



**ST TERESA
of CALCUTTA**
Catholic Academy Trust



EYFS Policy

(Early Years Foundation Stage)



St Vincent De Paul RC Primary School
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At St. Vincent's everything we do stems from our desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Mission Statement:

**Brother, sister, let me be your servant.
Let me be as Christ to you.
Pray that I might have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.**

Our rationale:

At St. Vincent's we are committed to providing our pupils with the opportunity to develop their relationship with God through the Catholic faith in an environment in which personal fulfillment, responsible citizenship and spiritual growth are fostered.

Aims

To create a Christian community where the Gospel values are evident:

- We will strive to be living witnesses of Christ's teaching within the world community and offer a positive contribution to our local community.
- We will love our neighbour by being aware of and responsive to human need.

We teach our children to be responsive to the needs of others through our assemblies and in classroom prayer, worship and reflection. The children assume this responsibility not only in their fundraising for a range of charities, but also in their day-to-day relationships.

To help pupils to know and appreciate the spiritual and religious dimension of life as expressed in the Catholic faith tradition we endeavor to:

- Teach the children to pray reverently and respectfully and provide opportunity for worship;
- Help the children to experience, understand, celebrate and live their faith in ways suited to their spiritual maturity;
- Help the children to develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- Help the children to understand the relationship between spiritual growth and the Church's sacramental life as expressed in sign and symbol, and then to support the pupils to participate in the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and the Eucharist, in collaboration with the home and parish;
- Give prominence to the physical signs of our faith around school for our community to reflect upon.

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1. Early Years Foundation Stage Definition

This policy outlines the purposes, nature and management of Early Years education at St Vincent de Paul's R.C. Primary School. Within this document the terms 'Early Years' or 'Foundation Stage' are used to describe all the children between 4 and 5 years who attend the Reception classes.

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential. (*Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2025*)

St Vincent de Paul's Early Years Foundation Stage uses the following documents to facilitate the teaching and learning of our school: **Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2025: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five** (This publication is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> updated Sept 2025 **and Development Matters 2023: non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage 2023**).

2. Aims for the Children in the Early Years

The overarching principles which guide our practice from the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework are:

- 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 practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We have agreed to adopt the principles from the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework by seeking to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.

- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
 - Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
 - Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.
- Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. We aim to 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.
 - Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners that will engage children in the learning process. There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children informed by a knowledge of how children develop and learn.
 - Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. Children will have the opportunity to play indoors and outdoors. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. Practitioners should support children to learn with enjoyment and challenge by providing well-planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development both indoors and out.
 - Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, safe, secure and valued. Early Years experiences should build on what children already know and can do. No child should be excluded or disadvantaged. Practitioners should be sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs ensuring that they provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.
 - Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
 - For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised. Practitioners should provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is carefully structured (recognising different starting points; relevant to levels of need; indoors and outdoors).
 - Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners.

Inclusion

- As a Roman Catholic school, Christ is at the centre of all we do, working in line with our school mission statement: *'Hand in hand with Jesus'*.
- We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St Vincent de Paul's R.C. Primary School are treated fairly regardless of gender, race, religion, or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

- In our EYFS we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning, ensuring each child leaves our setting with the cultural capital they deserve.
- In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, children who are high attainers, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

3. Safeguarding

It is important to us that all children in the EYFS are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. 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.

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

At St. Vincent de Paul's R.C. Primary School in EYFS we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements and we understand that we are required to:

- Promote the safeguarding and welfare of all children. Train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and respond in a timely and appropriate way.
- Promote a range of good health practices. Including: hand washing and hand sanitizing, having a balanced diet, staying hydrated, exercising and taking care of our dental hygiene.
- Have at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate who is on premises and available at all times when children are present.
- Prevent 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 development 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.

4. The Importance of Play in the EYFS

“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 and learning that is guided by adults.”

“Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and 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 express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

5. Learning and Development

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Learning in the EYFS is based on three ‘characteristics of effective teaching and learning’. These are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children 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.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape the educational program in our early years setting. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The Seven Areas of Learning in the EYFS

The Three Prime Areas of Learning

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

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

The Four Specific Areas of Learning

We must also support children in four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

6. Planning, Observation and Assessment

Medium term overviews and detailed weekly plans for Literacy, Mathematics, RE, Understanding the World, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Expressive Arts and Design, continuous provision and phonics are produced together by the EYFS teachers. Through this planning, the EYFS staff plan additional objective-led activities, in line with the Early Years Framework, Development Matters statements and the Early Learning Goals to ensure maximum and effective opportunities for the children's development and learning. This occurs naturally as a topic develops and children and staff alike become inspired by new ideas for enhancements. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and children's interests.

Assessment in the EYFS mostly takes the form of observation and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. We keep information provided by parents and previous settings that will contribute towards our knowledge of each individual child. Some more formal assessments are completed throughout the academic year to track progress. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is used which is a short assessment, taken within the first six weeks of a child

starting reception. Children are also assessed at the end of the Reception year against the Early Learning Goals as part of the statutory assessment for EYFSP. The EYFS Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Practitioners will indicate whether the child is 'Emerging' or 'Expected' for each of the Early Learning Goals.

7. Organisation of the Learning Environment and Staffing

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces." (Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The environment is set up in areas of provision where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS has an outdoor play area which is secure within the school grounds. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

The EYFS at St Vincent de Paul's is split into 3 class bases. The Reception classes are run in parallel and provision is freely accessible with distinct areas of provision for learning opportunities.

Organisation of the classes

There is one September intake of up to 45 Reception children. The cohort is split into three classes (currently alongside Year One); each of which is taught by one class teacher and one teaching assistant.

8. Admissions and Transition

Children are admitted to Reception in line with the School Admissions Policy (see website). In June, Reception teachers liaise and speak with Nursery setting staff to discuss each child in detail. It may also involve the Reception teachers visiting children in their Nursery settings to meet staff on-site and observe the new intake at play as well as individual home visits or telephone conversations with parents.

In September children attend in smaller groups for a number of shorter sessions which progress in length and involve additional events such as lunchtime. This supports children to settle and become familiar with their new setting, practitioners and routine before beginning school full-time. We aim that this transition process is completed within the first two weeks of term during which time crucial observations are completed to reflect the starting points of each individual child.

At the end of Reception, children are given the opportunity to 'visit' their new Year 1 classes and 'meet' their new teachers and teaching assistants. This will include a 'tour' of new areas and some fun activities to make the children feel welcomed, settled and excited for September. Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to pass on information and talk about each child in detail. Assessments are analysed and groupings with progress targets set against the new KS1 curriculum.

9. Parental Partnerships

At St. Vincent de Paul's R.C. Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Inviting parents of new children to tour the school.
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- Inviting parents of new children to a meeting prior to the October ½ term to give detailed information and advice regarding EYFS and whole school practices.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress by encouraging parents to talk to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. For example: fund raising days, themed activity days, Sports Day, PTA events, Religious and dramatic performances to which all family members are invited, holding two formal Parents' Evenings per year (Autumn and Spring term) at which time the teacher and parent discuss the child's progress and development.
- Hosting termly 'Stay and Play' events which offer families the opportunity to learn alongside their child and find out more about their school experiences.
- Encouraging families to complete home learning tasks each half term together to allow them to discuss the upcoming topics and events which will be part of the children's school experience.
- Providing parents with a formal end of year report alongside the children's books.
- Photographing the children and updating Seesaw (parent app) to provide parents with images of learning in school.

10. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed following a 2-year Policy Review Cycle or when there are significant changes to the curriculum that warrant it. It may also be reviewed earlier should it no longer comply with school practice or the legal requirements of schools.

Policy reviewed and updated by: Mrs Coluccio- October 2025

Policy review date: October 2027