

St Charles Catholic Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

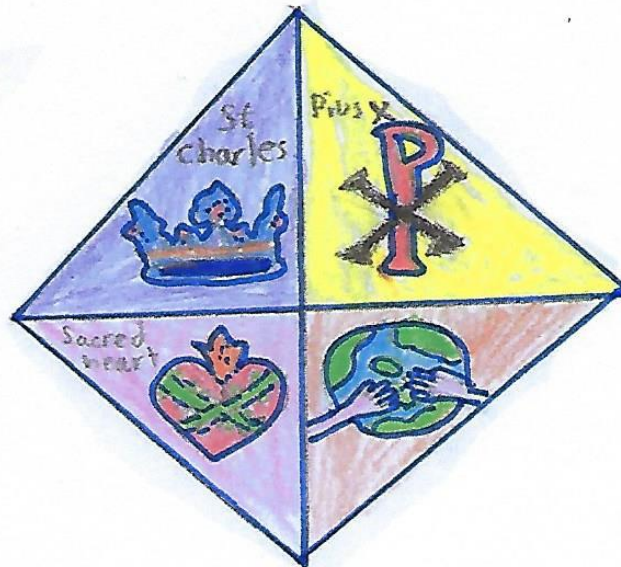
Date policy adopted by the SLT: October 2025

Date policy to be reviewed: October 2026

St Charles Catholic Primary school

Our Mission Statement

✠ *Love God, Love your Neighbour* ✠



(Design by Claudia 5A - 2020)

Through God's love, and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, we, the Community of St Charles, share our Catholic faith together. We seek to nurture in our children an understanding of the importance of Christian values and a deep love and lifelong commitment to God.

We value the unique strengths and gifts of the children entrusted to us and strive to provide an excellent education, so that through our teaching the children may realise their full potential.

In partnership with our families, Governors and Parish, and inspired by our faith, we support the children of St Charles. We encourage them to shine, to have pride in their achievements, to show concern for others and contribute to society as responsible citizens.

Our Aims

- To appreciate that we are all uniquely created and loved by God.
- To deepen each child's understanding of the Catholic faith.
- To nurture in the children an understanding of Christian values and how these help shape our lives and the lives of others.
- To understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- To work in partnership with parents and Parish to create a Christian atmosphere enriched through prayer.
- To provide an excellent education so children learn and achieve their potential.
- To respect and care for one another in a happy, welcoming and nurturing community.
- To ensure children care and respect others, develop an understanding of the world and contribute to society as responsible citizens.

St Charles Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

(This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St. Charles)

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’

EYFS Statutory Framework 2025

Aims

This policy intends to outline the provision for children in Nursery and Reception at St Charles Primary School. Within our Early Years provision we are committed to providing a secure and happy environment for our children to learn and play.

Our aims are for children to become:

- Happy, independent and reflective learners with the academic and physical skills needed to achieve in KS1 and beyond.
- Skilled communicators; who are able to connect with others through language and play.
- Confident individuals who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Charles Primary School applies to children who join our Nursery at the age of three years and to those children who continue to our Reception classes or join Reception in September. St Charles can admit up to 26 children in Nursery and 30 children in Reception. Our Early Years provision ensures that our children are ready for their next stage of development, be that starting Reception or moving on to start Year 1.

At St Charles Primary School, we follow, the guidance set out in the Early Years Framework and seek to provide:

- Quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind;
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the children's needs and interests and are assessed and reviewed 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.

EYFS Philosophy

Four guiding principles shape our teaching and learning in Nursery and Reception.

These are closely related to the EYFS Framework:

- **A Unique Child** Every child is unique and is given the opportunities to learn how to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** Children learn how to be strong and independent, through positive relationships with adults and guidance on how to develop relationships with their peers.
- **Enabling Environments** Children learn and develop well in well-planned environments and meaningful interactions from teachers, early years practitioners, teaching assistants and play workers. Adults in the Early Years respond to pupils' interest and support pupils learning and understanding over time.
- **Learning and Development** As children develop and learn at different rates, we pay close attention to those children who have additional needs. Staff in Nursery and Reception act swiftly to support any child with additional needs and seek guidance from other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists.

Overarching principles

Within the Early Years at St Charles Primary School, we are aligned to the 'Seven Key Features of Effective Practice' which is part of the 2023 EYFS Development Matters Framework. The seven areas are as follows:

- 1. The best for every child**
- 2. High-quality care**
- 3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn**
- 4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn**
- 5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt**
- 6. Self-regulation and executive function**
- 7. Partnership with parents**

1. The best for every child

All children deserve to have an equal chance of success. High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Children thrive when they experience high quality early education and care. High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning.

2. High-quality care

The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner. High-quality care is consistent. Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children

3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn

The curriculum at St Charles is carefully planned so that learning is relevant and engaging to our children. Throughout the curriculum high importance is placed on language development which is essential for all current and future learning.

The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything we want the children to learn in Nursery and Reception. The sequencing of our curriculum helps children to build their learning over time and provides the foundations needed to successfully access the National Curriculum. Identified skills within the seven areas of learning are broken down into component parts which children revisit throughout Nursery and Reception to achieve a depth of knowledge and understanding. Our planning and continuous provision enable children to take risks with their learning and develop skills within a safe play-based environment, carefully considering their interests to promote high levels of engagement. Within our curriculum there is room to follow children's emerging interests in order to maximise engagement.

Our curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It covers, but is not limited to, the learning needed to attain all 17 Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

At St Charles we deliver the EYFS curriculum using a range of teaching methods - as outlined in the Ofsted 'Teaching and play in the early years – a balancing act?' We aim to provide a child focused education through 'communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what children are doing, facilitating and setting challenges.' (Ofsted 2022)

Children are powerful learners. We strive for every child to progress in their learning. Effective teaching and learning is a mix of different approaches according to the child's needs and interests. Children learn through play, by adults modelling and through guided learning and direct teaching. Practitioners carefully plan activities for our indoor and outdoor learning areas for high-quality play. Opportunities are made available for children to invent their own play. Practitioners will join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning. Children in our Early Years also learn by working with

classroom adults 1:1 or in small groups, practitioner's guide their learning, moving children on from their starting points.

5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. Effective assessment enables all staff in Nursery and Reception to be clear about pupil progress and any gaps children may develop. Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.

In both Nursery and Reception, we assess children at their starting points through observations and short, play based activities. Children are judged as being either 'on track' or 'not yet on track' in each of the 17 strands of learning. In extreme cases where children are not yet accessing learning in a particular area they can be assessed as 'well below.' Reception children also take part in the statutory baseline within 6 weeks of joining our school. Typically, this will be in early October. The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out by the class teachers using an online programme using an iPad or a laptop, one-to-one with each child. Once the Reception Baseline Assessment has taken place and it has been inputted into the online programme, it provides a helpful snapshot of where each child is when they enter reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way. The main purpose of the Reception Baseline Assessment is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. The data from the assessment will only be used by the Department for Education when each child has reached the end of year 6, to provide the baseline to measure the progress of each child's year group from Reception to Year 6. The data from the assessment, including numerical scores, is not shared with parents, pupils, teachers, or external bodies, including schools, and there will be no published scores at pupil, school or national level.

Ongoing assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers, teachers and other adults to recognise children's progress, understand their emerging needs, and to plan activities and support. We continually make observations about each child's learning and development and use these observations to identify learning priorities and plan relevant learning experiences for each child.

Significant observations and samples of work are kept for both Reception and Nursery.

Assessment points throughout the year are in line with those in the rest of the school at the end of each academic term. Practitioner knowledge (of all adults working in each setting), work collected and where necessary play-based assessment activities are all used in conjunction with each other to decide whether each pupil is 'on track' or 'not yet on track' in each strand of learning.

Parents are invited to discuss how well their child is doing through parent consultation meetings which take place in the autumn and spring terms. An annual report is written and shared with parents in the summer term.

6. Self-regulation and executive function

Within the Early Years we develop children's executive functioning skills to enable the children to; hold information in mind, focus their attention, regulate their behaviour, and plan what to do next. By developing children's executive function skills, we enable the children to self-regulate their social and emotional skills. Self-regulation supports children to; focus their thinking, monitor what they are doing and adapt', regulate strong feelings, be patient for what they want and bounce back when things get difficult. Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans. Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.

7. Partnership with parents

We value the respectful partnerships we develop with parents. By working in partnership with our parents, we create the opportunities for our children to thrive during their time in Nursery and Reception. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate in their child's education and care in numerous ways, including consultation meetings, home learning, drop-ins and workshops. Parental involvement with school begins even before children start Nursery or Reception with a 1:1 school visit with a member of the EYFS staff. Parents' consultation meetings are held in October and February where parents are invited to discuss their child's progress. A report for each child in Nursery and Reception is sent out at the end of the summer term. It is important to stress that if parents are concerned in any way about their child, they should telephone or call into

the school to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the class teacher or Early Years leader.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and EYFS Profile

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals at the end of Reception.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

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

These three are the prime areas of learning.

Children are also supported through the 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.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

Nursery focus is strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas are reflected in the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at St Charles RC Primary and grow in confidence to fulfil their full academic and personal potential.

Children have whole class and small group teaching inputs which increase as they progress through the EYFS e.g. teaching mathematics and literacy. In Reception there are daily phonics sessions using the whole school accredited 'Essential Letters and Sounds' phonics scheme. This starts in the first full week of Autumn term. Mathematics teaching is delivered following the 'Mastering the Curriculum' programme in Nursery and 'Mathematics Mastery' in Reception in line with the rest of the school.

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

At the end of the Reception year children are assessed against the 'Early Learning Goals'. Teachers review information from all sources to make a judgement for each child, for each ELG. The judgement must say whether the child's learning and development is:

- Best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected)
- Not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (emerging).

Children who are awarded ELGs in Communication and Language, Physical Development, PSED, Literacy and Mathematics are deemed to have achieved Good Level of Development (GLD).

Inclusion

All pupils in this school are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, gender, race and social circumstances. The needs of all children are considered, and the curriculum adapted to suit all levels of ability. Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Nursery age onwards. Should a child have any additional need the parent will be informed at an early stage. We work closely with the SENCO and support is provided within the school where possible through targeted interventions. We also seek help and support from outside agencies to bring in the

expertise we need for guidance and support to help the children and parents within our setting.

The Learning Environment

Our learning environments are organised to enthuse children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classroom is arranged into learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our classrooms have their own enclosed outdoor areas which are an extension of the classrooms designed and set up to facilitate learning. Children have the opportunity to free flow between the two environments. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors as well as developing their gross motor skills and body strength in order to build stamina for the physical demands of school e.g. writing and sitting at a table. We plan activities and resources for the children to access indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

Transitions

Transition into Nursery, between Nursery and Reception and into Year 1 are carefully planned for. During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Nursery or Reception, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- All parents and carers are invited to a meeting, to ensure they know about school procedures and to express any concerns they may have about their child starting school. There is time for informal chats and parents' questions. Information packs are distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school start dates, routines, expectations and home visit dates for children starting Nursery or Reception from a different setting.
- School visits for new Reception children take place at the end of the Summer term. Nursery children school visits are in the first weeks of Autumn term. During the Visits, we find out about the children's interests and what they love to do. They give school an important insight into family life for each child. For children who are in our Nursery and joining our Reception and have been identified with SEND or other barriers to learning, parents are invited to a meeting with one of

our Reception staff team. All parents complete an 'All about me' booklet with their child to share with their new teacher.

- The children currently attending St. Charles, whether in Nursery or Reception, are invited to visit their new class during the summer term to allow the children to feel secure in the new environment and provide them with an opportunity of meeting their new teachers and early year's educators.
- During the last few weeks of the summer term, children outside of St. Charles Nursery, are invited into school for a morning or afternoon with their parents or preschool support to meet their new teacher and early years educators. During this time they have opportunities to tour the school and become familiar with their new learning environment.
- In September, the children starting Nursery at St. Charles are invited to an open day where they can visit their new classroom with their parents or carers and meet the Nursery staff.
- In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers meet with the Reception staff for a handover meeting to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals.
- Nursery and Reception teachers and Early Years Practitioners meet to discuss those pupils who move from St Charles Nursery into Reception. These discussions help teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Settling in Period

We recognise that starting Nursery or Reception is a substantial change for young children, and it is important that steps are made to do this in a gentle way. It is also important to introduce positive routines from the first day at school.

Children joining Reception start on the first day of Autumn Term, in line with the rest of the school. In exceptional cases a child may benefit from an extended period of shorter days. In these situations, a joint decision will be made by the SENCO, Head Teacher, EYFS lead and Parents. An individual settling in plan will be drawn up for the child.

In Nursery children usually start in the second full week of term, after school visits have been completed. An example of our Nursery settling in period is a 2-hour morning session in the first week, half day in the second week and full time by the start of week

three. A decision will be made by the class teacher about a settling in period any children joining Nursery mid-year. This will be based on their previous school experiences.

January Start

In some years, Nursery may invite children who have turned three in the previous Autumn term to join the class as part of a January intake. These children will be at St Charles Nursery for a total of 5 terms before moving into Reception. The settling in period in this situation is as outlined above.

Medical Need and Allergies

We keep records of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers, Piriton and epi-pens in the first aid boxes so, everyone is aware of individual needs.

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. Measures are in place supported by school and our school kitchen team.

Toileting

All members of staff are responsible for changing children when they are wet or soiled. Staff are provided with rubber gloves, disposable aprons, and hand wash for their protection. Soiled and wet clothing is sent home and parents are informed if children have had a toilet accident. In some cases, a parent or carer may be called in to change their child themselves. For children who are experiencing toileting issues, it may be necessary for a care plan to be put in place. This is completed with the support of parents and where possible appropriate other professionals.

Safeguarding Children Inc. Phones/Photographs/Videos

At St Charles we have a culture of safeguarding that supports the arrangements to:

- Identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation.
- Help children reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help.
- Prevent impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Manage safe recruitment practices and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children.
- Take action to ensure all children have the best outcomes.

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed/ videoed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual record books and on the school website and social media.

To ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care;

- All mobile phones will be kept in the lockers throughout contact time with children. (This includes all staff, visitors, parent helpers, supply teachers and
- Mobile phones will not be used in any classroom when children are on the premises
- Personal mobiles, cameras or video recorders cannot be used to record classroom activities. ONLY school property can be used for this.
- Photographs and recordings can only be transferred to, and stored on a school computer to be printed.

At St. Charles, child protection responsibilities are taken very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school for parents to read if they wish.

Health and safety

Foundation Stage support staff have had either general first aid or paediatric first aid training. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. They are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety

issues. Daily safety checks are made by staff in both the indoor and outdoor classrooms. Risk assessments are undertaken before any school outings.

Links to other policies

All subject policies should indicate their contribution to Early Years in school.

- Safeguarding /Child Protection.
- Equal Opportunities.
- Inclusion.
- Behaviour Policy/Discipline.
- Health and Safety.
- Assessment, recording and reporting.
- Special Educational Needs
- EAL Policy
- SMSC Policy

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Early Years Leader and the senior leadership team will carry out the monitoring of the EYFS policy.

Dissemination

This policy will be shared with members of St. Charles staff and governors where changes to the policy will be discussed. Parents and carers will be informed of the updated policy by letter and will be invited to look at or download the policy from the school website. They will also be made aware that a copy of the Early Years policy can be reviewed from the school on request. A copy of this Early Years policy will be available from the Early Years Leader and will also be in the school library.