St. Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

"Love one another as I have loved you"

EYFS Policy

School Mission Statement

Our mission at St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School is to educate our children to reach their full potential in the context of a Catholic community in which each individual shares, or is in sympathy with, the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Christian way of life.
Our core values of **equality, excellence, kindness, forgiveness, perseverance, friendship, courage, service** and **respect** were chosen by our pupils and are based on Catholic Social Teaching. These are the overriding principles to which the whole school aspires, together with our school motto, *"Love one another as I have loved you" John 13:34.*

We seek to make St Elizabeth's School a secure, happy and inclusive environment that is a place:

- of the highest quality teaching and learning;
- of compassion, co-operation and reconciliation;
- where each child is seen and appreciated as a unique individual, made in the image and likeness of God;
- in which every child's talents are developed and their needs met;
- where mistakes are learning opportunities;
- in which all children are empowered to keep themselves safe and healthy;
- where endeavour and excellence are encouraged and celebrated;
- in which cultural diversity is respected and valued;
- where we put our faith into action for the Common Good

We value worshipping and celebrating together, sharing our Christian witness and drawing strength from and serving our local parishes and the wider community.

Approved by:	Education Standards and Catholic Life Committee
Status	Statutory
Review Cycle	Annual
Date written/last review	November 2026
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1. Aims of this policy

- To develop positive relationships with parents and carers, to build a strong partnership in supporting their children's learning and development.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum with a solid and strong foundation in the three prime areas of learning, and the four specific areas of learning.
- To provide high-quality learning experiences that correspond to each child's developmental stage to guide children towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goals at the end of the EYFS.
- To provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment, one which provides challenge and promotes a positive attitude to learning.
- To provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

3. Introduction

"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." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

At St. Elizabeth's, we strive to encourage a love of learning in our pupils. Our broad curriculum has God at its centre and we strive to enable each child to flourish spiritually and academically.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. We believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

At St. Elizabeth's Primary School, children join us at the beginning of the school year following their fourth birthday.

We endeavour to provide high-quality early learning experiences that uphold and demonstrate the four key principles outlined in the EYFS statutory framework:

- **A Unique Child:** Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments:** 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.
- **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

4. Curriculum

At St. Elizabeth's Primary School, our curriculum is underpinned by our Catholic identity, Catholic Social Teaching principles and Fundamental British Values. We follow the aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. We recognise that all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

We ensure that children receive a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, giving them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of Reception.

We recognise that three areas of learning 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 prime areas are:

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

We also teach the four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

We focus on the prime areas of learning first. The balance then shifts towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how best to support the child

As well as the seven areas of learning, we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and Exploring: Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active Learning: Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically: Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

5. Planning

"There are seven areas of learning and development that set out what providers must teach the children in their settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

At St. Elizabeth's Primary School, we support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Children share in daily phonics, reading, writing, and mathematics sessions. At all times, the characteristics of effective learning are considered in our planning and teaching in order to meet each child's needs.

We ensure that children's next steps are met in our weekly planning, while also responding to their social and emotional needs and their achievements both inside and outside of school.

6. Assessment

"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests, and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning.

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's learning. Our observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journals on Seesaw and in their paper-based folders. Learning journals include teacher, parent, and child voice, and contain a wide variety of evidence shared with parents at each consultation meeting.

Within the first 6 weeks of a child starting Reception, staff administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), indicating whether they are:

- **Expected:** Meeting the expected level of development
- **Emerging:** Not yet reaching the expected level of development

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared directly with parents and/or carers.

We encourage all parties to contribute to discussions, assessment, and children's learning journeys. Initial assessments take into account information received from parents during home visits as well as records from pre-schools and childminders. Parents have access to WOW slips throughout the year to record significant learning moments outside of school.

7. Teaching and Learning

At St. Elizabeth's Primary School, children in the EYFS participate in whole-class, small-group, and individual activities, with timings increasing as the year progresses to accommodate children's needs and stretch their learning.

The Early Years education we offer is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning with a range of starting points, matching the needs of young children and providing learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers

"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 which is guided by adults." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Our ultimate aim is to help children become independent, enquiring, and evaluative learners. We follow children's interests to fully engage them in taking charge of their own learning. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences that help them make sense of the world.

As children grow older, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help prepare them for Year 1 and formal learning.

8. The Learning Environment

At St. Elizabeth's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. We ensure that both the indoor and outdoor learning environments are planned effectively to meet the requirements of all areas of learning.

Classrooms are well-organised into clearly defined areas, allowing children to explore and learn securely and safely. We encourage children to engage in purposeful, challenging activities with or without direct adult presence.

Pupils in Reception Class have dedicated outdoor access. Being outdoors offers unique opportunities for exploration, physical activity, sensory discovery, and exuberance. Outdoor provisions include sand, water, climbing equipment, writing areas, a mud kitchen, construction spaces, and role-play zones.

9. Parents as Partners

"Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers. We pride ourselves on positive relationships with families and recognise parents as children's first and most enduring educators.

Parents and carers are kept informed of progress and development. The EYFS Profile provides a well-rounded picture of each child's knowledge, understanding, and abilities.

We host stay-and-play sessions in the summer term prior to children starting school, continuing these throughout the academic year to:

- Support transitions and allow children to spend time with their teacher before starting school.
- Provide useful guidance to parents supporting development at home.

We also invite parents to an induction meeting and maintain an 'open door' policy for daily informal discussions. Formal parent consultation meetings are held across the autumn and spring terms. Parents are actively encouraged to participate in stay-and-play events, home learning tasks, seasonal projects, Christmas productions, and assemblies.

We draw on community links to enrich learning through educational outings and visiting guest speakers.

10. Safeguarding and Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, when they have positive people caring for them." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

At St. Elizabeth's Primary School, we adhere to the legal welfare requirements stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Provide a setting that is welcoming, safe, and stimulating
- Promote good health and prevent the spread of infection
- Ensure children are within sight and hearing of staff while eating
- Ensure at least one person who has a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises and available at all times when EYFS children are present, and accompanies children on outings
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately for children's developmental stag
- Ensure all adults looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable (including DBS checks)
- Ensure premises, furniture, and equipment are safe, suitable, and fit for purpose
- Maintain mandatory records, policies, and procedures required for safe management

We educate children on boundaries, rules, and hazards to help them keep safe and protect physical and psychological wellbeing (detailed further in our Safeguarding Policy). We utilize the Zones of Regulation framework to support emotional self-regulation.

We promote healthy lifestyles by providing daily fresh fruit and free school meals for Reception pupils under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme.

11. Inclusion

We value every child as a unique, capable, and resilient learner. Diversity is celebrated, and all children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, background, or ability.

We set realistic, challenging expectations tailored to individual learning needs—including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), higher-attaining pupils, and children with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Staff monitor progress closely to remove barriers to learning, making early interventions and adapting resources where necessary.

12. Transition

To ensure a smooth start to school, transition is carefully planned. Summer stay-and-play sessions, parent induction meetings, and home visits help build early familiarity.

We maintain strong working links with local feeder nurseries and early years providers to share key information prior to starting in September.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and updated annually by the EYFS Lead, Headteacher, and Governing Body, or sooner if statutory guidelines change.