



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.*

Written by A Russell

Role EYFS Subject Leader

Date policy agreed September 2026

Date to be reviewed September 2029 or sooner as required

1. Purpose of EYFS

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision reflects the deep value we place on early childhood as a unique, formative phase of life. We recognise that children arrive in school with diverse experiences, strengths and needs, and we commit to providing a nurturing, safe and relational environment where every child is known, valued and supported.

This policy provides clear guidance for staff, governors and families on our approach to planning, teaching, assessment, safeguarding, inclusion and partnership. It aligns with whole-school policies and the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2026)**, ensuring that our youngest children receive high-quality education and care that prepares them for lifelong learning.

Our EYFS practice is rooted in our Catholic mission: **"Let the little children come to me..." (Matthew 19:14)** We strive to ensure every child experiences love, dignity and belonging from their very first day.

2. Aims

In EYFS we aim to:

- Provide a **safe, calm, predictable and emotionally secure environment**, recognising that children learn best when they feel safe and connected.
- Promote, learn and embrace our **Catholic faith**, ensuring it is woven through daily routines, relationships and curriculum experiences.
- Deliver a **rich, stimulating and ambitious curriculum** that challenges every child to achieve their full potential.
- Build a **family ethos** where children, staff and families feel welcomed, respected and part of a community.
- Develop strong, attuned relationships with children, using trauma-informed principles and the **EEF 5-a-Day** relational strategies.
- Ensure staff have access to high-quality CPD that strengthens pedagogy, inclusion and early childhood expertise.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop independence, resilience, curiosity and self-management.
- Support children to become responsible citizens and committed members of the Church.
- Build strong partnerships with parents/carers, recognising them as children's first educators.

- Deliver a curriculum fully aligned with the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2026)**, including updated safeguarding, safer sleep and screen-use guidance.
- Teach children to use technology safely, responsibly and purposefully.
- Ensure a smooth, positive transition from Reception to Year 1.

3. Subject Statement (Intent, Implementation, Impact)

Intent

At SSMJ, our EYFS curriculum is shaped by our Catholic values of **aspirations, love, respect, courage and unity**. We recognise each child as a unique individual created in God's image, with their own story, strengths and needs.

We intend to:

- Support children in learning about and living out the Catholic faith.
- Build strong partnerships with families to nurture independent, happy learners.
- Follow children's interests and use them to shape learning experiences.
- Support children's emotional wellbeing through open conversations, co-regulation and trauma-informed practice.
- Celebrate diversity and teach children that being unique is a gift.
- Provide a curriculum that deepens knowledge, builds skills and ensures children meet their next steps.
- Create indoor and outdoor environments that maximise learning opportunities.
- Ensure early intervention is timely, proactive and responsive.
- Prepare children to reach the Early Learning Goals and transition confidently into Year 1.
- Teach responsible, safe and purposeful use of technology, following the **2026 screen-use guidance** for early years settings .

Implementation

Our curriculum follows the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2026)**, covering all seven areas of learning:

- **Prime Areas:** Communication & Language; Personal, Social & Emotional Development; Physical Development
- **Specific Areas:** Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; Expressive Arts & Design

Key features of our implementation include:

- Planning, interactions and provision promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning through opportunities for children to play and explore, actively learn, and create and think critically.
- A **child-centred curriculum** built around "wow" experiences, high-quality texts and purposeful play.
- Daily adult-led sessions including Worship, Phonics, Literacy, Mathematics, Guided Reading and Circle Time.
- Continuous provision that enables children to practise taught skills independently and creatively.
- Regular observations and interactions that inform next steps and responsive planning.
- Use of **Development Matters (2023)**, **Birth to Five Matters (2021)** and Lancashire guidance to support progression.
- Trauma-informed practice that prioritises relationships, regulation and predictable routines.
- Outdoor learning available year-round, supporting physical, social and cognitive development.
- Healthy snacks, breakfast support when needed, and daily fruit/milk provision.
- Visits, trips, community engagement and People Who Help Us experiences.
- Strong parental involvement through workshops, stay-and-play sessions, Dojo communication and transition events.
- Online safety teaching embedded throughout, including the **Four Cs** (Content, Contact, Conduct, Contract).

Impact

We measure impact through:

- Children's progress across all EYFS areas from their varied starting points.
- Achievement of Early Learning Goals in line with or above national expectations.
- Evidence in big books and children's individual RE, Literacy, Maths and EYFS books showing progression.

- Regular assessment cycles, moderation and responsive intervention.
- Children's wellbeing, confidence, independence and embodiment of school values.
- Children being **Year 1 ready**, with secure foundations for future learning.
- Children and parents demonstrating strong understanding of online safety.
- Children demonstrate sustained concentration, independence, resilience and positive attitudes towards learning.

4. Assessment

Assessment is continuous, purposeful and supportive. It includes:

- Formative assessment through observation, discussion, modelling and feedback.
- Summative assessment is informed by Development Matters (2023), professional judgement and progress towards the Early Learning Goals.
- Half-termly tracking of children on track/not on track for ELGs.
- Moderation within school, across the trust and with local schools.
- Trauma-informed assessment that considers context, emotional needs and barriers.

5. Planning and Resources

Planning:

- Follows statutory EYFS guidance (2026).
- Is flexible, responsive and shaped by children's interests.
- Uses Lancashire's Planning for Learning guidance.
- Ensures diversity, inclusion and representation.

Resources:

- Are updated throughout the year to reflect children's interests.
- Support sensory, exploratory, imaginative and structured learning.
- Include safe, supervised access to technology.

6. Organisation

Daily structure includes:

- Short adult-led sessions (Worship, Phonics, Literacy, Maths, Guided Reading).
- Continuous provision indoors and outdoors.
- Child-initiated play and exploration.
- Responsive small-group or 1:1 interventions.
- The organisation of the day remains responsive to children's developmental needs, interests, wellbeing and learning priorities.

7. Equal Opportunities

We ensure:

- All children receive equal access to learning opportunities regardless of background, gender, culture, SEND or disadvantage.
- Resources reflect diversity and avoid stereotypes.
- Staff use inclusive strategies aligned with EYFS principles and EEF guidance.
- Challenge is provided for all learners, including those who are high-attaining.

8. Inclusion

We provide:

- Adapted teaching and tasks to ensure full accessibility.
- Effective deployment of additional adults.
- Enrichment opportunities that support inclusion.
- Trauma-informed approaches that recognise behaviour as communication.
- . Early identification and graduated support for children with SEND, EAL, disadvantage and additional needs, working closely with families and external agencies where appropriate.

9. Technology and Screen Use

Technology is used purposefully to enhance learning and is balanced with rich opportunities for face-to-face interaction, physical activity, outdoor learning and play.

10. Role of the EYFS Leader

The EYFS Leader will:

- Maintain a high profile for EYFS across school.
- Ensure high-quality resources and environments.
- Model excellent EYFS practice.
- Monitor planning, books, evidence and teaching.
- Track progression of knowledge and skills.
- Lead staff development and training.
- Ensure the curriculum reflects school context and Catholic ethos.
- Ensure school safeguarding measures are employed and EYFS safeguarding updates (2026) are fully implemented, including:
 - safer sleep requirements (when appropriate)
 - screen-use guidance
 - appropriate safer recruitment and vetting procedures, including enhanced DBS checks where required
 - suitability disclosures
 - banned dog breed restrictions

10. Parents and Community

We value parents as partners and aim to build strong, trusting relationships through:

- New parents' meetings explaining EYFS delivery.
- Curriculum letters with home-learning suggestions.
- An open-door policy for informal conversations.
- Books shared termly with home contributions.
- Workshops on phonics, reading and early learning.
- Autumn and Spring parents' evenings.
- Interim and annual reports.
- Friends of SSMJ School Association involvement.
- Clear communication regarding SEND concerns.
- Online safety guidance for families.

- Parents are regularly informed about their child's progress and development and are encouraged to contribute to assessments and learning journeys.

11. Review process

This policy will be reviewed in September 2029 or earlier if needed or updated recommendations to best practice are made.