessment plays an integral role in helping practitioners recognise children's progress, understand their learning needs, plan next steps and identify any additional support required. We keep parents and carers regularly updated on their child's progress.

Formative Assessment & Daily Practice

Ongoing (formative) assessment is a natural part of daily teaching and learning. Practitioners interact with children and observe their skills, interests and progress during daily activities to shape future learning experiences.

In line with DfE statutory guidance, assessment does not require excessive paperwork, unnecessary breaks from child interaction, or the routine collection of physical/photographic evidence. When assessing whether a child has reached expected levels of development, teachers rely primarily on their professional knowledge of the child and expert judgement.

Learning Journals & Progress Monitoring

Each child has a dedicated learning journal kept within the classroom to celebrate key achievements and learning milestones. Practitioners capture meaningful learning moments, which are shared with parents and carers during open sessions, workshops and parent consultation meetings.

Rather than maintaining exhaustive physical tracking books, progress is evaluated through daily interactions and ongoing observations. Practitioners use these insights alongside their expert professional judgement to determine whether a child is 'on track' or 'not on track' against age-related expectations, recording data internally on the school's tracking system at the end of each term to inform planning and targeted support.

Statutory Assessments

Our setting completes two statutory assessments during the Reception year:

1. **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA):** A short, interactive assessment completed within the first six weeks of starting Reception.
2. **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP):** Completed in the summer term of the Reception year. The EYFSP provides a well-rounded summary of the child's attainment against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and assesses their readiness for Year 1.

Targeted Support & Interventions

Where a child requires extra support, targeted interventions are planned and tracked via provision mapping. If practitioners have concerns about progress, particularly in the prime areas they will meet with parents and the SENCO to agree on supportive strategies and determine whether specialist support is required.

Reporting to Parents & Local Authority

- **End-of-Year Reporting:** At the end of the summer term, parents receive a final report stating whether their child is working at expected levels (**'Expected'**) or working towards them (**'Emerging'**) for each ELG.
- **Transition to Year 1:** All assessment data and EYFSP outcomes are shared with the Year 1 teacher to ensure a smooth transition. Children who have not yet met all ELGs will continue to be supported towards them in Year 1.
- **Data Submission:** Statutory EYFSP results are reported electronically to the local authority (Achieving for Children) at the end of the academic year for submission to the Department for Education.

12. Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. Using our EYFS curriculum, learning is personalised in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents and SENCo, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support. Our school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

13. Safeguarding and Welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy. All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be

dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required. Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect. All safeguarding and welfare concerns are recorded.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with appropriate choices to help them develop these important life skills, including the promotion of good oral health. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

St Richard Reynolds school takes safety of its pupils very seriously and various related safety policies and procedures are available in the school office and published on our website. In accordance with current legislation for all schools, should any concerns arise regarding child protection including radicalisation, then we will seek advice from the appropriate authority. All staff have received Child Protection and PREVENT training. All EYFS staff and volunteers follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The headteacher or the Governor with responsibility for Health and Safety will be happy to discuss these in more detail should a parent / carer wish to do so. Specifically, the following procedures must be observed:

- Pupils may begin to arrive at school at 8:35am where a soft start morning is in place. Two members of staff are on duty at the gate. At 8.45am the gate to the Primary playground is locked. Security systems operate throughout the day to enable visitors to enter via the college reception desk. A visitor can only gain access to the teaching parts of the building via the college office and foyer, requiring a staff member to open security doors. All parents must leave promptly at 8.45am. All late pupils are required to report to college reception where they are marked in and then escorted to their classroom.
- At 3:05pm the children are dismissed from the playground gate by the class teacher.
- No child will be handed over to the care of any adult other than a parent / carer or person nominated by the parent and known to the Reception class staff.
- Safeguarding procedures strictly regulate the use of mobile phones, cameras, and all electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities within the EYFS setting for staff, visitors, and parents.

The EYFS learning environment is checked frequently for health and safety and this is recorded in a log scrutinised regularly by the Early Years Coordinator. The Health and safety governor monitors that any repairs and maintenance is undertaken in a timely manner.

13.1 Child Absence & Attendance

The school maintains an Attendance Policy shared with parents/carers establishing expectations for reporting child absences. Staff follow up on unexplained or prolonged absences in a timely manner. Where a child is absent without notification, attempts are made to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. Where necessary, concerns regarding missing children or absence trends will be referred to local children's social care services or a police welfare check requested.

13.2 Whistleblowing

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place for all staff (including volunteers and students) to raise concerns regarding poor or unsafe practice. Staff are aware of reporting mechanisms to senior leadership as well as external reporting routes, including the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line (0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk) and Ofsted.

13.3 Safer Eating & Food Safety

While children are eating, at least one member of staff with a valid full Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate is present in the room. Children are always within sight and hearing of staff while eating. Staff sit facing children where possible to monitor for choking (which can be silent) and prevent food sharing/allergic reactions. Prior to admission, information regarding dietary requirements, preferences, allergies and intolerances is obtained and shared with all staff involved in preparing and handling food. Up-to-date dietary and allergy records are maintained in the classroom and provided directly to kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors. Allergy action plans are created with parents/carers. Any choking incident requiring intervention will be recorded, shared with parents/carers on the same day and reviewed periodically to mitigate risks.

13.4 Banned Dog Breeds

In accordance with statutory regulations, banned dog breeds under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (including the XL Bully type) must not be kept or present on the premises at any time.

13.5 Children's Screen Use

The school adheres to the DfE statutory guidance regarding children's screen use in early years settings to support healthy physical and educational development.

14. Class Size and Welfare

Class sizes will be limited to 30 pupils per school teacher. Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

At St Richard Reynolds we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (effective September 2026). We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and develops experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy was updated in September 2026 by the EYFS Lead to reflect the statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026).

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.