

**Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School,
Ilkley,**

A Voluntary Academy

EYFS Policy



Mission Statement:

‘Do Everything in Love’ 16:14 Corinthians

**Love Ourselves. Love Others. Love Learning. Love Our
World.**

Aims and Principles

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS reforms September 2025.

We endeavor to ensure that in line with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025, the children “learn and develop well and kept healthy and safe”. We aim to support children by “teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’” and therefore, ensure that this “gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Sacred Heart Primary School greatly values the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that 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

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS practice is shaped by four overarching principles:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Sacred Heart School we recognise that every child is constantly learning and we want all our children to be able to develop the skills to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

RE and our Catholic Ethos:

Our school mission, “Do everything in love”, underpins the way we welcome, teach and care for children and families. We help children to love themselves, love others, love learning and love our world. We teach respect, kindness, compassion, belonging and care for creation, while valuing and respecting families of all faiths and beliefs. At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, children in Reception take part in weekly RE sessions. Although we follow Source to Summit: Lighting the Path scheme, Godly play is used to enhance these sessions and support children’s understanding of the bible stories. Children attend whole school celebration of the word gatherings and assemblies. Class celebration of the word are led by the EYFS teacher, to support the school’s mission statement, ‘Do Everything in Love’.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Sacred Heart School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school 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.

In the EYFS we set realistic but aspirational expectations for our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning preferences;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary, involving external support agencies as necessary.

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.

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."
(Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025).

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At Sacred Heart School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2025. 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.
- 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 are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose
 - Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, assessments, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- In accordance with the Statutory Framework (2025), our EYFS lead is a trained DSL.
- All staff working in the Early Years have regular safeguarding training.
- Early Year's attendance is monitored and checked following the school's policy (see attendance policy).
- Ensure all staff in our Reception class are Paediatric First Aid trained.
 - Ensure that children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting. Where appropriate intimate care policies and plans are used for individuals.
 - Ensure safer eating guidance is followed by obtaining information about any special dietary requirements, food allergies and intolerances and an adult with the children when food is being consumed

"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."

Positive Relationships

At Sacred Heart School we recognise that children learn to be independent built from the foundation of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

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

We value and greatly enjoy the relationships we establish with parents of children in our care. We believe that a partnership between parents/carers and the adults involved in the child's learning are crucial. We build on what children already know and parents are often our first

port of call for this crucial information. We believe in creating an atmosphere, which is welcoming to parents, which makes them feel appreciated and encourages an all-important two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

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

- the children have the opportunity to spend time in Reception, before starting school, during taster sessions in the term before they start school;
- inviting all parents to a 'stay and play' session in the first few weeks after their child has started in Reception;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class, soon after the induction period, in the late Autumn Term, in the Spring Term and through open mornings and 'Stay and Play' sessions;
- parents receive an end of year report which highlights progress and achievements;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Share days, Class assemblies, Sports Day etc;
- parents have access to all their children's observations via 'Tapestry', our online observation and assessment tool, parents can also contribute to this which provides opportunities for them to inform school of specific achievements or 'Wow 'moments shared at home.
- Written contact through reading diaries as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring school to contact staff or the Early Years Leader.
- Parents/carers are made aware of the curriculum and ongoing activities through Tapestry, parent meetings, half termly curriculum letters, handouts at parents evenings, the school newsletter and social media posts.

We have good links with a number of pre-schools and nurseries in the locality. The EYFS teacher meets with staff to discuss new intake children. Pre-School children are invited to events in school (Stay and Play sessions/ nativity performances). Many of the children and families who join the school have attended our weekly playgroup sessions (Little Hearts) in school. This means the EY teacher has already begun developing positive relationships with parents before the child begins Reception.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the children's curiosities and is a themed approach to learning. This is adapted and changed as necessary in response to the needs of individual and groups of children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are

recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journal' on 'Tapestry'. Tapestry also contains information and observations provided by parents. We record baseline and termly assessment judgments on to an electronic tracking system in school.

All practitioners within the setting are aware of how their interactions, playing alongside and questions are part of moving learning on for children within the early years.

Each child's level of development at the end of Reception will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The three characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning will be used to ascertain each child's skills, attitudes and abilities.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up into learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We offer a free flow system where for the majority of the time the children can move freely between indoor and outdoor activities.

Children learn through exploring the environment around them. They absorb skills, knowledge and understanding needed for a particular task, but social, emotional, physical and cognitive learning is taking place at the same time. For children first-hand experiences are essential to learning. The physical doing leads to abstract thinking. Children need a stimulating environment in which to formulate and experiment with ideas. Challenges need to be offered in a context that is relevant to the child, and which fits in with the child's understanding and experience.

Learning and Development

At Sacred Heart School we recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We aim to guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in our care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them. We aim to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, to build their capacity to learn and to form relationships.

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

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.

Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs, interests and next steps by guiding their development through warm, purposeful and positive interactions. 'As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for Key Stage 1'. (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2025)

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Each area of learning and development will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated activity.

'If foundations prove inadequate, it is very, very expensive to underpin them later on'.

(Julie Fisher 'Early Education')

It is our goal that all children leave the Foundation Stage with increased confidence and independence, an inquisitive mind, a good understanding of core skills, a sense of achievement and of where they need to go next, some good friends and lots of fantastic memories.

Curriculum

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support pupils' personal development, prepare pupils for their next stage of education and develop the whole child.

We use 'Power Maths' with a maths mastery approach to ensure our children are exposed to a range of active experiences to develop the depth of their mathematical understanding. Topics are chosen around children's interests and the intended vocabulary and knowledge we wish for our children to leave the Reception year with. Vocabulary acquisition is planned for in all areas of the curriculum and time given to teaching children new vocabulary in meaningful/play based contexts. We use Ready, Steady, Write to support our teaching of early writing. The teaching of writing and maths follow the same approach and scheme as the rest of the school and supports the transition into National Curriculum. Our children are taught phonics from Bug Club (Active Learn) which is a DfE credited phonics scheme.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff ensure that the needs of the 'whole child' are met

Health and Safety

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School 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 line with the EYFS statutory framework 2025, at Sacred Heart Primary School we undertake;

- A whole school medical policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. (See separate policy).
- Fresh drinking water is always available.
- The school provides or permits snacks in line with its current arrangements and records dietary needs and allergies. Children are supervised whenever they eat and remain within sight and hearing of staff.
- Staff are alert to choking and allergic reaction risks, follow individual allergy plans and discourage food sharing. Food is prepared and served in a way that reduces choking and other risks.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.

- Milk is free until a child's 5th birthday, then parents have the option to pay for milk.
- Children have the choice of bringing their own healthy snack or having free fruit which is available during the day.
- Staff in the Early Years are Paediatric First Aid trained, and staff record any accidents/ and records are kept.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure, risk assessment and policy is in place and practiced every half term, (see separate policy).
- The school has a lockdown procedure that is practiced with the children. (see separate policy).
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- Any screen use is purposeful, age appropriate and consistent with the Department for Education's current guidance for screen use in early years settings and the school's online safety procedures. Screens do not displace the importance of talk, relationships, physical activity, practical exploration, books and play. Any screen use is limited to short periods for a clear learning purpose, with adult co-engagement.

Leadership, Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and EYFS lead are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. All staff working with Reception children are expected to understand the policy and apply it consistently. The EYFS lead and senior leaders review the quality of provision through discussion with staff, monitoring of curriculum and children's experiences, review of assessment and progress information, safeguarding and welfare checks, and feedback from children and families. Any actions are used to strengthen provision and improve outcomes, especially for children who may face barriers to learning or wellbeing. In Sacred Heart's school-based context, Reception is considered within Ofsted's state-funded school inspection arrangements. The current school inspection toolkit evaluates the early years separately as well as considering relevant whole-school evaluation areas. It focuses on statutory EYFS compliance, the ambition and sequencing of the curriculum, how well it meets children's needs, children's development across the areas of learning, communication and language, and the impact of leadership. This policy supports practice; it does not replace daily evidence of children's experiences or professional dialogue. This policy is reviewed annually and sooner if the EYFS statutory framework, safeguarding guidance or school arrangements change.

Related school policies and procedures

This policy should be read with the current school policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection; attendance; SEND and inclusion; behaviour; health and safety; medical conditions and medicines; allergy and safer eating; intimate care and toileting; educational visits; fire and emergency evacuation; lockdown; online safety and acceptable use; use of images and mobile devices; data protection; and complaints.