



SSMJ POLICY FOR Early Years Foundation Stage

*Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love
and respect one another to be the best we can be.*

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Role __EYFS Subject Leader_____

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EYFS Policy Sept 2024-July 2025

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The Purpose of EYFS

The Early Years Policy in this school reflects the value and importance of Early Years Education, both during and beyond the foundation stage. It provides a frame work for staff and parents that gives guidance of practice and outlines procedures for planning, teaching, assessment, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The policy contributes towards promoting our faith and raising educational standards within the school and ensures that the needs of the youngest children are met within the context of whole school policies, curriculum, planning, agreed teaching approaches and organisational structures.

Aims

The Foundation Stage aims to provide and maintain a safe, relaxed, attractive, stimulating and reassuring environment for the children in which their physical, language and Personal, social and emotional needs will be met.

The Early Years Policy reflects the main aims of the school, which are:

- To promote, learn and embrace our Catholic Faith.
- To be committed to honesty and responsibility in all relationships
- To provide a rich, stimulating and exciting curriculum which challenges every pupil to achieve their maximum potential and have the best possible start to their school life recognising each child as an individual.
- To create a family ethos with a caring and welcoming atmosphere that gives us all a sense of belonging.
- For staff to develop those key relationships with children and use that knowledge effectively to promote the 5 a Day Principles (EEF).
- To develop staff's knowledge through CPD that enhance the experience of the individual children.
- To provide a calm, safe environment for every person to grow, learn and feel valued allowing them to 'be the best they can be'.
- To provide each individual with the life skills necessary to become a responsible citizen and committed member of the Church.
- To provide opportunities to form links with the local, national and international communities, developing our understanding of the world beyond our school.
- To provide a good partnership that works positively between practitioners and with parents/carers.
- To provide a curriculum that encompasses the Statutory Framework for the EYFS September 2024.
- Develop children's knowledge through different forms of technology where appropriate.

The main aim for our children in the Foundation Stage is to welcome them into school in a positive and friendly way. The school recognises that the transition from Nursery to school needs to be a positive experience recognising this can give each child a positive start to education. For this reason, we have a comprehensive transition policy from Nursery to Reception. (See Nursery to Reception Transition Policy) The staff at SSMJ school believe that the following principles underpin their practice and reflect a shared vision of how children develop and learn, the activities and experiences that help children make progress and the type of stimulating environment and activities that promote opportunities for active learning.

We believe that: –

- Our faith is at the heart of our curriculum and school; therefore, it is in everything we do.
- Each child should be valued as an individual and recognised for their own individual achievements.
- A positive ethos needs to be promoted and consistent with regards to behaviour and expectations.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements of each child are paramount.
- Each child should have positive relationships with adults and peers learning how friendships and negotiating skills are developed.
- Each child has the right to free play as well as to structured learning, experiences, exploring and investigation materials, objects and relationships.
- The learning and development opportunities experienced by the children are planned around the individual needs and build on and extend their interests and knowledge.
- Each child should talk about their learning developing key acquisition of vocabulary.
- The children should develop in independence and self-management skills.
- A range of approaches are used to provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk
- The learning and development of each child is assessed and reviewed regularly and targets/next steps developed.
- Each child has individual learning requirements including those who may have particular needs or disabilities.

- All children should be given support and encouragement so that no child gets left behind and that each child will reach their full potential and make good progress.
- Parents/carers play a vital role in children's development and as such need to be included and relationships need to be developed.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Staff's knowledge of each individual child, their understanding of pedagogy and how this is reflected at SSMJ.
- 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 each child's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively and ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- Providing a rich and stimulating environment which is safe and supportive to learning where 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 the children's progress and taking action to provide support or challenge when necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.
- Allowing them supported access to use of different forms of technology so they become aware of how to use technology responsibly.
- Developing those important relationships with parents using a wide range of strategies.

Intent:

At SSMJ the Early Years Foundation Stage is recognised for its significance. Our EYFS curriculum is reflective of our Catholic ethos.

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’”

Matthew 19:14

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.”

Psalm 127:3

In EYFS at SSMJ School, the curriculum is designed to recognise children’s prior learning from previous settings and their experiences at home, provide first hand learning experiences, whilst allowing the children to build resilience, ambition and integrity. Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we celebrate and welcome differences within our school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We provide enhancement opportunities to engage learning and believe that our first experiences of school should be happy and positive, enabling us to develop a lifelong love of learning.

At SSMJ we understand the importance of adapting our modelling, our planning or our environment to suit the current cohort of children and ensure it reflects their individual needs.

Community involvement is an essential part of our curriculum and faith as we celebrate local traditions, learning new skills to enable the children to take an active role in events throughout the year. We understand the important role the Church plays in supporting the children in their faith and strive to make the most of developing that close relationship from an early age.

In a technology driven world it is important children are taught how to access and use online materials safely. We teach children how access to technology can enhance skills and knowledge and allow worldwide experiences that would not be possible without. Children are supported to use technology safely in all lessons. Adults model responsible technological access.

Throughout their time in EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to our school community, ready to transition to year 1 the following academic year. They have the confidence and skills to make decisions and self-evaluate, make connections and become lifelong learners.

We intend:

- To support the children in learning about the Catholic Faith.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points.
- To understand and follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS.
- To support children emotionally so they are mentally healthy having open conversations/discussions about different topics/situations.
- To support children's knowledge/experiences of a wider world and the role they play.
- To develop children's knowledge of being a unique individual and being different to one another is ok.
- To provide a curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure children meet their next steps that reflects the children's interests.
- To create an indoor and outdoor environment which makes the most of learning opportunities.
- To prepare children to reach the Early Learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage, ensuring no child is left behind.
- To assess and monitor children frequently to ensure early intervention is available for both home and school.
- To ensure proactive interventions that are consistently changing that reflect what the children need and address issues arising so no child is left behind.
- To support an effective transition into year 1.

Implementation:

Throughout EYFS at SSMJ School, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, updated January 2024, by the DfE. This framework specifies the requirement for learning and development in the Early Years and provides prime and specific areas of learning we must cover within our curriculum.

We have a curriculum that is child-centred and that is based upon wow experiences and topics which engage the children. We encourage active learning to ensure the children are motivated and interested. We take time to get to know children's interests and their likes to support learning. All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum.

The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum as stated in the new Early Years Statutory Framework from the DFE January 2024. They are:

- Communication and Language (Prime Area)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Prime Area)
- Physical Development (Prime Area)
- Literacy (Specific Area)
- Mathematics (Specific Area)
- Understanding the World (Specific Area)
- Expressive Arts and Design (Specific Area)

These 7 areas are used to enhance children's experiences giving them a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning for this curriculum is designed to be flexible so that a child's unique interests are supported however a link to the curriculum overview document can be found in the Appendices 2 below. During each day, the children will work with an adult to complete a range of activities, for short periods of time, including:

- Worship – The children discuss a key topic following the liturgical calendar. This may be as a whole school, a Key stage or as a class. Children's knowledge is developed to support child planned worship.
- Phonics – As this is key to children's ability to speak correctly and begin to read and write.
- Literacy – Activities are based around different stories, poems, video clips, non-fiction texts, songs and news articles.
- Mathematics – Activities are directed by an adult either 1:1, in small groups or whole class.
- Guided Reading – Looking at different texts covering comprehension and phonics objectives.
- Circle Time – An opportunity for children to discuss things that are relevant to them from home, school etc.
- 1:1 individual reading to take place at least twice a week.

A vital aspect in the development of essential knowledge and skills is the use of continuous provision. This means that children are using and developing taught skills throughout the year on a daily basis. Continuous provision practise and principles begin in EYFS and support children to develop key life skills

such as independence, socialisation, innovation, creativity, enquiry, analysis and problem solving. During the school day, children will have an opportunity to work independently, work collaboratively with their friends and with members of staff.

Daily guided activities are also planned to cover different areas of the EYFS curriculum and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. Through observation and discussion, areas of need and next steps are identified for all children to ensure good progress is made. There are also a range of stimulating and engaging activities which the children can access independently and a variety of opportunities for child-initiated play. In planning and directed children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn (see Pedagogy Document <https://www.ssmj.lancs.sch.uk/useful-documents-10/>) and reflect these in our practise. Staff in the EYFS regularly observe children and participate in their learning to further enhance experiences. These are collected in each child's SEAL (Skills, Experiences, and Learning) book. Children have Literacy and Mathematics books for more structured sessions. This allows children to begin to record and allows for those basic skills to be continuously developed.

We regularly assess where the children are, guided by 'Development Matters 2023', 'Birth to Five Matters 2023' and Lancashire's Planning for Learning Early Adopter Guidance which ensures our planning, adult interaction and learning environment; including continuous provision, support children to reach their next steps. We will include interventions for groups or individuals that address any issues daily.

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. Our outdoor areas are used all year round and in most weather conditions. We ensure activities support the Characteristics of Effective Learning as overarching principles to ensure learning takes place. These 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.

We share a range of healthy snacks and learn about the importance of a healthy balanced lifestyle to maintain our own wellbeing. To ensure no child goes

hungry school provides breakfast snacks when required as we know children can only be at their best if they are not hungry. Milk is provided by the government up until the term they are five after such time parents are required to pay. Fruit and vegetables are also provided by the government which children receive on a daily basis.

All of children perform in a Nativity, participate in whole school assemblies, receive certificates in assembly, and participate in trips. They enjoy visits from other volunteers to talk about a topic related to their learning. They are visited by a vast range of People Who Help Us, such community members including the police, fire service, postal workers, vets, doctors, nurses, their animals and vehicles. EYFS make effective use of the school gardens planting different fruit and vegetables and watching them grow.

To support our wider curriculum, we provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to come into school and work with their child, share their work and celebrate successes. We keep parents informed and we meet regularly with them to ensure children's transition into school is effective. This includes transition days, nursery visits, stay and play sessions, parent workshops, topic days, reports and parent consultations as well as more frequent informal communication to suit individual families.

When using online resources for children are reminded about staying safe online knowing how to respond when the content is inappropriate and reporting it to a known adult. Children are reminded which details are appropriate to give out and how to conduct themselves online. Children complete online safety sessions as a unit once a year through Computing lessons and are reminded when using resources online of the four C's (Content, Contact, Conduct, Contract). Parents are given documentation to support encouraging their child to stay safe online.

We also support the transition into Key Stage 1 for both child and parents. We prepare children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of EYFS and the start of Year 1. Parents have the opportunity to meet with new teachers and visit their child's new learning environment. They also complete 'moving on' activities with their child throughout the summer term. These aim to support the transition for all.

Impact

We strive to ensure that our children's progress across the EYFS curriculum is good from their varied starting points. We also strive for children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception and to be at least in line with National Expectations. Evidence in children's SEAL books support all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Evidence in children's Literacy and Mathematics books shows evidence of progression in both areas.

The impact of our curriculum is measured by assessment procedures which allow us to measure outcomes against all schools nationally. We measure the percentage of pupils achieving age related expectations throughout the academic year and put supportive interventions in place if and when needed. Class teachers use observations, modelling and discussions to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Class teachers also termly evaluate the curriculum and adapt the overview to suit the cohort of children.

We ensure children and Parents have a secure knowledge of how to use resources online safely to support the development of their child.

The impact of our curriculum will also be measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well rounded individuals who embody our values and carry with them the faith, knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them lifelong learners and valuable future citizens. We endeavour for pupils to be Key Stage 1 ready and have our school values and ethos embedded by the time they leave reception, preparing them for their future.

Assessment: (See Assessment Policy and Roles & Responsibilities below Appendix 1)

Summative assessment compares children attainment to age related expectations guided by year bands in Development Matters 2023. This is tracked using a spread sheet showing children who are on track/not on track to meet End of Year Learning Goals every half term. Our assessment judgements have been moderated both in school and externally with local schools and others in our trust.

Assessment for learning is continuous throughout the planning, teaching and learning cycle. Key skills and knowledge are taught to enable and promote the good development of children. Assessment is supported by use of the following strategies:

- Modelling

- Monitoring and Observation;
- Differentiation;
- Quality questioning
- Providing effective feedback
- Assessment

(See our Teaching and Learning Policy for more detail.)

Planning and Resources:

Planning reflects children's interests and follows statutory guidance (EYFS Statutory Framework 2024) supported by Lancashire's Planning for EYFS.

Planning is reactive to suit the needs of individual children and is often changed/adapted to reflect this.

Resources are gathered throughout the year to support and reflect children's interests. Resources are not always subject specific but link to a topic the children are focusing on.

Organisation:

Children have some short teacher directed sessions throughout the day for Worship, Phonics, Guided Reading, Literacy, Mathematics daily. Other activities and opportunities are provided through Continuous Provision. Organisation will vary on a daily basis as it reflects children's interests/needs.

Equal Opportunities: (See Equal Opportunities Policy)

At SSMJ Primary school, we are committed to providing a teaching environment which ensures all children are provided with the same learning opportunities regardless of social class, gender, culture, race, special educational need or disability. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure inclusion (EYFS Seven Principles & 5 a Day EEF materials) and also to maintain a positive ethos where children demonstrate affirming attitudes towards others. Support for specific individuals is well considered and planned for, with consideration given to how deeper learning and further challenge can be provided for and demonstrated by children who require further challenge.

Inclusion:

(e.g. EAL/SEN/PPG/Provision for HA) All pupils are entitled to access the EYFS curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs. To ensure inclusion, teachers use a range of strategies in line with the school's inclusion planning key. Independent tasks, as well as teaching, are also well-adapted to ensure full accessibility, as well as to provide appropriate challenge to different groups of learners. The school makes full use of additional adults who are deployed effectively to ensure that identified children are able to make progress in each curriculum area, according to their full potential.

Teaching takes account of the children's own interests to ensure topic relevance to all individual learners. Opportunities for enrichment are also fully utilised, to ensure a fully inclusive and engaging music curriculum.

The Role of the Subject Leader: (See Subject Leader Policy)

The Subject Leader's responsibilities are:

- To ensure a high profile for EYFS
- To ensure a full range of relevant and effective resources are available to enhance and support learning.
- To ensure children have access to high quality resources.
- To model the teaching of EYFS.
- To ensure progression of the key knowledge and skills identified within each unit and that these are integral to the programme of study and secure at the end of each age phase.
- To monitor books/video and ensure that key knowledge is evidenced in outcomes, alongside and as supported, by SLT
- To monitor planning and oversee the teaching of EYFS
- To discuss weekly children's progress or lesson outcomes in EYFS
- To lead further improvement in and development of the subject as informed by effective subject overview
- To ensure that the EYFS curriculum has a positive effect on all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have low attainment
- To ensure that the EYFS curriculum takes account of the school's context and promote the Catholic ethos.
- To ensure that approaches are informed by and in line with current identified good practice and pedagogy.
- To ensure staff have access to high quality EYFS training.

Parents (Including Homework):

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years' settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Curriculum letters are sent home periodically to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum and learning needs, with an outline of activities which could be undertaken at home to support this.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view children's work.
- Sharing progress at school through annotated photographs and observations in 'SEAL' books which are sent home termly, and to use home observations and 'Wow vouchers' to record any special moments or achievements at home.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the Reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits.
- In the Autumn term, there will be an evening meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on Phonics and Reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents' evening in Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an interim report at the end of the Autumn term and an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals 2024.
- All parents will be invited to join the Friends of SSMJ School Association, which exists to facilitate social occasions so that families can get to know one another and feel part of the school, to raise money to provide extras that enhance the education of all children in school and to contribute to the ethos of the school by providing support for staff e.g. on special occasions by organising refreshments and making new-comers feel welcome.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.

Appendix 1

Assessment Role & Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Evaluation of Impact.
- Hold the Headteacher to account.
- Whole school overview record.
- Summary of attainment and progress for each cohort and significant groups.

Head Teacher

- Whole school analysis (inc. trends over time).
- Highlighting areas for improvement and allocation of resources (staff/materials/training/accommodation etc).
- Managing the Monitoring/Assessment Calendars.
- Ensuring that decisions made and agreed are carried out.
- Prepares whole school data for presentation to the governors.

Senior Leadership Team

- Monitoring the performance of teachers and overview of pupils.
- Analysing cohort/group data and preparing it for presentation to governors.
- Holding subject leaders/teachers to account for targets set.
- Holding pupil progress meetings to discuss individual/group/class performance using data prepared by the teachers.
- Hold teachers to account for impact where resources have been allocated.
- Ensure targets set lead to improved performance/ rise in attainment.

Subject Leader

- Monitor the performance in their subjects.
- Analyse and report on attainment and progress in their subject for SLT.
- Highlight areas of strength to celebrate and weakness to support.

- Moderate and address issues arising from mismatch between data/pupil books/observations etc.
- Hold teachers to account for performance in their subject area.

Teachers

- Operate within the assessment time frame.
- Meet or exceed the targets set for each child.
- Record and analyse pupil/ group results.
- Highlight areas to celebrate and to address ready for pupil progress meetings.
- Prepare for pupil progress meetings.
- Plan for timely intervention where needed and report impact.
- Record results ready for input onto the Tracker.
- Aware of the impact of their performance upon the whole school.