

The Good Shepherd Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Mission Statement

**Our mission is to develop our children with active and creative minds,
a sense of understanding and compassion for others and
the courage to act on their Catholic beliefs.**

**In our school community we celebrate our faith and we work together to
achieve our personal potential by trying to live like Jesus and become the
person that he wants us to be.**

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Chair of Governors signature:	Rebecca Burke
Head Teacher's signature:	Margaret Williams

“Start children off the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22: 6

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five. The EYFS curriculum is used from Pre-school / Nursery up until the end of the Foundation Year. At Good Shepherd Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy, children can join Nursery (Foundation Stage 1) from September 2021, following their third birthday and Reception (Foundation Stage 2) in the September following their fourth birthday.

AIMS

At Good Shepherd Academy we aim to:

- give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop to their full potential
- offer extensive and varied opportunities for development
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.
- recognise that all children are unique and special
- encourage children’s independence and decision-making skills
- understand that all children develop and learn in individual ways and at different rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally
- foster and nurture children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the school community
- teach them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- develop children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
- understand the importance of play in children’s learning and development
- provide effective learning experiences, which build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development
- provide exciting learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

CURRICULUM

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Good Shepherd is delivered in accordance with the Government’s statutory document ‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’. We are currently an ‘Early Adopter School’ and have been using the revised Development Matters document, which will become statutory in September 2021. This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children’s welfare, and learning and development requirements through four themes:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

In our school community we endeavour to celebrate our faith and work together in order for each child to fulfil their own personal potential by trying to live like Jesus and become the person that He wants us to be.

At Good Shepherd we work towards developing our children with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others and the courage to act on their Catholic beliefs. We strive to provide a secure and caring learning environment in which all children feel eager and motivated to learn.

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Foundation Stage 2 the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

AREAS OF LEARNING

There are seven areas of learning and development that together shape the educational provision in our Early Years setting. All areas of learning are valued equally and are often inter-connected. The curriculum is centred on three prime areas of learning and four specific areas, which strengthen and apply the prime areas.

The Prime areas are:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The Specific areas are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. 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. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. As effective Early Years practitioners we aim to plan a broad and

balanced range of activities based on the needs of the children in our setting, while also setting realistic yet challenging expectations. The Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance material is used to support our planning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and encompasses the prescribed seven areas of learning as follows:

PERSONAL, SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Good Shepherd fosters and develops relationships between home, school, our Church and wider community. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image. Well-being and the mental health of our children is at the heart of everything that we do in the Foundation Stage.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children are given weekly opportunities to move to music and develop their sporting skills through fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done through both indoor and outdoor activities using a range of equipment. Children are also taught how to handle a variety of equipment safely.

COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE

This area of learning covers all aspects of language development and provided the foundations for all Literacy skills. This area focuses on developing key speaking and listening skills. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through a wide variety of stories, rhymes, role-play and whole class discussion. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and imaginative play. Children take part in activities using puppets, small world, role-play area, music and rhymes.

LITERACY

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early Literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making and writing area independently and will also take part in adult-led focused activities which are differentiated inline with the ability of all children. These activities include guided reading, 1:1 reading, story sequencing, writing, shared writing and Phonics. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control and letter formation. Children have the opportunities to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to independently look at books while also treating them with respect. They are given many opportunities to listen to stories either told by an adult or on the listening station.

MATHEMATICS

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numbers through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas, in-line with the whole school Mathematics and Calculation policy. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, calculation, shape, space, position, pattern and

measurement. Children will also begin to become familiar with money, telling the time and solving simple problems including problems that include doubling, halving and sharing.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use technology within the classroom.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS and DESIGN

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children will make paintings, drawings, collages, models and the use of basic musical instruments. Children learn new songs and rhymes during lessons and through weekly music / singing lessons. Through various times in the school year children are given the opportunity to participate in school productions, assemblies and Collective Worship.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Foundation teachers plan activities within the Foundation classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At the Good Shepherd Academy, we follow the Religious Education Scheme 'Come and see', in-line with the whole school. The children cover three topics per term and are assessed against religious success criteria after each topic. One topic per term is formally assessed. All children within the Foundation Stage are given opportunities to listen to, and respond to stories from the Bible. They are encouraged to think about their feelings and the feelings of others and are also given opportunities to ask relevant questions and 'wonder' about their faith. The children attend Mass on a regular basis either in school or at The Good Shepherd Church. They also attend whole school Collective Worship and lead child-led acts of worship within the classroom. The children are given the opportunity to explore other faiths, where we celebrate the cultural diversity of the world in which we live.

Active Learning through Play

At the Good Shepherd we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible, taking into account the differing abilities of all children within Foundation.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In the EYFS setting at Good Shepherd Academy practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences. These support children to discover, explore, investigate and to develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity. They also help them to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Through play activities children can apply their knowledge and demonstrate their skills and level of understanding.

Assessment

An informal Baseline Assessment is will be carried out when a child starts with us in Foundation Stage 1. This will be used to inform the team's planning and the child's next steps.

A Baseline Assessment is also undertaken within the first three weeks of the children starting school, In Foundation Stage 2. The current Baseline Assessment provider is STA.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. It is therefore essential that accurate and regular assessments are done to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Good Shepherd Academy. Regular, focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs so that staff can respond to these immediately. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by each class teacher and child-initiated pieces of independent work are photographed to form part of an individual learning journey using our whole school assessment system on Eazmag.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally).

Teachers make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs, observation sheets and through the use of our on-line system, Eazmag). All staff are involved in observing children. Teachers use observations to support their developing knowledge of each individual child. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Our observations are linked to the ages and stages in Development Matters.

Observations are evaluated so that learning priorities can be identified and relevant learning opportunities planned for to support children in their next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in focused 1:1 assessments. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring of assessment and data and all data is moderated as part of the Foundation team. Data is inputted every half term into Eazmag and following the data input a team assessment meeting takes place in order to inform planning.

Assessment at the end of the EYFS

At the end of Reception (Foundation Stage 2) the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The 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.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, over 7 Areas of Learning. Practitioners indicate whether children are meeting 'expected' levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning is created by the Foundation teachers and takes into account individual children's learning and developmental needs. Short term plans are created for Mathematics, Literacy, PSHE and Enhanced Provision. Enhanced Provision is then supported with the use of 'Focused Questions' for the children to consider in their play. These plans take into account prior learning and the next steps that are essential for rapid and sustained progress.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. This includes a weekly activity outline and a continuous provision grid. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child - initiated activities, both indoors and outdoors.

The Role of Parents

We value the involvement of parents/carers in school. This relationship begins before the children start at Good Shepherd with an invitation to visit the school for a presentation and an opportunity to meet the Foundation team. Within the first half term parents are asked to come into the classroom for an informal 'Meet the Teacher' session, where parents will be given additional information about our curriculum and how to help their child at home. It is also an opportunity to ask any questions that may have occurred following their child starting school.

We provide a Phonics and Reading Workshop at the start of the year, to ensure consistency with reading and writing approaches.

Parent consultation meetings are held in the autumn and spring terms, where parents are invited to come and discuss their child's progress. A report is sent out towards the end of the summer term, which details Characteristics of Effective Learning and the assessment levels of each child. If parents wish to discuss the report they are invited to make an appointment with the class teacher. If there are any concerns about a child parents are asked to come and discuss these with a

member of staff at the point at which the concern occurs. If parents have any concerns they are also encouraged to arrange an appointment with the class teacher as one is required. Parents are kept informed of what is happening in school through regular newsletters, the school website, Twitter, notes in the organisers and notices on boards outside the classrooms. Parents are invited to all assemblies, Collective Worship, WOW Days and performances throughout the year. We also encourage parents to complete 'WOW Moments' and send them into school to inform and become part of their child's learning journey.

Parents are involved in our planning and assessment process too and regularly receive forms at the start of a new topic to share ideas and prior knowledge with us.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

At Good Shepherd Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Promote each child's health and well-being, encouraging healthy eating during our allocated "Fruit and Milk" time.
- 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.

It is important to us that all children in the school 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.

In the EYFS setting at Good Shepherd Academy there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this an annual risk assessment is conducted in the EYFS.

Equal Opportunities

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is inclusive and facilitates the needs of all children regardless of their age, size, mobility, gender, ethnicity and ability. Our planning aims to foster an appreciation of each other's cultures and beliefs along with the promotion of a healthy and positive self-image. This is linked to the school's role as a Christian community, Special Education Needs and Inclusion

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments consider contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest

possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable practitioners to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's Special Needs Co-ordinator is consulted for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's policy for Special Educational Needs.