



Corpus Christi
Catholic Primary School
Early Years Foundation Stage
Curriculum

The EYFS framework

The EYFS framework provides us with four guiding principles around which we have planned a curriculum that enables all children to become competent, confident and independent learners. The four principles are at the heart of our EYFS curriculum and they ensure that there is a continuity of practice throughout the phase.

The principles state that every child is a **unique child** and that they learn through developing **positive relationships**. Children develop well in **enabling environments** and **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**.

The four overarching principles are also used to support continuity of provision as children move into Year One in our school. As children come to the end of their entitlement to an Early Years Foundation Stage provision at the age of five, a negotiated curriculum approach is adopted. This approach enables children to continue to develop as confident, independent learners who are not afraid to take risks. As they begin to access the National Curriculum in England (2014) practitioners continue to recognise that every child is a unique learner, who requires positive relationships and an enabling environment in order to learn well.

The Early Years Foundation Stage in our school begins when children enter Nursey and continues until the end of their Reception year. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is important in its own right as well as underpinning all future learning by supporting and fostering children's personal, social and emotional well-being, and establishing positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is broad and balanced for every child in order to develop the building blocks of their future learning.

A Unique Child

The curriculum encourages and motivates children to become independent learners. It supports them from their individual starting points and recognises their diverse learning needs.

Enabling Environment

The curriculum includes planning to establish a safe and secure learning environment both indoors and outdoors where children can explore confidently and independently, and where adults can support children to learn by following their own interests and fascinations.

Teaching and learning is broad and deep. The curriculum is delivered by providing opportunities to learn through solitary play, group play, adult supported play, adult directed learning and through discrete teaching.

Positive Relationships

The curriculum provides opportunities for children to build relationships with adults and children. Each child has a key worker to enable positive relationships from the outset.

The curriculum reflects the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds in the class.

There are positive relationships between school and home. The crucial role that parents play in the development of every child is valued.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The curriculum is relevant, fun and based on real experiences. Planning to include first hand experiences for the children within our curriculum will put their learning into context.

The curriculum allows and celebrates opportunities for practitioners observe children learning through play, and to use these observations to plan next steps in their learning through enhancing the learning environment or planning relevant activities.

The curriculum is built upon observations of every learner recognising their different starting points and planning for their next steps.

Learning from home is valued and used to help build the curriculum. Any information from home is used to develop a complete understanding about how each child learns, and recognises that children may display different characteristics and interests in the home environment.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

“The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment-playing and exploring, active learning, and creative and thinking critically-underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner”

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012

We support children to develop their characteristics of effective learning throughout our play based curriculum. We believe that characteristics of effective learning play a central role in helping us to understand how each unique child learns best, and are essential to helping us support children to become effective learners. Planning in the early years at our school is based upon observations of the children at play. We follow their interests and fascinations and plan from what they have learnt to ensure that we provide engaging and motivating learning opportunities based on real life experiences, and open ended resources to explore imaginatively and to promote creative and critical thinking skills.

The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all 7 areas of learning and development. They represent processes rather than outcomes.

Playing and exploring – engagement

'Finding out and exploring' is concerned with the child's open-ended hands-on experiences which result from innate curiosity. These experiences provide raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds out.

'Using what they know in their play' describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.

'Being willing to have a go' refers to children, finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenges, having a 'can do' attitude, being willing to take a risk in new experiences and developing the view that failures are opportunities to learn.

Active learning – motivation

'Being involved and concentrating' describes the intensity of attention that arises from children engaged in following a line of interest in their activities.

'Keeping on trying' refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties. It involves developing an element of purposeful control which supports resilience

'Enjoying achieving what they set out to do' builds on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success. It refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, rather than relying on the approval of others.

Creating and thinking critically

'Having their own ideas' covers the critical area of creativity - generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.

'Using what they already know to learn new things' refers to the way children use narrative and scientific modes of thought to develop and link concepts, find meaning in sequence, cause and effect and finding meaning in the intentions of others.

'Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways' involves children in approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways, by making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks. It is about developing their ability to plan and monitor what to do and to confidently change strategies when needed.

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Role of Adults

"Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development". (Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012).

- It is the role of *all* adults to support children's learning using a range of strategies, appropriate to age and stage of development. Adults are responsible for setting up a rich and stimulating learning environment that encourages independent play and investigation. Time needs to be given to allow children to explore the environment independently. It is the adults' role to support children's learning through high quality interaction and modelling.
- Adults should use a range of teaching strategies that reflect an understanding of learning style diversity, and promote the characteristics of effective learning. Teaching strategies will include supporting child-initiated play, leading activities that have been planned from children's interests, and discrete teaching sessions. Adults need to plan for a balance of these activities depending on the needs and developmental stage of each child.

- It is the role of all staff to ensure that the needs of all children are being met equally and that reasonable adjustments are made to ensure inclusion for all.
- Adult led activities will become more frequent across the Early Years Foundation Stage at our school as children progress in their learning. In Nursery there will be some appropriate times for small group sessions and whole class sessions such as singing or story sessions. As children move into Reception class whole class or grouped adult led activities will occur more frequently and for an increased duration in response to children's increasing focus and attention.

“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 must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for learning in Year 1.”

Planning and Assessment

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.” (Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012).

- In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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

Enabling Environments

- Children learn through having an interesting, stimulating and a safe environment and the time in which to explore it. A well set up learning environment is a powerful additional teacher.
- Aspect of the learning environment that should be equally valued and planned for are the **emotional environment**, the **indoor environment**, and the **outdoor environment**.
- A wide range of independent play opportunities need to be provided though stimulating, organised and well-resourced areas such as sand, water, role play areas, small world play malleable materials and construction areas. Literacy and Maths opportunities will be embedded across the learning environments and may also have designated areas.
- Areas set up in the learning environments will be well planned and have a clear purpose for learning.
- Language acquisition and literacy are a priority across the EYFS at our school. All learning areas encourage use of spoken language, development of vocabulary and listening comprehension. Reading and writing materials are available in areas across the indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- Mathematical development is enabled through the careful consideration given to layout of resources, learning prompts and open-ended resources available in learning areas.
- Children need to have as much access to the outdoor classroom as possible with a free flow approach operating when appropriate. Both Nursery and Reception classes share the outdoor learning spaces which include a garden area, sand kitchen, planting area and bike track. We also use nearby Saltwell Park for our “Forest Fridays”
- Displays need to promote, support and reflect children’s current interests and learning. Displays that are planned to support children in an interactive manner will be at an accessible height. To celebrate our understanding of how children, learn and develop, there should be a balance of self-initiated and adult led work on display.

Plan Do Review

Plan-Do-Review is an important part of our weekly timetable across the Foundation Stage. It gives children the opportunity to think about cause and effect, to overcome problems and to work with others. The discussion at planning and review times, gives scope for language and listening skills to develop and, as they mature, the opportunity to reflect on their experience with increasing verbal ability and logic. The plan-do-review process supports children in taking their first step in the learning process by helping them make choices and following through on their plans and decisions. It supports the transition into Year One, when a shared learning responsibility is needed for the negotiated curriculum.

This three-part sequence has a significant impact on our children's development across all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Plan:

In this first 10 – 15 minute session the children plan what they would like to do in the classroom or outdoors (the area to visit, materials to use and friends to play with). This may be an activity suggested by an adult or they may share their own ideas. During this time the children are encouraged to talk using sentences and provide as much information about their plan as possible to promote their communication, language and literacy skills. This is then noted by the adult to support the reviewing process.

Do:

The children are then given the opportunity to follow their plans with the support of adults if needed during a session of 45 – 60 minutes independent learning (or shift to new activities that interest them). During this time the adults will build on the children's interests, used skilled questioning and draw on key areas of development through the child's plan. Adult's supporting children are skilled key workers who have an in-depth knowledge of children's next steps in learning and use this knowledge to take learning forward during child initiated play.

Review:

During a 10 – 15 minute review time the children are again given the opportunity to further develop their communication, language and literacy skills whilst reviewing and recalling what they've learned. The adult supports the talking by asking relevant questions and building on their sentence structure. This also provides opportunities for the adult to determine suitable further provision to enhance the learning opportunities within the environment

Parents as Partners in Learning

- Building partnerships in learning between home and school is important to us. When children enter our setting, we achieve smooth transitions between home and school by offering a series of visits for both children and their parents. These involve children and their parents coming for stay and play sessions, offering a meeting between school and parents and a home visit from key workers.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning.
- Regular Family Learning sessions and workshops encourage parents to get involved.
- Stay and Play sessions make parents familiar with activities and resources.
- Parents are encouraged to share information about their child. This is gathered through informal discussions, Wow Sheets and through their home-school My World My Family books. Information shared may be recorded as part of a child's formative assessment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning which are then defined by aspects of learning within these areas. It is expected that teaching and learning will focus strongly on the three prime areas for the very youngest children. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

The Prime Areas of Learning:

- **Communication and Language (Aspects: Listening and Attention, Understanding, Speaking)**
Development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development (Aspects: Moving and Handling, Health and Self-Care)**
Involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Aspects: Making Relationships, Self, Confidence and Self Awareness, Managing Feelings and Behaviour)**

Involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The Specific Areas of Learning:

- **Literacy (Aspects: Reading, Writing)**

Development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

- **Mathematics (Aspects: Number, Shape, Space and Measures)**

Involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure.

- **Understanding the World (Aspects: The World, People and Communities, Technology)**

Involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

- **Expressive Arts and Design (Aspects: Using Media and materials, Being Imaginative)**

Involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The overview of themes is used as a starting point to create a long term plan which sets out possible learning opportunities that could take place throughout the year while allowing sufficient flexibility for children to develop and build upon their own interests.

Our long term plan gives an overview of the themes and enquiries that are going to be covered over the coming months and notes any special events and occasions that are planned. Our long term plan continues to value experiential learning encouraging further planning based upon visits, visitors and key events that the children may have at school and with their families. It takes into account the outdoor learning opportunities that children will experience as the seasons change.

Long term planning at our school provides limited details about what will be taught but sets out the foundations for how practitioners can plan broad and balanced learning opportunities based on what they know the children will experience. The broad themes and enquiries set out in the plan are based upon opportunities children may experience in their own lives and communities. It is enhanced over the year in more detail based on observations and in response to children's interests and fascinations. Flexibility within the curriculum over time enables practitioners to plan for learning that offers a variety of opportunity that considers the needs of children who remain in the provision for several years.

In addition to the broad themes that are planned for the year, some aspects of learning such as R.E, Maths and Literacy are planned out on a termly basis to ensure that progression in learning and coverage of content is planned for systematically over the year.

Themes that are set out in our school R.E scheme are set out on the long-term plan and are taught as far as possible through planned play opportunities, enhancement of the learning environment, visits and visitors and through stories

The teaching of Maths in Reception class follows the White Rose Maths overview

Our whole school follows the principles of the CLPE Power of Reading to teach Literacy. In order to ensure variety across the EYFS and throughout the school, key texts are planned throughout the year. Phonics is taught through the 'Little Wandle' scheme. Sets of phonemes are taught throughout the year and are set out across a long-term plan to support teachers to ensure coverage, pace and progression.

Our long-term plan is used in conjunction with our summative data to create a medium-term plan. Medium term plans are created termly. They are created by using what we know from summative data to inform what experiences and learning opportunities we need to give to the children, discussion

about how the children learn in the different cohorts and how we can use what we know about the children's interests to plan for effective learning that has the unique child at its heart. Medium term plans are not rigid but like our long-term plans are flexible so that we are able to respond to the changing needs and interests of individuals.

Our medium-term plan firstly gives an indication through summative data about areas for development with the curriculum for each cohort. These are the areas that future planning will focus during the coming half term. Possible ideas to support learning in these areas for development in particular, are planned and used to help staff in each class with considerations for changes to the learning environment, routines or when making enhancements to continuous provision.

Medium term planning sets out the experiences that children will have and suggests when in the half term these will take place. This enables specific planning and risk assessments to be made. Other agendas that are mapped out include possible key books and themes based loosely around the long-term plans for the term. This enables staff to consider any resources or idea for floor books that may be required in advance.

Medium term plans are used to help develop weekly short-term planning that informs the teaching and learning that will take place on a daily basis. It is used in conjunction with what practitioners learn about the children's characteristics of learning, their interests and next steps in learning that can only be discovered through a play-based routine that allows time to observe them as they demonstrate embedded learning. Short term planning can be annotated after shared discussion about what practitioners observe during the day. It allows practitioners to record responses to learning needs by noting environment enhancements, small changes to routine and providing small group directed teaching.

The Daily Routine

The daily routine in each class is important. In both the Nursery and Reception classes there are opportunities for joining as a whole group, small group time adult directed time, adult initiated enhancements to the environment and most importantly time for sustained child-initiated play opportunities.

Routines for both Nursery and Reception class have:

Welcome Time (A Time to Gather)

Welcome time can take place as a whole group for older children or smaller key worker groups. At this time the children are greeted by their key worker. Message boards are used at welcome times to share any news, talk about the weather, the day of the week and maybe something exciting that will take place during the day. A visual timetable is used to support children to understand and know what to expect during the session. Teaching of Literacy and Maths happens here when practitioners model writing, or talk about time, or explore simple data collection when thinking about numbers of children attending.

Sustained Time to Play and Learn

We know that children learn best through play; therefore, it is important to us that quality time is given in each class within the Foundation Stage to engage in sustained play-based learning. These are times that enable children to make choices about what they will do, and how they will achieve their goals. The development of the characteristics of effective learning can be seen clearly through the plan, do, review process, which are observed as the children engage in a play-based project that emerges from their own enquiries and fascinations. During these times it is the role of the adult to take learning forward through high quality interactions with the children without taking over or interrupting the flow of the play. It is an ideal opportunity for practitioners to observe and record what is happening. These observations which may be long narrative observations, short anecdotes, photographs or play products will form part of ongoing formative assessments. This in turn will inform short term planning on a daily basis.

Small Group Time

These are times during the day when adults plan to direct children's learning. Small group times can involve individuals, a few children or as the children move into Reception class a carefully selected group. Small group times are planned using a session planner which shows the reasoning behind why a particular skill is being taught or an activity is being delivered. It indicates differentiated learning opportunities, wider curriculum links and the resources that are required. The number and duration of small group time learning tasks will increase as the children move through the foundation stage.

Phonics Time

Every child has opportunity to short daily phonics activities. In Nursery these are planned from Phase One Phonics Foundations aspects of "Little Wandle" and when children are ready they will move on to Reception Phonics. Phase One is all about tuning into sounds and usually takes the form of a music session, nursery songs and rhymes. As they become competent at tuning into sounds the children learn skills such as identifying speech sounds that are the same and using oral blend and segment to hear and say the sounds in simple phonically decodable words. As children move into Reception Class most children will begin Little Wandle Reception and move through the phonics phases as they get to grips with reading and writing.

Number Time

Every child has the opportunity to take part in a short daily maths skills time. These could be embedded as part of the daily routine for example counting to ten before entering the indoor area or through a designated time to build up quick recall, counting and number recognitions skills. Planning is based on careful assessment and follows the "White Rose Maths" scheme.

Whole Group Gathering Time

There will be daily session times planned to enable the whole class to come together to learn, celebrate being together and reflect. Times when the whole group gathers together may be to share stories, sing and take part in music sessions or in Reception class, for P.E times. As children move through Reception class and into the summer term they will begin to join in with larger whole school gathering times such as assembly.

Summative Assessment and Moving On

At the end of each phase within the key stage, practitioners will make summative assessments based on a best fit judgement around age related expectations. In Nursery this is based around the age of each child and the relevant developmental band within Birth to Five Matters and Development Matters 2021. In Reception class, best fit judgements are made based around the Early Learning Goals.

In order to make accurate judgements about a child's development and embedded learning, all adults who are involved with each child must contribute. This includes gathering evidence throughout their time in school and at home.

Summative assessments are shared with their Year 1 teacher and with parents. They provide a starting point from which the next steps in their learning journey can begin.

These assessments are not used in isolation but alongside a quality discussion between staff and through a carefully planned transition process. The Foundation Stage team at our school treats transition into the next stage as an ongoing journey and is not isolated to the term before they move classes. Staff across the Early Years Foundation Stage at our school are familiar with all children through having shared play spaces and through cross moderation sessions over the year.